

**GROWING QUALITY SCHOOLS IN THE CRESCENT CITY**

**Expanding Opportunity Through Quality Charter  
Schools Program CFDA Number: 84.423(M)**

Absolute Priority 2: Low-income demographic

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Reopening poor performing schools as charter schools

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## **ABSOLUTE PRIORITY**

Crescent City Schools (CCS), a charter management organization (CMO) in New Orleans, Louisiana, is pleased to submit a proposal through the Expanding Opportunity Through Quality Charter Schools (CSP) Program. The *Growing Quality Schools in the Crescent City* (GQS) project will allow high-quality operator CCS to grow to serve an additional 740 students in New Orleans by both expanding an existing high-quality PreK-8 school, and replicating the successful CCS model to turn around a low-performing K-8 school. GQS is deeply aligned with CCS' mission to support and develop open enrollment charter schools that raise student achievement and prepare students for college.

GQS will address Absolute Priority 2: low-income demographic. CCS' network includes three schools – Paul Habans Charter School, Akili Academy of New Orleans, and Harriet Tubman Charter School. Each school serves a population that is at least 93% economically disadvantaged, according to Louisiana state measures<sup>1</sup>, far exceeding the 40% required to meet Absolute Priority 2. CCS anticipates that the expansion and the replication schools proposed in this project will serve a similar population of students. Please see chart below for the percentages of economically disadvantaged students at all CCS schools, as well as city and state comparisons.

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<sup>1</sup> The Louisiana Department of Education defines "economically disadvantaged students" as those students eligible for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Medicaid, awaiting foster care, migrant, and incarcerated children. This measure is the state's measure for poverty status. Please see Appendix E for full definition.

Economically Disadvantaged (2017-18)	
New Orleans	81%
Louisiana	69%
Akili	94%
Tubman	93%
Habans	96%

**COMPETITIVE PREFERENCE PRIORITY**

GQS also meets Competitive Preference Priority 2: reopening poor performing schools as charter schools. Through the GQS project, CCS will replicate its successful model and reopen a school whose charter has been revoked or is otherwise scheduled for closure in New Orleans. Please see page 19 or Appendix I1 for more details on the school siting processes.

**APPLICATION REQUIREMENT D – Applicant operates/manages more than one charter school**

CCS is a charter management organization (CMO) in New Orleans, Louisiana currently operating three PreK-8 public charter schools – Paul Habans Charter School, Akili Academy, and Harriet Tubman Charter School. Funding from this competition would allow CCS to expand Tubman to serve 200 additional K-8 students, and replicate the network’s high quality charter school model to turn around a low-performing school that will serve 540 K-8 students. Please see Appendix I2 for charter renewal letters for each site.

## ASSURANCES

Please see Appendix A for CSP assurances.

### **SELECTION CRITERIA A - Quality of Eligible Applicant**

*(1) Extent to which academic achievement results for educationally disadvantaged students served by applicant's schools have exceeded average for other public schools in the state*

CCS is unique in that two-thirds of its network are turnaround schools—schools that were deemed failing based on chronic low performance under another operator, whose operation was turned over to CCS for improvement. Despite the challenges of serving students who had not been receiving an adequate education, CCS has achieved success in radically transforming each school in the network.

When CCS took over Harriet Tubman in 2011, it was a failing school and ranked 45<sup>th</sup> (of 75 scored schools) in the district. In two years, CCS grew the school from an F to C<sup>2</sup>, and by year four Tubman was ranked 4<sup>th</sup> in the district for open enrollment elementary schools. In 2018, Harriet Tubman was 10<sup>th</sup> (of 87 schools) in the district for growth in ELA, and earned the

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<sup>2</sup> Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) assesses each school's performance based on a variety of measures including absolute performance and student growth to calculate a School Performance Score (SPS). SPS is a publicly available letter grade that families can use to assess quality in choosing schools. Local district Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB) also uses SPS scores to determine school transitions (new operator) or closures. Please see Appendix I4 for details.

prestigious Equity and Top Gains awards from the state for its work with increasing student achievement with all sub-groups.

CCS took over Paul Habans in 2013, and over the last five years has taken it from an F to C, improving 25 school performance score points (on a scale of 150). In 2018, Habans was the number one elementary school for student growth in ELA and 6<sup>th</sup> (of 87) for math, and earned the highest growth score of any open enrollment elementary school in New Orleans.

Akili Academy, the only non-turnaround school in the CCS network, was a K-4 school serving 250 students in 2013 when CCS assumed operations<sup>3</sup>. CCS grew the school to a full PreK-8<sup>th</sup> grade campus serving 600 students, and by 2018 it had the 7<sup>th</sup> highest growth of any open enrollment elementary school in New Orleans.

CCS’ schools all serve a higher percentage of educationally disadvantaged (ED) students than the statewide average. Even in New Orleans, which has a 12% higher population of economically disadvantaged students than the state, CCS serves some of the most vulnerable students. Please see Figure 1 below and selection criteria B1 for more details.

Fig. 1: Demographic Data (2017-18)					
	Black	Hispanic/Latino	Economically Disadvantaged	Students with Disabilities	Limited English Proficiency
New Orleans	82%	7%	81%	12%	5%
Louisiana	43%	7%	69%	12%	4%

<sup>3</sup> Akili was a single-site school whose school leader was leaving the organization. Part of the succession plan was to have Akili join a successful CMO – CCS.

Akili	96%	2%	94%	20%	1%
Tubman	86%	10%	93%	15%	8%
Habans	89%	8%	96%	13%	9%

Fig. 2: Students Achieving Mastery or Above <sup>4</sup> on State Exams (2017-18)				
	Students of Color <sup>5</sup>	Economically Disadvantaged	Students with Disabilities	Limited English Proficiency
New Orleans	23%	22%	9%	14%
Louisiana	24%	26%	11%	16%
Akili	18%	18%	5%	NR <sup>6</sup>
Tubman	21%	21%	10%	38%
Habans	19%	20%	9.5%	13.6%

While the absolute performance scores on state exams (Louisiana Educational Assessment Program – LEAP) for CCS are not higher than the statewide averages (Figure 2 above), **the Louisiana Progress Index shows CCS is achieving more progress with educationally disadvantaged students than other public schools statewide.** Please see Figure 3 below.

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<sup>4</sup> Mastery or above is considered proficient on Louisiana state exams.

<sup>5</sup> LDOE no longer releases performance data by specific racial subgroup, instead using “students of color.”

<sup>6</sup> Not enough students to be statistically significant.

The Progress Index is used statewide to measure how well students, regardless of where they start at the beginning of the year, are progressing towards a “Mastery” achievement level on state exams. Because the Progress Index is calculated by matching students to peers with similar demographics (ex: economically disadvantaged) to control for demographic differences, there is not a specific demographic breakdown available for this data. Because each school in the CCS network serves virtually 100% ED students, the school-wide progress indexes reflect progress for ED students. According to the state Progress Index, **every school in the CCS network is growing students to Mastery quicker than schools across the city and state.** For more on the LA Progress Index, please see Appendix I3.

The Louisiana Department of Education weights student growth at 25% of a school’s overall performance score, in acknowledgement that schools across the state are often serving very different student populations and as a way to capture how schools are improving achievement for the students they serve.

Fig. 3: Progress Index Scores (2017-18)	
New Orleans	84.7 (B)
Louisiana	88.3 (B)
Akili	96.6 (A)
Tubman	90.9 (A)
Habans	103.8 (A)

Data (Fig. 4) also shows that students in the CCS network are starting further behind than their peers across the state, or even the city of New Orleans, which has more similar student demographics. As shown in Figure 1, CCS serves a significantly higher percentage of ED

students. And, because CCS operates 1) all open enrollment schools that accept all students regardless of academic record, and 2) two turnaround schools, the network is serving many students who did not receive an adequate education before coming to a CCS school. **Despite starting further behind than peers across the city or state, CCS on average is moving a higher percentage of students to Mastery than the city or state.** There is a significantly larger increase in the number of students achieving proficiency by 8<sup>th</sup> grade than in the city or state at two of three Crescent City sites.

Fig. 4: Grade Level Comparison			
	3rd Grade Proficiency	8th Grade Proficiency	Difference
New Orleans	27%	31%	+4%
Louisiana	37%	37%	0%
Akili	12%	28%	+16%
Tubman	14%	26%	+12%
Habans	19%	19%	0%

\*note: third grade is the first tested grade; 8<sup>th</sup> grade is the highest grade served by the network  
 CCS is the only CMO in New Orleans to take two schools from F to C in the last five years and one of only two CMOs serving more than 1,000 students to have all its schools earn A’s for growth from the state in 2018. Stanford’s Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO) identified CCS’ work at Tubman as “one of the fastest and most impressive full-school turnarounds of the last decade.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> An Evaluation of the i3 Validation Grant: Scaling the New Orleans Charter Restart Model

<http://nolai3eval.stanford.edu>



***(2) Extent to which charter schools operated by applicant have closed, had charter revoked, or voluntarily disaffiliated. (App. Req. E)***

No schools operated or managed by CCS have been closed, or had their charters revoked. CCS has not experienced any problems with statutory or regulatory compliance. The network is in good standing with both the Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB) and Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE). The network has also been assessed by Bellwether Education Partners, a national education nonprofit that offers strategic advising to districts and charters, and earned the “high readiness: foundation in place for growth with quality” top designation. Habans, Tubman, and Akili’s charters are up for renewal in fall 2020, 2021, and 2023 respectively. Each school already meets the academic requirements for renewal.

***Extent to which charter schools managed by applicant have had significant financial, operational, or student safety issues that could lead to charter revocation. (App. Requirements B3, E, and H)***

*Compliance with Statutory and Regularly Standards*

CCS has never experienced any deficiencies or compliance violations that have led to intervention by the Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB), the charter authorizer. The network has been in full compliance with all financial, operational, and student safety standards since its inception. To continue operating schools, CCS must abide by stringent financial and operating standards set forth by OPSB’s accountability framework (please see Appendix I4). OPSB monitors compliance annually through assessments of each CMO, which includes a review of academic results, board compliance, special populations’ compliance, adherence to laws, and fiscal management. Please see Appendix I2 for copies of the most recent renewal letters.

Through an independent assessment by Bellwether Education Partners evaluating the network's readiness to expand, CCS was found to have strong financial and operational systems.

Bellwether found that CCS:

- “has developed robust operational systems and infrastructure across three campuses that allow the schools to operate smoothly for staff and students;”
- “has well-defined roles and responsibilities between the schools and the CMO office;”
- “has effective systems to manage key finance functions established;”
- has a plan in place for expansion fundraising; and
- has a high readiness to expand – the top designation within the evaluation program.

CCS' strong management systems described in the sections below will help to ensure full compliance going forward.

*Compliance Oversight:* The Chief Operating Officer (COO) for CCS (Chris Hines, see Appendix I17 for qualifications) is responsible for ensuring compliance in all areas for CCS, working closely with relevant staff at each school. The COO works with each school's Data Manager to collect and report all necessary data to comply with charter authorizer and state reporting mandates. The COO works closely with each school's Director of Special Education to ensure compliance with all state and federal requirements for services for English Language Learners (ELL) and students with disabilities (SWD). To guarantee that all student admissions policies are designed and executed in compliance with state law and ensuring that the number of students does not exceed its approved charter, the COO works closely with each school's principal, who oversees admission and target setting. In New Orleans, all open-enrollment public schools are

part of OneApp, a blind citywide enrollment process, to ensure equitable access for all students. Please see Appendix I8 for information on the OneApp process.

*Financial Management:* CCS conducts its financial management in accordance with all national and state laws. CCS has had clean audits since its start in 2010. Annually, CCS relies on approximately 96.2% of its annual revenue from federal sources, 2.9% from philanthropy, and 1% from other sources. As its own local education agency (LEA), each school receives funds directly from the state, local district (OPSB), and the federal government. Schools then allocate 6.5% of this funding to support the CCS CMO team, which provides key assistance with regard to all aspects of school administration.

In accordance with internal financial controls, for initiatives and items that cost more than \$10,000, there is sound financial oversight requiring approval from the Chairman of the Board of Trustees as well as the CEO or the respective principal, depending upon whether it's regarding the network or one of its schools.

*Operational Management:* The CCS COO works closely with each school's Director of Finance and Operations (DFO) to ensure efficiency and continuous improvement on operations, meeting individually each week as well as meeting monthly after hours to train and support them in their work. The COO also meets weekly with each principal, who is ultimately responsible for everything that happens in his/her building. If the COO has any concerns about operations that cannot be solved directly with the DFOs, the situation is resolved with the principal. To promote efficiencies, the CCS Director of Finance, who reports to the COO, also works closely with the DFOs to manage financial matters.

CCS' management approach focuses on the CMO supporting autonomous principals who lead change in their schools. Thus, the only managerial relationship between the CMO and each school is the CEO managing the principals. Please see Appendix I5 for a breakdown of responsibilities among the CMO vs. schools and Appendix I6 for an organizational chart.

Management policies within CCS and each school outline that managers meet weekly to support staff in accomplishing their job responsibilities that feed into the overall goal of fostering student achievement at each school. CCS' CMO team has an office in each school, and the CEO is on-site several times each week, meeting weekly with the principal, attending regular whole-school and leadership meetings, and conducting "pop-in" visits to classrooms.

*Student Safety:* CCS does everything within its power to ensure student safety. Annually, CCS updates student safety plans and procedures, including fire drills, school response team command hierarchy, and emergency communication plans, submitting these to OPSB for review. In keeping with regulations set up by the New Orleans Fire Department, fire drills and emergency intruder drills are conducted regularly. A copy of the fire drill instructions and a chart showing an emergency dispersal plan can be found in each classroom. The COO works with each school's DFO to update the plans, and staff is trained during summer professional development sessions.

## **SELECTION CRITERIA B – Significance of contribution to assisting ED students**

### ***(1) Extent to which applicant's schools currently serve ED students, particularly students with disabilities and English language learners***

CCS' schools all serve a higher percentage of educationally disadvantaged (ED) students than the statewide average. Please see Figure 1 for a detailed demographic breakdown by school. Even in New Orleans, which has a 12% higher population of economically disadvantaged

students than the state, CCS serves some of the most vulnerable students. This is due mainly to the reputation CCS has built with families across New Orleans for commitment to serving all students well. For example, CCS has some of the top achievement results for students with disabilities in the city. Please see Application Requirement B1 in Appendix I11 for subgroup achievement results.

Fig. 1: Demographic Data					
	Black	Hispanic or Latino	Economically Disadvantaged	Students with Disabilities	Limited English Proficiency
New Orleans	82%	7%	81%	12%	5%
Louisiana	43%	7%	69%	12%	4%
Akili	96%	2%	94%	20%	1%
Tubman	86%	10%	93%	15%	8%
Habans	89%	8%	96%	13%	9%

***Quality of plan to ensure replicated/expanded schools will recruit, enroll, and effectively serve ED students, particularly students with disabilities and English language learners***

***Strong Growth Plan***

CCS’ systems, management, and educational programs are strong, and the network is well-prepared to grow to serve more ED students. Last year, CCS completed a multi-month, rigorous growth plan assessment with Bellwether Education Partners (a national education nonprofit that offers strategic advising to schools and charters) upon the request of a local nonprofit that funds charter school growth. The network earned a “high readiness: foundation in place for growth with quality” designation, the strongest indication of growth readiness, after being assessed

across nine dimensions that include educational program, staff and organizational culture, external engagement, operations, and governance. (For more details Bellwether's assessment criteria, please see Appendix I7.)

Additionally, CCS has a strong track record of the kinds of school expansion and replication activities that will be carried out by the *Growing Quality Schools* (GQS) project. The network was founded in 2011 with the turnaround (takeover of failing school) of Harriet Tubman Charter School, a PK-8 school in an underserved neighborhood in New Orleans. In 2012 and 2013 respectively, CCS added Akili Academy and Paul Habans Charter to the network. CCS has successfully operated as a three-school, PK-8 network serving over 90% ED students ever since. GQS will implement CCS' proven strategies for recruitment, enrollment, and effective service of ED students at the expanded Tubman campus and replicated new school, CCS4.

#### *Recruitment and Enrollment*

*OneApp – Centralized Enrollment:* (App. Req. J) New Orleans' public school system is a network of independent charter schools that families can choose from, regardless of where they live in the city. To ensure equity of access, enrollment is managed by the local district (OPSB) through a blind centralized lottery called OneApp. Each school in the CCS network, including the expanded Tubman and new school CCS4 (set to open in fall 2020), will be available for families to select through OneApp.

Through the OneApp process, families fill out one single application to apply to schools, and can list up to 12 schools in order of preference. An algorithm then runs a lottery, assigning each student to one single-best option based on each child's lottery number and the schools preferenced on the application. Schools enroll students until they are at capacity. OneApp does

weight some criteria—there is a slight geographic preference to ensure students can attend schools closer to home if they so choose, and a sibling match component to keep families together. These weights are determined by the district in accordance with ESEA compliance standards and executed citywide. Please see Appendix I8 for details on OneApp.

If more students apply for any CCS school than can be accommodated, these students will be placed at one of the other schools they preferenced through OneApp. About 76% of students are placed at one of their top three choices citywide. CCS does not control enrollment and is not proposing any additional weights to the existing citywide lottery system. CCS does not have any bearing on which students attend schools in the network, and is committed to equitably serving every student that comes through the door.

CCS sets projected enrollment targets for budget planning purposes. Based on an assessment of how many schools are likely to require transformation or closure and OneApp demand data for CCS schools, CCS predicts it will add about 200 seats to Tubman for the 2019-20 school year, in addition to the approximately 300 seats added this school year. In the last school year, 322 families preferenced Tubman for only 200 seats in the main application round (see demand data for Tubman in Appendix I8), indicating strong demand for the school by families. CCS4 will open with approximately 540 students (60 per grade) in K-8. As a turnaround school, CCS4 is likely to retain most of the students currently served at the site, and CCS will recruit additional families to meet capacity. For details on CCS' financial planning process, please see Selection Criteria D1 on page 32.

Expanding CCS will help meet a citywide need for more quality educational options.

### CCS Recruitment Practices

CCS has experience in conducting the targeted recruitment necessary for successful expansion and replication work, both as an unknown operator trying to get to know families and the surrounding community for the transformation of Tubman in 2011, and then as an experienced operator looking to expand within communities new to the network when transforming Akili and Habans. Recruitment will also be buoyed by the reputation CCS has built with families across the city for serving all students well, as evidenced by the fact that families of students with exceptionalities continue to choose the network in high numbers. As shown in Figure 1 (page 3), CCS serves a higher percentage of educationally disadvantaged students than the citywide average. There is an urgent need in New Orleans for more schools that are prepared to equitably serve all students, and growing the CCS network will help meet this need.

*Tubman Expansion:* Harriet Tubman Charter School is currently in the first year of successful execution of CCS' two-year expansion plan for the school. Tubman created an additional 300 seats for the 2018-19 school year and filled each one. In order to advertise that expansion, Tubman staff:

- Created signs for current Tubman families to put in their front yards proclaiming their support of Tubman and announcing the increased number of seats
- Attended citywide student recruitment fairs
- Visited local area Pre-K programs to speak to families considering their kindergarten options
- Mailed enrollment postcards to families of four-year-olds inviting them to apply to Tubman for kindergarten, and



- Hosted several “open houses” to invite prospective families and Algiers (neighborhood where Tubman is located) community members to learn more about the school.

Given that families in New Orleans have the opportunity to choose their children’s schools, a range in enrollment targets is necessary. CCS planned conservatively for 810 students at Tubman, and is currently serving 909, which is leading to smooth operations. CCS plans to offer an additional 200 seats at Tubman in the 2019-20 school year.

*CCS4 (replication):* As discussed in A1, CCS is a proven turnaround operator in New Orleans. CCS’ past turnaround successes have been built on strong recruitment and community engagement practices that the network plans to utilize for both Tubman’s expansion and the launch of CCS4. When the district assigned CCS to Harriet Tubman in 2011, leadership was unfamiliar with the area as none of CCS’ founders had led or worked in schools in the area. CCS staff and leadership took a series of steps to embed in the Algiers neighborhood and worked tirelessly to get to know the community. Activities included:

- Renting space in the Craige Cultural Center, one half mile down the street from the Harriet Tubman building, for four months prior to being allowed into the Tubman building. This gave CCS leaders a home base in Algiers before signing the lease for the Tubman building.
- Walking the streets of Algiers on numerous Saturday mornings with teaching staff, knocking on doors and introducing the CCS team and model.
- Hosting numerous parent information sessions both at Craige and at Tubman so parents of current Tubman students and other Algiers parents could come and get to know the team at Tubman.

- Meeting with over fifteen different Algiers community groups to introduce the CCS team and talk about the vision for the reimagined Tubman. Kate Mehok (CCS CEO) met and spoke with leaders from groups as varied as the Algiers President’s Council, the Kiwanis Club of Algiers, and the LASPCA (LA Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals).
- Recruiting 1,000 volunteers and spending over \$150,000 of the network’s own money to renovate the run-down Tubman building so that when students entered the building in August 2011, they would return to a beautiful building signifying a fresh start.
- Adding the vice-president of the McClendonville/Tunisburg Neighborhood Association to the board of CCS for neighborhood representation.

Efforts to engage families were successful, as the CCS team grew Tubman enrollment from 300 in Spring 2011 to 540 in August 2011, despite never actually receiving any accurate records of enrollment from the previous operator and despite erroneous messages sent from the previous operator that the Tubman school was closing. Upon opening, the CCS team held a series of “Back to School Nights” for families so they could see the building and get to know staff. CCS also hosted a “Tubman Community Breakfast” and invited all the community members in Algiers who had supported the school throughout the turnaround process. Over 30 community leaders attended and were thrilled to see the transformation that had already taken place.

Community Breakfasts at Tubman have become an annual tradition.

In 2013, when the district assigned CCS to the Paul Habans building, more families knew about CCS in Algiers, having successfully operated at Tubman for two years. Yet Habans was in a different neighborhood in Algiers, so additional relationship building was necessary. Efforts were successful here as well, as CCS increased enrollment at Habans, going from about 250

students in Spring 2013 to 440 in August 2013. CCS also held a series of back to school nights for families and a community breakfasts to continue building relationships.

When CCS is granted a charter for CCS4, leaders will use some of the same proven strategies referenced above, and then adapt others to fit the needs of the community. CCS recognizes that each school community is unique and is prepared to create a myriad of opportunities for families to get to know the CCS team. CCS will hold several family nights prior to the start of school, plans to canvas the neighborhood surrounding the school, and will invite families to the other two Algiers schools to learn more about the network. CCS leadership will seek to ensure that all families remain at the transformation school.

For the new school, CCS will participate in the district siting process, which involves meetings with the new community, and opportunities to engage with families and students directly. In New Orleans, chronically low-performing schools are either closed or transitioned to a new operator to ensure students are not forced to languish in failing schools. The district identifies schools for transition or closure based on their performance scores, and runs the process to choose a new operator to take over the school in the case of transition. During this process, families will have opportunities to ask questions and give their thoughts on what they want from their turnaround school. If there is more than one operator interested in a school, then OPSB will create a rubric and community members and families will be able to judge and rank those operators, thus having a say in who operates their school (please see Appendix II for details on the school siting process). Through that process, CCS will get to know families and hear their concerns and desires for a strong school.

*Effectively Serving Educationally Disadvantaged (ED) Students (App. Req. A1)*

CCS will raise student achievement in New Orleans by operating open enrollment, public charter schools that prepare ED students for high school, college, and beyond. CCS' unwavering faith in students' potential, as well as commitment to developing effective and inspiring educators builds the fundamental basis for the network instructional model. The CCS core program includes educational elements that will dramatically raise student achievement for ED students, create a culture of respect and joy, and maximize the efforts of school-based leadership. These elements are grounded in research-based practices in urban, high-performing public schools whose students are achieving at the highest levels, and are the way CCS will meet its academic objectives.

- High Expectations for Academics and Behavior
- Instructional Models That Have Proven Results
- A Structured and Orderly Learning Environment
- Healthy Environment, Healthy Relationships for Learning and Teaching
- Outstanding Teachers and Outstanding Support
- Common Values for Character, Leadership, and Responsibility
- Rigorous Goals that Motivate
- College Focus From the Start
- Partnership With Parents
- Enrichment With a Purpose

CCS will institute the appropriate learning program for each child in order to fulfill its own promise of high expectations, grounded in the beliefs that learning ability, special education

status, or emotional need are not excuses to deliver a sub-standard program. Most CCS students will begin the school year significantly behind academically, and determining their academic needs through diagnostic testing will allow the network to tailor the academic program for each child. CCS is committed to meeting an absolute standard and to creating measurable goals along the way that inspire and motivate students to keep working hard. These goals are incorporated into the diagnostic testing that students will take throughout the year to measure progress. CCS aims to inspire its students to believe in themselves and, through a highly effective academic program, achieve more than they have previously thought possible. For more details on whole-school and classroom-based instructional models, please see Application Requirements C3 on page 46.

*Effectively Serving SWD:* (App. Req. K) CCS, as part of its mission to provide college preparatory education to all students, will ensure a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) for all students by providing and directing special education and related services that meet all State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (SBESE) standards and Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB) standards at the school's expense. Students with disabilities (SWD) will receive robust support within the school community in order to excel and meet high academic performance standards. CCS will provide services in accordance with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations, including Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1974, Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Bulletin 1706, and other relevant regulations/legislation. Both the Tubman expansion and CCS4 will offer SWD the least restrictive environment possible within the guidelines of each student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Neither school will discriminate against students who have

or may have disabilities in student recruitment or enrollment practices, as it is CCS' mission to provide a college preparatory education to underserved and at-risk students in New Orleans. (Please see Appendix I8 for an explanation of New Orleans' blind centralized enrollment system.)

All CCS students, including those identified as disabled under Louisiana State Law and Federal IDEA law, will achieve CCS' mission of being prepared to enter into college because the network has instituted a thorough support system into the overall school design and model to support the academic needs of all students. In order to serve all students in a setting that best supports their learning, CCS offers a full continuum of services. These options include inclusion in the general education classroom (the primary goal and used whenever possible), resource rooms, and self-contained classrooms.

Overall, the Special Education program at both the Tubman expansion and CCS4 will be guided by six main principles: 1) equal access to college preparatory curriculum; 2) integration in student population; 3) preparation for independence; 4) students of all learning profiles find the program inviting; 5) strict adherence to procedure; and 6) stakeholder involvement.

*Equal access to college preparatory curriculum:* All students at Tubman and CCS4 will have access to a high-quality, rigorous, college preparatory curriculum regardless of whether the student has an identified disability or not.

*Integration in student population:* To the greatest extent possible, SWD will be integrated in the regular student population and included in every part of the school's culture and expectations.

*Preparation for independence:* The goal of the special education program at CCS is to help SWD excel at the highest levels. CCS believes that this includes developing life-long strategies

for success and achievement at the highest possible level. CCS wants to equip students with strategies for independence and, to the extent possible, exit students from special education services when they no longer need the designation.

*Inviting to students of all learning profiles:* Tubman and CCS4 will actively seek students of all learning profiles, including SWD, to be a part of its robust and rigorous academic environment. SWD are an integral part of the CCS vision.

*Strict adherence to procedure:* CCS' special education department will strictly adhere to the special education policies and procedures of each school, as these policies and procedures ensure that students and parents are given due process in decisions regarding special education evaluations and services. Please see Appendix I18 for more information.

*Stakeholder involvement:* Beyond the extent required by law, CCS' special education staff will include parents, classroom teachers, administrators and others in decisions involving a student's disability and/or accommodations.

Tubman and CCS4 will provide the following services directly, with school staff hired for this specific purpose: speech language pathology and audiology services; physical and occupational therapy; recreation, including therapeutic recreation; adapted physical education; early rehabilitation counseling; diagnostic and evaluative medical services; remedial tutoring; and student and/or parent counseling.

*Effectively Serving ELL Students:* In order to support English Language Learner (ELL) students, CCS will equip them with targeted instructional support necessary for their academic success. CCS will use a structured English immersion methodology to fulfill this goal, as this strategy has been shown to demonstrate the best results with English language learners. In addition, an

extended school day and school year will provide needed additional learning time for these students to work toward mastery of the English language. CCS will avoid the common pitfall of assigning ELL students to special education services simply because of their limited language proficiency. For parents whose English proficiency is also limited, the ELL Coordinator will provide translations of all school materials and make regular contact with the parent to ensure that communication is open and frequent. CCS will actively recruit staff members that are either native speakers or fluent in the prevalent non-English languages of its student population.

*Identify ELL students:* ELL students will be identified in the initial assessments administered upon enrollment and through a Home Language Survey. Students will be selected to take the assessment if they are foreign-born or do not speak English in the home. The assessment will determine a student's proficiency in the English language. Once the assessment results are collected, the Director of Curriculum and Instruction (DCI) will create an instructional plan for the student. The instructional plan will integrate scaffolding methods to address language learning and set goals for achieving proficiency. As prescribed by law, intervention will be administered that facilitates growth in English mastery, while promoting content knowledge.

*Ensure students are not tracked inappropriately:* Once ELL students are identified, the DCI, the School Leader, and the ELL Coordinator will meet with teachers of ELL students and review the results of the Language Assessment System (LAS) test. The teachers, with support from the Director of Curriculum and Instruction, will be responsible for backwards mapping the Proficiency Level Expectations (PLEs) outlined in the Louisiana English Language Development Standards (ELDS), which identify what ELL students should learn at five levels of English language proficiency in the domains of language, listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Each ELL student will have an individualized annual plan of sequenced benchmark goals based on the



student's entering level of proficiency and a rigorous plan for growth in proficiency during the school year. Once the measurable benchmark goals are identified, the School Leader will work with the general education teachers as well as external tutoring resources to plan additional instructional supports to ensure ELL students reach their goals for English proficiency. CCS will utilize the LAS Benchmark Assessments at least once every quarter, modified as necessary to ensure alignment to PLEs, in order to monitor the progress of ELL students in achieving their interim proficiency goals throughout the year.

In addition, ELL students will participate in the state's English Language Development Assessment (ELDA) and LEAP (statewide assessment) in the spring of each school year to monitor and report the effectiveness of the ELL program and supports.

*Exit criteria:* Once an ELL student demonstrates mastery of the English language, as defined by passing both the oral and written portions of the Language Assessment System, and reaches a proficiency level of five on the English Language Development Assessment (ELDA), the student will no longer be considered ELL but will be monitored by his/her teachers for the following two years. This process of monitoring will include assessment of the student's written and oral contributions to class, as well as performance on internal and state standardized assessments. Should it appear that the student is struggling due to a lack of language mastery, a meeting will be called to include parents, teachers, and the student (if appropriate) to re-visit the status of the ELL designation.

Students with limited English proficiency will participate in a full-inclusion, immersion program with pull-out support as required. After school academic mentoring will be conducted in a small student to teacher ratio, thus ensuring individualized instruction and support for growth in the target language.

*Implement strategies to ensure academic success for students:* CCS will utilize structured immersion to help ELL students achieve proficiency, an approach that is grounded in research. ELL students are taught the same academic content and skills in the same classrooms as their English-speaking peers and are held to the same high standards. However, the school supports ELL students so they can succeed in those classes. This support may include additional English tutoring sessions before or after the regular school day, supplemental instruction from teachers who speak the student's first language, home visits by staff members who speak the family's language, pairing students with other students who speak the same language, extracurricular materials in the child's native language, or other supportive services. Furthermore, all teachers receive training in modifying instruction to meet the needs of ELL learners. If it is deemed necessary to hire additional staff or make referrals, CCS will do whatever is necessary to ensure that ELL students achieve English proficiency.

The shifting demographics of New Orleans suggest that CCS will service a growing number of ELL students in the future. When CCS started Tubman in 2011 the school had less than 2% ELL students. In Spring 2017 that number was 7%, and CCS leadership expects that to climb, as the ELL population at Habans is at 10% and has also increased every year. As the need for ELL services grows, additional support will be enlisted through the recruitment of teachers with experience in ELL classrooms. Because many of the strategies CCS teachers utilize will benefit all modalities of learning, many interventions will already be in place to service this growing population. Examples of strategies that will benefit ELL students are: 1) use of images to convey concepts and/or target words; 2) scaffolded instruction that takes into account a diverse population's needs; 3) small heterogeneous group instruction that allows students to learn from

each other and capitalizes on their relative strengths; and 4) small group and one-on-one support beyond the academic class.

### **SELECTION CRITERIA C – Quality of the evaluation plan**

The goal of the GQS project is to raise student achievement in New Orleans by operating open enrollment, public charter schools that prepare students for college (see Appendix I14 for logic model). CCS has designed a rigorous independent evaluation plan that will not only assess outcomes related to its growth plan and student learning, but also how holistic and instructional elements of CCS' educational model contribute to its success and are maintained, enhanced, or even challenged as the organization grows. We anticipate adding important knowledge to the field by not only showing the success of the CCS model, but also how its specific components contribute to this success and, potentially, which elements explain variation in success across its schools. This information will assist the network as it grows and will also provide insights for other charter schools, CMOs, and public schools interested in promising practices.

The proposed evaluation will be a quasi-experimental design study that will meet What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) Evidence Standards with reservations and will be complemented by appropriate qualitative and descriptive quantitative analyses.

As part of its strategic growth planning, CCS has identified multiple performance indicators. These indicators include critical student outcomes (e.g., academic achievement, sense of belonging, and engagement) and operational processes (e.g., central office staffing and support for expansion). As CCS continues to expand, ongoing reflection on these performance indicators can support continuous improvement of network operations, school leadership, and instructional staff. The strategic growth plan and aligned performance indicators provide an important foundation from which the rigorous evaluation of CCS will be built and sustained.

This evaluation will focus on two areas: 1) CCS' ability to add seats to an existing school and its ability to take over an existing low-performing schools while maintaining fidelity to its holistic support for students and core instructional elements and 2) CCS' impact on student learning. These learning priorities align to major goals, objectives, and strategies proposed by CCS and represented in detail within its Logic Model.

### ***Evaluation Focus Area #1***

To evaluate CCS' ability to increase enrollment in existing schools as well as grow to include an additional school while maintaining fidelity to its model, the evaluation will leverage existing data collected and aligned to the CCS approach at the macro level (e.g., important organizational milestones for expansion) and micro level (e.g., critical factors for implementation with fidelity, such as instructional observations and teacher and parent surveys). These data will be complemented by primary data collection by the evaluator, as appropriate, such as interviews of teachers, administrators, parents, and students. When appropriate, case studies may be developed to describe specific innovative and effective network practices.

### ***Evaluation Focus Area #2***

To address the second focus area, benchmark data, such as the performance of CCS students compared to students enrolled in other schools within New Orleans, other comparable districts within the state (e.g. East Baton Rouge), and statewide will be reported via descriptive, longitudinal trends to provide the larger contextual framework within which CCS is operating and to represent how CCS students are performing relative to similar peers in non-CCS schools. In addition, achievement gaps by sex, ethnicity, economic status, English language proficiency, and special education status will be explored and reported to determine the extent to which CCS may have impact.

Propensity score matching (PSM) will be used to select a baseline equivalent comparison group of students required to implement a rigorous quasi-experimental evaluation. Comparison students will be identified within NOLA and East Baton Rouge via PSM based on several criteria:

- state assigned performance grade of comparison schools
- Grade levels served within comparison schools
- Student demographics
- Baseline equivalence on achievement measures

CCS students will be compared as cohorts (based on enrollment dates) with comparison students.

As this quasi-experimental design is executed, evaluators will monitor ongoing student enrollment (e.g., students that “switch” from a traditional to an CCS school, or, vice versa, “drop” from an CCS school to a traditional school), overall attrition, and sample equivalence to determine and execute appropriate adjustments (e.g., stratification or covariation), as necessary.

Both groups of students (i.e., CCS students and the comparison group) will be tracked longitudinally, particularly on state assessments in reading and math, and comparisons of student growth as a whole and by subgroups will be analyzed. Group effects will be analyzed through multilevel modeling, nesting students within schools.

The evaluators will explore the extent to which student achievement varies within the CCS network, and if so, will conduct exploratory analyses to assess whether variation in various aspects of the CCS model are related to variation in outcomes. For example, the contribution of instructional adequacy measured via the CCS teacher rubric to student outcomes may be explored using regression analysis, given the necessary statistical assumptions are met. It is anticipated that such analyses will be completed as summative reporting for the CSP grant is

generated, giving CCS schools time to implement new tactics and stabilize variation within and across schools. Careful discussion within the evaluation working group, considering extant data and implementation trends will guide which independent variables are included in the model.

### ***The Evaluation Working Group***

Bellwether Education Partners (Bellwether) has agreed to provide the evaluation for this project. Bellwether's evaluation approach includes tethering rigorous evaluation methodology to evidence-based decision-making of an evaluation working group represented by organizational leaders and its own lead evaluator(s). CCS believes this approach will simultaneously ground the rigorous evaluation and deepen the capacity of CCS leaders for evaluation in a way that will strengthen the organization as it grows.

The evaluation working group will meet in person to kick off the evaluation process and virtually in years two and three to continue planning and reflecting upon results each year of the grant.

Other virtual meetings will be scheduled as needed (typically, these include monthly check-ins).

The objectives for the evaluation working group will include:

- Ensuring the evaluation questions, design, tools, execution, and related findings speak to expansion goals and grant reporting requirements throughout the course of the grant.
- Providing context and information that may guide the evaluation process and help ground findings and recommendations.
- Optimizing participation from stakeholders during data collection.
- Boosting odds that stakeholders will consider the evaluation's implications and recommendations.
- Providing an opportunity for leaders within the organization to collaborate around solutions.

- Identifying optimal ways to disseminate findings, such as publications, website posting, conference presentations, and social media.

***Evaluation Framework:*** A preliminary evaluation framework and associated performance measures (see Appendix I19) have been developed to represent proposed evaluation questions and their alignment to CCS expansion and performance goals. The related evaluation methods, including data that will be collected and analyzed, are described. This is not an exhaustive representation of measures and data collection tactics. Rather, it capitalizes on and complements those cited throughout this proposal that are or can be tracked and measured, e.g., number of schools and students, stakeholder perceptions of school climate, and student achievement indicators. This preliminary framework represents information and processes that drive the proposed evaluation design.

***Reflecting Upon and Reporting Results:*** Data will be analyzed and reported formatively (quarterly and annually) and summatively (project end) in response to the evaluation questions posed in the evaluation framework. The evaluation working group will reflect on formative results quarterly (e.g., project milestones, implementation variables) for ongoing decision-making related to program implementation and enhancement. Annually, the group assess progress toward longer-term goals (e.g., project milestones, implementation variables, and student outcomes), review formal evaluation reports and draft publications, and refine plans for the dissemination and communication of results to the sector and public at large.

***Evaluation Firm, Team, and Qualifications:*** Bellwether is a nonprofit dedicated to helping education organizations—in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors—become more effective in their work and achieve dramatic results, especially for high-need students. With experience

conducting both short and longer term evaluations, manipulating existing data sets, designing instruments, collecting original data, and analyzing and reporting of various kinds, the Bellwether evaluation team has served a variety of clients and federal grants and is experienced in federal reporting.

Furthermore, Bellwether has deep experience in advising CMOs in their expansion processes, which allows for the combination of analytical rigor with knowledge about the specific and contextual variables of CCS' organizational and growth goals. Specifically, Bellwether currently serves as the external evaluator for three CSP-awarded CMOs, two of which are located in New Orleans. Furthermore, Bellwether has an existing data agreement with the Louisiana Department of Education through which Bellwether is able to access unidentified student-level achievement and demographic data for its current NOLA CMO CSP client evaluation purposes. Bellwether intends to leverage its current relationship and data agreement with the state for the CCS evaluation upon award. See Appendix I20 for key evaluation team members and their bios.

#### **SELECTION CRITERIA D – Quality of the management plan and personnel**

##### ***(1) Ability to sustain operation of replicated/expanded school after the grant has ended***

###### *Facilities, Governance, Oversight, and CMO Structure*

In the 2018-2019 academic year, Tubman expanded from one to two campuses to accommodate its growing student population. Because Tubman's student population exceeded the capacity of its original building, the Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB) gave CCS permission to continue to occupy a temporary location, in addition to using its original and renovated building.

Tubman's K-2 program is currently located at the temporary site. Grades 3-8 are housed in Tubman's original facility after renovation was substantially completed in July 2018. Tubman will continue to serve 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> graders at its renovated campus going forward. After the 2018-2019



academic year concludes, Tubman's K-2 grades will move out of the temporary facility. OPSB has offered a school site for the program. CCS is also exploring other possible sites with the help of TenSquare, a charter support organization that assists with facilities development. CCS will secure and renovate the future K-1-2 facility by August 2019.

For the new school (CCS4), CCS would assume operations of the failing school, which would be sited in a district facility. CCS has many years of experience in maintaining district-owned buildings in accordance with the maintenance and safety expectations laid out by the district lease and facility policies and applicable laws and regulations. CCS will create and implement a preventative maintenance plan for the facility and its systems; will ensure safety inspections are conducted and any issues are addressed; will adhere to all fire/life safety codes; will not enroll more students than are permitted by the occupancy limit; and will not perform any renovations that would violate the ADA. CCS4 will have a Director of Finance and Operations and a Facility Manager who will manage all these facility issues.

Additionally, CCS' COO has been an active member of the New Orleans Citywide Facilities Working Group for years and was very actively involved in creating the facility maintenance and safety standards and procedures that the Orleans Parish School Board has implemented. The COO will support the Tubman and CCS4 teams to ensure that the facilities are safe, well-maintained, and in compliance with all relevant laws and policies.

*CMO Governance - Board of Directors:* The job of the board of CCS is two-fold: to govern the organization to ensure the financial and academic success of its schools and to hire, manage, and evaluate the CEO of CCS, Kate Mehok. The CEO hires and manages all principals in the CCS network and will continue to manage Julie Lause, Tubman's Principal, as well as the Principal of CCS4 (TBD). As Orleans Parish School Board charter schools, Tubman and CCS4 will be

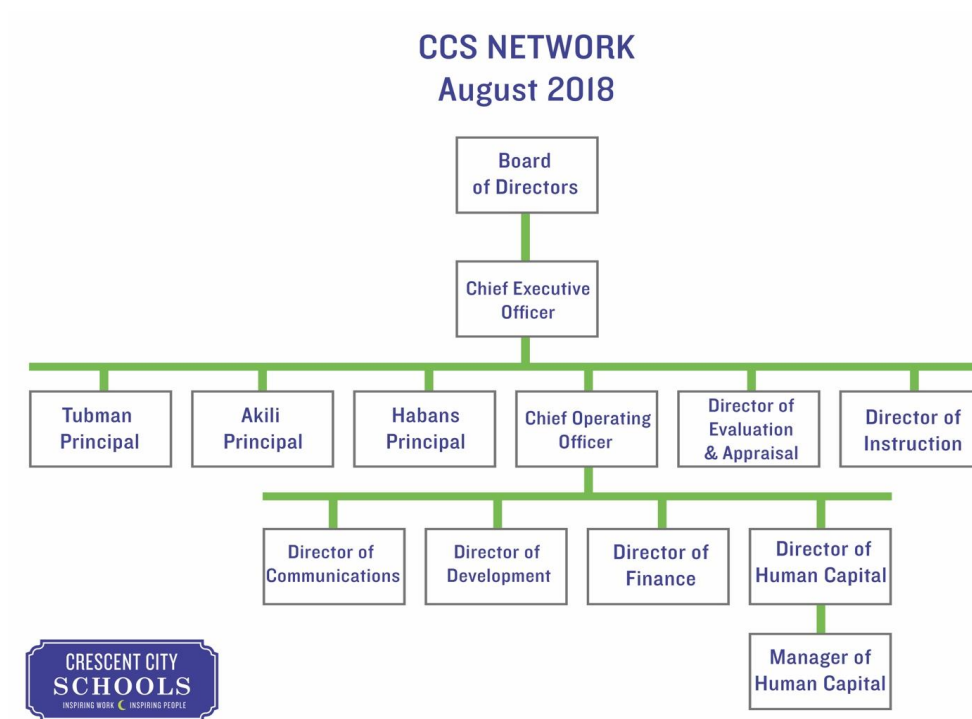
subject to the OPSB Accountability Framework (please see Appendix I4), which lists a variety of organizational and finances measures that all schools must meet yearly. Some examples include the following:

1. All Louisiana Department of Education and OPSB reports are timely and accurate
2. Cumulative fund balance must be the following: Y1: >2%, Y2 >3%; Y3 >4%; Y4 >6%  
Y5 >8%
3. Facilities must pass yearly inspections
4. All Special Education files are in compliance

The board of CCS is comprised of a diverse set of individuals with expertise in the areas of law, administration, education, finance, public health, and community relations. The bylaws of the organization dictate that the board must be composed of no fewer than five and no more than fifteen individuals who serve two-year terms renewable for a maximum of six terms. The CCS board currently has 12 members, ten of whom reside in Orleans Parish. Officers include the Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer. Those officers are elected yearly and can serve a maximum of four years in the same office. CCS would like to strengthen the board by adding members who possess experience in communications and/or public relations. OPSB policy currently requires that the CCS board has at least one parent representative, and as of August 2018, CCS has two parent representatives on its board.

*Enhancements to CMO and School-based staff to Support CCS Expansion:* Historically, CCS has relied on a lean CMO central team that provides consolidated services to the schools in the areas of financial oversight, staff recruiting, fundraising, development, and school leader management. Because CCS believes that the best way to raise student achievement is to ensure that resources and decision-making remain close to students and families, important academic and school

culture roles are housed inside its schools. However, as CCS looks to expand Tubman and add a fourth school to its network (CCS4), some key adjustments to the CMO team will be necessary in order to ensure that the expansion process is done effectively and that CCS schools continue to receive the supports and resources they require in real-time. The current organizational chart is as follows:



CMO staff to be funded with CSP support (see budget narrative, also included as Appendix I16)

include a Director of Instruction, Manager of Human Capital, and Chief Academic Officer.

School staff to be funded with CSP support include: Tubman Principal, CCS4 Principal, three Directors of Curriculum and Instruction for different grade levels at CCS4, and a CCS4 Director of Finance and Operations. In 2019-2020, Tubman will add the following positions to its existing staff – Instructional Leadership: English, Math, Science, Social Studies. In 2020-2021, CCS4 will open with the following staff – School Leadership: Principal, Director of Curriculum and

Instruction, Director of Finance and Operations, Director of Intervention; Instructional Leadership: English, Math, Science, Social Studies, Reading/ELA Interventionist, Behavioral Interventionist, Paraprofessional, Special Educators, and a full-time Nurse.

*Human Resources:* All prospective faculty will go through a rigorous hiring process to ensure that CCS is selecting the very best staff for students. Qualities to look for in potential candidates for Tubman and CCS4 include experience with dramatically raising student achievement levels in urban classrooms, and academic achievement in candidates' own school background. For CCS4 prospective staff members, the network will look for a willingness to devote extra time and energy to creating a school from the ground up. In addition, CCS seeks faculty that embody its values and demonstrate a love of teaching, learning, and the ability to transform the lives of children. While teachers at Louisiana charter schools are not required by law to be certified (except PreK) and no longer are required to be classified as "highly-qualified," CCS continues to seek certified teachers as certification demonstrates a level of commitment to the profession.

*Staff Recruitment and Hiring:* The recruitment and screening process for new candidates begins at the CMO level, led by the Director of Human Capital and supported by the Manager of Human Capital. The number of applicants to CCS has increased in the previous two academic years, with over 4,000 applicants – at a time in which the city is facing teacher shortages.

After a candidate applies and is screened, qualified candidates are invited to an online interview program, where they record themselves answering several questions. CMO central office staff screens that video and then shares qualified candidates with school leaders, who then continue the hiring process at the school level (including an in-person interview) and make the final decision to offer a candidate a position. All employees of CCS will undergo a rigorous background check as part of the full hiring process.

*Staff diversity:* CCS has the systems in place to attract and recruit a diverse set of staff into the organization. CCS also seeks staff who are from the New Orleans region, as it is important that educators be grounded in the communities in which they serve. The current demographics of the 288-person network are: 53% of all staff are Black, 42% White, 2% Hispanic, and 3% Multiracial.

*Professional Development:* Developing leaders within the organization and providing opportunities for growth are key to higher staff retention. One of the goals of the professional development program at all CCS schools is to provide career options within the organization for staff members, so that most vacancies can be filled from within the organization. Because CCS values professional development and feedback to teachers, the CCS model has two positions in each school solely dedicated to observing teachers and giving them feedback during the school year. The Directors of Curriculum and Instruction (DCIs) will support teachers in unit and lesson planning, observe them daily in their classrooms, and be a resource for teachers for all instructional needs.

The Leadership Team at Tubman and at CCS4 will participate in one week of professional development with the school leader and then the rest of the staff will join for an additional three weeks of professional development. For CCS4 staff, the first week with the entire staff will be devoted to an overview of the mission and values, getting to know one another, and familiarizing themselves with the CCS approach to the work. The second week will be devoted to curriculum planning, and the third and last week will focus on routines and procedures, classroom set-up, and getting the building ready for students.

*Continuous Use of Data to Evaluate Teacher and School Leader Effectiveness and Promote Student Academic Growth*

*Daily Use of Data:* Daily use of data is one of the Core Program Elements utilized throughout the CCS network. Schools in the CCS network utilize a number of sources to monitor individual student performance, including grades, standardized test scores, attendance data, and discipline data. CCS also uses Measures of Academic Performance (MAP) assessments for ELA and math as well as network-created interim assessments for grades 3-8<sup>th</sup> science and social studies and Louisiana Department of Education Created Interims for math and ELA in grades 3-8. These metrics are the basis for data-driven instruction (see whole school instructional model in App. Requirement C3, page 46) along with literacy data that is gathered from quarterly STEP and Fountas and Pinnell assessments. School leadership makes sure that there are adequate structures and time during which staff can analyze and learn from student data, as the interim assessments and quarterly STEP and Fountas and Pinnell assessments are the same tools used to identify students in need of remediation and intervention. Each school designates three days each school year as “Data Days,” where staff analyzes student data in order to identify learning gaps and create teaching strategies to address them.

*Rigorous evaluation of teachers and school leaders:* Schools in the CCS network utilize a robust system of teacher evaluation, creating and holding staff accountable to goals around student achievement levels, and instructional practice. At each school, the Directors of Curriculum and Instruction (DCIs) are the primary sources for teacher coaching, feedback, and evaluation. CCS uses the Whetstone observational tool to support teacher coaching. At throughout the year, coaches assess teachers using the Whetstone rubric and classroom observation, then hold biweekly meetings to debrief observations with teachers and to co-generate action steps. All data is recorded within Whetstone so teachers and coaches can access it at any time and track progress. Teachers are evaluated mid-year and at year’s end on a scale of 0-4 in terms of

instructional performance (as measured against a rubric that is aligned with the objectives of the state) as well as progress made toward student achievement scores. (Please see Appendix I21 for details.)

Teachers meet every other week for individualized support and coaching throughout the school year, and in-depth meetings are held with teachers individually three times a year. This system of evaluation is used to guide the content of ongoing professional development and inform personnel decisions. The CEO, Kate Mehok, is responsible for the development of the principals, with whom she meets individually on a weekly basis. Each fall, the CEO gathers feedback from the principals' direct reports and uses that feedback as well as progress to goals set the prior year to provide a written evaluation of the strengths and areas of growth for the principal. Then together the CEO and the principal of each school develop a Personal Professional Development Plan (PPDP) for that school year. The PPDP includes site visits to high-performing charter and district schools, both in New Orleans and outside the region, observations of summer professional development for turnaround schools, school visits during the start-up weeks to observe culture setting, readings and discussions of those readings, and professional seminars that include topics such as curriculum development, teacher coaching, decision-making, finance, and operational management.

### ***Financial Model and Oversight***

CCS designs each of the schools in its network to be sustainable on public dollars and the majority of CCS' funding comes from government sources. In 2017, more than 96% of the organization's revenue came from state and federal sources. Approximately 93% of all expenses go towards program service expenses. One major assumption CCS has is that the citywide per pupil funding structure, determined by the Orleans Parish School Board and the Recovery School

District in 2016, will continue to take into account individual student needs. General education students are now funded at approximately \$8,000 per year while students with the most severe special education needs are funded at approximately \$30,000 per year. Additionally, the state Department of Education operates a High Cost Services competitive grant, and the city operates a Citywide Exceptional Needs Fund. Both of these funding pools provide additional resources to schools, like those in the CCS network, that serve students with extensive special education needs.

CCS also assumes that, in addition to local, state, and federal sources, an additional \$100 per student will be generated from private and corporate dollars. CCS identifies funding prospects beyond local, state, and federal sources by working with individuals, corporations, and foundations to secure private philanthropic dollars. The organization's development work is led by CEO Kate Mehok and Director of Development, Nicole Escarra. Mehok and Escarra work with individuals, foundations, corporations, and government entities to provide CCS with additional revenue for its schools and students. In 2015, CCS raised ~\$642,000; in 2016, CCS raised ~\$564,000; and in 2017, CCS raised ~\$616,000. Over the years, CCS has received funding from national foundations, such as the Walton Family Foundation and The Louis Calder Foundation, as well as from local funders such as Pro Bono Public Foundation, Booth-Bricker Fund, and New Schools for New Orleans. Philanthropic dollars are also used to fund innovative programs (such as personalized learning), enrichment opportunities (culinary clubs, musical instruments, educational field trips), and one-time capital expenses (such as playgrounds).

CSP funds would support expansion costs at Tubman and start-up costs at CCS4. Funds would go towards personnel, benefits, supplies (curriculum, computers), professional development, external evaluation of programming, and renovation costs of new PreK-2 location for Tubman students.



Please see the budget narrative (also in Appendix I16) for a more complete discussion of these items. After the Tubman expansion period and the start-up of CCS4, both schools will be self-sustaining on recurring public dollars.

### **Financial Management and Oversight**

The Board of Directors of CCS understands that one of its primary functions is oversight of the organization's finances. The board has selected a Finance Committee made up of professionals with deep finance and accounting experience to lead in fulfilling this obligation. The Finance Committee meets monthly with the Chief Operating Officer and looks at detailed financial reports that include for each school and the CMO: balance sheet, statement of activities, budget-to-actual comparisons, accounts payable and accounts receivable details, and updated financial forecasts. The Board Treasurer then reports highlighted and summarized information to the full board at its monthly board meetings.

The Chief Operating Officer (COO) begins working with each school's principal and Director of Finance & Operations (DFO) in January to create the next year's budget. The COO prepares a schedule of expected revenues and certain fixed costs (insurance, authorizer fees, etc.). The principal and DFO then work together to develop the rest of the budget (staffing plan, facilities, transportation, etc.). A first draft of the budget is shared with the Finance Committee at its March meeting. Feedback is directed through the COO back to the Principal and DFO, who incorporate it into the next draft that is shared with the Finance Committee in May. This draft is available to the public for inspection and comment and shared at a public hearing before it is voted on by the full Board of Directors in June. The COO also meets monthly with each school's Principal and DFO. At this meeting, the COO, Principal, and DFO go through the detailed board reports (described in the previous paragraph) and also look at more specific measures of controllable

costs and revenues (food service, overtime, utilities, supply purchases, etc.). At these meetings, the COO, Principal, and DFO work to ensure they are on track to meet their financial goals or develop plans to get back on track if necessary. The COO meets weekly with the CEO to discuss all operations and finances in the CCS network.

The board approves the organization's Finance Policies & Procedures Manual (please see Appendix I9) and is heavily involved in the budgeting and annual audit process. The board contracts with an outside, independent firm to perform its legally-required annual audit of financial and administrative operations of the school. The Finance Committee of the board conducts an RFP process to select an auditing firm at least once every three years and brings its recommendation to the full Board of Directors who ultimately selects the firm. The firm reports to the Finance Committee, who brings the report to the full board.

***(D2) Adequacy of mgmt. plan to achieve objectives on time and within budget***

The CCS CMO team, Board Chair, and school staff members will work together to ensure that the expansion of Tubman and the creation of CCS4 achieves the objectives described in the CSP project on time and within budget. The two tables in Appendix I10 show the key activities, milestones, responsibilities, and timelines for necessary for the *Growing Quality Schools* (GQS) project.

***(D3) Qualifications of key project personnel***

The Project Director for the GQS project will be Kate Mehok, CEO and Co Founder of CSS. Kate has over 20 years of experience in education serving the needs of high-risk students in public schools. As CEO, Kate brings leadership, vision, and a commitment to raising student achievement in New Orleans public schools. Kate received a bachelor's degree in political

science from Haverford College and an EdM in Educational Leadership from Columbia University Teacher's College. She began her teaching career as a corps member in Teach for America, teaching math and science to 7th and 8th graders in Baltimore. Kate moved to New Orleans to serve as the Dean of Faculty for the Summerbridge program at Isidore Newman School, where she recruited, trained, and supported high school and college students from the New Orleans public schools. With school leadership in mind, Kate returned to the Northeast to attend graduate school at Columbia University Teacher's College, where she spent two years examining the factors that go in to creating great schools. After receiving both her Principal's and Superintendent's Licenses, Kate became the founding Assistant Principal for curriculum and instruction at KIPP STAR College Prep Charter School in Harlem in 2003. During Kate's five-year tenure at KIPP STAR, the school was one of the highest performing schools in Harlem. In 2007, Kate received the Kinder Excellence in Teaching Award, given yearly to the top educators in the KIPP Network. Founding and leading a school for five years gave Kate the incredible experience of growing a school to full capacity. After her return to New Orleans in 2008, Kate helped launch and support ten charter schools by providing direct support to new school leaders at New Schools for New Orleans. In 2010, she co-founded CCS and has served as the CEO since then.

Please see Appendix I17 for additional key personnel.

## **APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS**

*(A1) How educational needs of students, including SWD and ELL students, will be met*

Please see Selection Criteria B2 beginning on page 13 for details.

***(A2) Transportation plans***

Tubman and CCS4, just like the other schools in the CCS network, will provide free transportation to all students residing in Orleans Parish who live more than one mile from the school, and to all students with disabilities requiring specialized transportation as specified in an IEP. CCS has worked with several outside vendors who provide this transportation in approved vehicles in accordance with state requirements outlined in BESE Bulletin 119 and intends to continue to provide such transportation through contracting with a vendor.

***(B1) Student assessment results for all students and for each subgroup, for each school in network***

Please see Appendix I11 (also in mandatory Appendix G).

***(B2) Attendance and student retention rates for most recently completed school year, for each school in network***

Please see Appendix I12.

***(B3) Information regarding significant compliance or management issues encountered***

CCS has not had any significant issues regarding compliance or management issues at any schools in the network. For more on CCS' compliance and management systems, please see Selection Criteria A3 on page 9.

***(C1) How program will enable all students to meet challenging state standards***

Louisiana Student Standards guide the curriculum at CCS schools and help teachers determine what to teach so that students master the expectations for each grade level. It is a priority for all

teachers in CCS' PreK-8 classrooms to align their teaching to state standards, so that teachers know what material students have learned and mastered in previous grades, know what material they are responsible for getting students to master in the current grade, and know what new academic content students will face in upcoming grades. This united focus on standards allows CCS to provide a comprehensive approach to K-8 education.

CCS teachers use a standards-based, aligned curriculum, which is formed by breaking the state standards down into units of study and using the LEAP assessment guides to determine the areas of greatest priority for each subject and grade. All schools in the CCS network use "Tier 1" curriculum—instructional materials that have been assessed by the state and deemed highly effective in teaching students key state standards—to ensure each child has access to quality instruction. (For more context on Louisiana's curricular assessment tool and CCS' specific curricula, please see Appendix I13.) Teaching with the state standards ensures that students are prepared for state assessments with the level of rigor needed to apply their knowledge.

Additionally, teachers will familiarize themselves with the format and type of test questions and use these same types of questions on their own weekly classroom assessments. CCS uses a common schedule of assessed standards to allow for collaboration among teachers.

Because the curriculum is aligned to state standards, all CCS schools use the LEAP360 interim assessment system developed by the Louisiana Department of Education. Schools take two interims and a practice test which allows the network to track student mastery toward state standards and also generate comparison data that gives a sense of how CCS schools are progressing compared to the city and the state. The alignment as a network of schools encourages collaboration between teachers. If something is working well in one classroom,

teachers have a chance to discuss teaching methods and share ideas with one another across schools.

CCS will hold teachers accountable for curriculum planning, instruction, and assessment that is aligned to the Louisiana Student Standards and designed to meaningfully engage students in the learning process. By ensuring a focus on aligned, standards-based curriculum and effective pedagogy, CCS will ensure mastery of state standards. Three weeks of professional development for staff before the start of school will include workshops on curriculum planning and the use of research-based strategies, in which teachers will create long-term plans using the curriculum. Additionally, CCS will administer two school-wide assessments and a practice test before state testing to ensure teacher and student accountability and provide students with specific feedback on their progress.

***(C2) Grade levels to be served***

Both the Tubman expansion and CCS4 (new school) will serve preK-8<sup>th</sup> grade students. Grant funds will support K-8 students at both sites.

***(C3) Instructional practices that will be used***

Each school in the CCS network, including the Tubman expansion and new school replication at CCS4, will implement the educational programming described below.

Instructional methods are all based on well-established best practices in high-performing schools across the country and CCS staff's own experiences. These include whole-school instructional methods adopted for use as an entire school, as well as classroom best practices that will be used by all teaching staff.

Whole-school Instructional Methods	Classroom Instructional Methods
Standards-based, aligned curriculum	Instructional consistency
Focus on planning	Lesson cycle with guided and independent practice
Data-driven instruction	Spiraling every day
Explicitly teach habits of mind	Daily use of data
Tier-based grouping and instructional organization	Purposeful homework
Multi-layered system of intervention	

*Whole-school instructional methods:* These instructional methods will be implemented at the school level, with responsibility for execution residing with school leadership.

*Standards-based, aligned curriculum:* please see Application Requirements C1, above.

*Focus on Planning:* Strong planning is the catalyst to great lesson implementation. Teachers at CCS are trained on how to use the curriculum to support their lesson and unit planning process to maximize their efforts in the classroom. At the beginning of the year, teachers plan their yearly units to ensure overall coverage of the standards. Long-term planning is completed before the school year begins and done horizontally and vertically to ensure instruction is aligned over the course of a student’s time at the school. All teachers will lesson plan with the support of school leadership and build assessment of skills taught into their school year.

The Directors of Curriculum and Instruction (DCIs) (one for grades K-4 and one for grades 5-8) will be responsible for training and supporting staff on using the curriculum, lesson, and unit plan format for at each school. In addition, the DCIs will read and give feedback on all lesson plans, ensuring that high-quality lessons are in place before students enter the building. For beginning teachers, CCS will expect each part of the day to be scripted out entirely. This practice is used to develop teachers' awareness of each item that goes into a lesson, including giving directions, managing transitions, and collecting the exit ticket. Too often, poor planning leads to chaos in the classroom when materials are missing or students aren't given proper directions. Scripting each item out, though time consuming, will help the newest teachers build their delivery skills. DCIs will also regularly observe and meet with teachers to coach on instructional methods.

In addition, teachers have ample planning time built into the school day to ensure that the planning process is prioritized and supported by the school leadership. Several different types of meetings must take place, including: department (subject area) meetings; team (grade level) meetings; division (K-4 or 5-8) meetings; student support or school building level committee meetings; whole school meetings; parent meetings; individual coaching meetings with the DCI; individual meetings with the school leader; and planning meetings for events, trips, or assemblies.

*Data-Driven Instruction:* CCS teachers are committed to the constant pursuit of information about student learning. Teachers in the CCS network use assessments to inform their planning and teaching. Before the school year begins, all students are assessed for their reading level using Fountas and Pinnell or STEP assessments and students are assessed in math using iReady. All students in K-2nd grade take MAP, a norm-referenced test that will allow CCS to track students'



progress over time and in comparison to same-grade peers across the country. Data from these assessments guides placement of students in intervention groups and allows CCS to tailor each child's education program to their specific needs.

Additionally, teachers will use a gradebook that is organized around state standards. Each portion of a student's test, for example, will be graded and entered into the gradebook separately and by standard. This way, teachers can see quickly who has mastered which standard and which students need additional work in which areas. This also eliminates confusion for parents when the grade in the class is linked more closely to mastery of skills. At each school, student performance on assessments and classroom work is recorded in each student's academic grade. This also allows clear communication to families about student performance.

Teachers will plan their curriculum for the year by beginning with the end in mind. Because the LEAP will be the final assessment of skills mastered, teachers will study the test to determine which skills and knowledge are assessed most frequently and what kind of rigor is necessary to master the standards tested. Rather than assisting teachers to "teach to the test," this practice enables teachers to prepare students appropriately so that at the end of the year the LEAP actually assesses the standards and skills rather than students' familiarity with the test format and question stems.

Assessment will be a regular part of each classroom teacher's planning each week. When teachers turn in their lesson plans to the Director of Curriculum and Instruction, they will be required to have planned their assessments for the week. Teachers will use assessments to determine their own instructional progress as well as the progress of their students. Using anecdotal evidence, exit quizzes, skill quizzes, and unit tests in their classrooms, teachers will determine whether students are meeting achievement goals for the subject area.

When formative assessments are used systematically, educators can determine the learning needs of their students on a daily basis. Formative assessments also help inform teachers of the effectiveness of their teaching. Interim assessments help determine student progress on mastery of standards and inform teachers in their future planning.

Results from interim assessments will be transformed into data to use in teacher conversations following each administration of the assessment. A full data day following the assessments is built into the school calendar so teachers have time to analyze the data, reflect on their teaching practice, and make a plan for re-teaching standards not mastered. This process is designed to help teachers tailor their academic assessments to the LEAP assessments so that, in the spring, the interim assessments enable educators to make instruction more relevant during the year.

Teachers will be held accountable for producing results inside their classroom. Students will need to make progress towards Basic or Mastery-level achievement on the LEAP, and teachers will reflect on this progress quarterly. By the time the students take the LEAP, teachers should be able to predict their scores because they are so familiar with their students' progress.

Another benefit is that regular LEAP-like assessments improve teaching: data on student performance can impact lesson design as well as help teachers understand what they have taught well and what they need to re-teach. A re-teaching week is built into the schedule after each data day, allowing teachers the chance to plan for a review of standards not mastered. This cycle of teach, assess, and re-teach forms the basis of the CCS instructional program and allows teachers to fine-tune their teaching.

*Tiered Grouping and Instructional Organization:* In a traditional setting, tiered groupings are used to deliver interventions to students who are falling behind. CCS will be using a tiered approach at the Tubman expansion and CCS4. However, leadership knows that the majority of

students at both sites will qualify for Tier II, meaning that they are up to two years behind in grade level. CCS' academic program is designed to meet the needs of a majority-Tier II-school, with classroom instruction and interventions delivered to the majority of students.

*Multi-layered system of intervention:* Students with needs that extend beyond the standard curriculum will receive intervention that is tailored to their needs. Small group instruction, pull-out or push-in services, and ongoing assessment of needs will be conducted. Students who do not demonstrate improvement with intervention systems will be referred for evaluation for special education services. However, CCS' focus is on early intervention to increase student achievement and regular assessment to determine student needs so to limit the number of student referrals.

*Classroom Instructional Methods:* These instructional methods are implemented in the classroom, and responsibility for executing them resides with each teacher. The Directors of Curriculum and Instruction will continually work with teachers to ensure that these are implemented effectively.

*Instructional Consistency:* Tubman and CCS4 will use instructional consistency to reinforce the team approach to instruction. Each teacher will use the same lesson plan, unit plan, and assessment format, and each grade-level team of teachers will use similar procedures, language, and curriculum templates. In the middle grades where students are rotating between classes, the use of common procedures and language reduces the time it takes students to adapt to each classroom and supports teachers in implementing their curriculum. Among the items that teachers will use in common are: board configuration (including Do Now, Homework, Lesson Objective), transition procedures, grading procedures, songs/chants/rituals, lesson plan template, and assessment templates and procedures.

*Lesson Cycle:* At Tubman and CCS4, all teachers will use the lesson cycle that includes guided and independent practice. While specific curriculum may suggest a specific lesson cycle, all lesson cycles are designed to give students a chance to absorb information, practice the skill with the guidance of the teacher, and then practice the skill alone. CCS requires that teachers thoughtfully plan daily guided and independent practice to maximize student learning.

*Spiraling Every Day:* All students need constant review of standards and skills taught previously. In every class, students will spiral through previously mastered standards and skills as a part of their daily practice. It is the teacher's responsibility to determine which skills to spiral, though a priority will be placed on those standards and skills that students previously showed difficulty with or are "power standards," that relate to a variety of other necessary skills. At the start of each subject, a "Do Now" will often be used for the purposes of spiraling. Teachers can also build spiraling into the lesson when a new skill is related to a previously taught skill. Homework can also contain spiraling to keep students practicing mastered skills.

*Daily Use of Data:* Though a significant amount of data will be generated by school-wide assessments, each teacher will use data in their classroom to improve teaching and check for student understanding. Exit tickets will be a common practice, giving teachers immediate data on which students mastered which skills in the class that day. Teachers will enter exit ticket data in a common spreadsheet, which will be reviewed by the Directors of Curriculum and Instruction. In addition, teachers will be trained on checking for understanding during the class period. This practice immediately increases the instructional quality because the teacher does not have to wait until the end of the class to make course corrections or tweak instruction. The teacher should be constantly checking for whole class understanding during their lesson and should be circulating during independent practice to ensure that each student is practicing the skill correctly.

*Purposeful Homework:* All teachers at Tubman and CCS4 will be trained on using homework to reinforce skills and standards learned in their classroom. Too often homework is used as busy work and time filler, and CCS believes this is a wasted opportunity to further the instruction from the classroom. In addition, CCS believes that checking and grading homework is of the utmost importance. In order to prepare students for high-performing high schools and college, students must learn that homework completion is at the core of their responsibilities. Parents, too, are involved in this effort and are required to check and sign their child's homework each night.

*Multi-age, Montessori classroom:* Drawn from the existing structure at Tubman, CCS4 will offer its K-1-2 students an innovative Montessori-inspired classroom. CCS4 will have six K-1-2 combined aged classrooms, with two teachers serving 30 students with 10 kindergarteners, 10 first graders and 10 second graders in each classroom. This K-1-2 school day provides students with two significant blocks (two hours each) of independent work time on a daily basis. Each two-hour block, known as a "Workshop Block" gives students the time and space for student-driven work and study, enabling them to engage deeply with projects and learning materials. The experiential projects and activities are designed to be visually appealing, engaging, interactive, and self-correcting (designed to allow students to determine themselves if they have correctly finished a work). Each of these projects and activities are available on shelves around the room and during student independent work time students choose the "works" (another Montessori term) that appeal to them from the shelves and bring them to their individual work area to complete. Student record all of this data in their personal notebook or on their personalized learning worksheet. The shelves contain works that are tied to standards from PreK to grade 4, which enables students to progress when they are ready/interested in the available works and

provides students with agency and choice surrounding what, when, and how they learn. Inspired by Montessori, students have their own work mats and use those mats to keep their work organized. The use of individual mats develops in students a pride of ownership and teaches them to care for their environment. Tubman piloted this program at its campus for 2016-2017 school year and saw an increase in student engagement, a decrease in Time Out Center visits, and an increase in MAP achievement.

*The Aurora Program:* The Aurora Program is a highly individualized program designed to meet the unique needs of children with documented emotional and behavioral concerns that are significantly impacting the child's ability to be successful in his/her regular school setting. CCS believes that the benefits to offering the Aurora Program are two-fold: not only does it provide the students who participate in the program with the support and services they need to succeed in the classroom (and in life), but the existence of the program also positively impacts the general student population. CCS has found that the extreme behaviors of a few students in its school buildings heavily influence the behavior of the rest of the student body, particularly when students are very young. It is very difficult to concentrate in a classroom when another child is having a tantrum in the back of the room every single day. Furthermore, CCS has found that when very young students see extreme behaviors, they often mimic those behaviors, and so one child having a severe episode can easily turn into two or three children throwing disruptive tantrums as the day progresses. Now traumatized students can attend Aurora and get the support they need so that, when they reenter the classrooms with their peers, they are better equipped to be productive members of the school community. For this reason, CCS believes that the existence of Aurora will enable a 10% increase in the percent of students attaining Mastery or above on state LEAP assessments in math and ELA.

*Behavior Management Cycle*: Since 2012, Crescent City Schools has partnered with the *Center for Transformative Teaching* (CTT) to implement the *No Nonsense Nurturer (NNN) Behavior Management Cycle (BMC)* in its classrooms. Coaches from CTT have worked with members of all three schools' leadership teams to coach them to implement NNN in their school buildings. Teachers are trained to use the following BMC strategies:

- Set expectations by giving MVP directions to students that explain what type of movement they want to see, what type of volume they want from students, and what type of participation they expect. An example of a good MVP direction is, “When I say go, I want you to silently (*volume*) take out your homework from last night (*movement*), and then look up so I know you are ready (*participation*). Go”
- Narrate positively what they are seeing in the classroom. Examples of positive narration include, “I see Jonas taking out his homework,” “Marcus is silently following directions” “Elicia has her eyes on me.” Positive Narration allows students to hear the expectation again so they know what they should be doing and allow teachers to recognize students for doing the right thing.
- Give a consequence. Teachers at all CCS schools and at Tubman give consequences when students are not meeting expectations. Teachers give consequences in a neutral tone and restate the expectations. Consequence might include, “John, that is a deduction. We are silent” or “Maria, that is a color change, we are taking out our homework.”  
  
Consequences are used to reinforce positive behavior and never to humiliate.

Implementation of the NNN model is a hallmark in the CCS model. It allows teachers to establish and maintain a strong classroom culture. Teachers know to set expectations, narrate,

and give consequences. Students know expectations will be clear and that there will be consistently delivered consequences if expectations are not met.

Tubman leaders always use professional development time during staff summer orientation PD to introduce the NNN model to teachers and giving them ample opportunity to practice it with their peers before the start of the year. Many teachers pick up the model easily and can implement it, while others struggle with this unfamiliar model for classroom management. For those teachers, Tubman instructional leaders use *Real Time Teacher Coaching (RTC)* to provide teachers with “in the moment” feedback during their classroom lessons. Coaches use walkie-talkies to communicate with teachers who wear ear buds in their ear, giving them quick directions they can follow that will positively influence the class lesson. At first coaches spend time coaching on management with teachers, giving directions such as, “Reset the class with MVP direction” or “John is not taking notes-go over and tap him on the shoulder.” Once teachers are implementing the NNN model for management, coaches move on give real time feedback on instruction. CCS anticipates using RTC for management at CCS4 with new teachers in the building for much of the first half of the 2020-2021 school year, but will then coach more on instruction as the building culture is strong in every room.

***(D) Demonstrate that applicant currently operates/manages more than one charter school***

Please see page 3 for Application Requirement D.

***(E) Information regarding compliance issues for schools that have closed or had charter revoked***

No schools operated or managed by CCS have been closed, or had their charters revoked. CCS has not experienced any problems with statutory or regulatory compliance. The network is in



good standing with both the Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB) and Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE). Please see Selection Criteria A3 on page 9 for details on operations and compliance management at CCS.

***(F) Logic model***

Please see Appendix I14.

***(G) Demonstrate how any single-sex educational program is Title IX compliant***

All classrooms within the CCS network are coeducational. CCS does offer some single sex sports across all campuses, including fall volleyball and winter basketball. CCS also offers a “Girls Empowerment” club. All single-sex extracurriculars are available to any student that would like to participate, in accordance with Title IX.

***(H) How applicant currently operates schools, and how proposed replicated/expanded charter schools will be operated***

CCS is the legal manager and operator of all its charter schools, and holds the charter for each. The network will also secure a charter for CCS4, the school the network plans to replicate via turnaround based on the successful model implemented at each current CCS school, in 2020.

For details on how CCS currently operates schools, please see Selection Criteria A3 on page 9. CCS will follow this operational plan to manage both the Tubman expansion and CCS4.

***(I) How applicant will solicit and consider input from parents and community***

CCS believes that one of the most powerful ways for families to connect with schools is through parent conferences on Report Card Day, which happens three times a year. These days are so important that CCS closes school all day and opens the building from 7am-6pm so to

accommodate working families. Prior to those days, staff call families individually to invite them and during the day the schools have competitions among grade-level teams to see who can get the most families in the building. Over the last two years, Tubman averaged 75% attendance at those meetings, with some grade levels and homerooms getting to 90%. CCS uses those meetings not only to discuss academic progress with families, but also as an opportunity for families to give feedback about the school. Feedback is solicited both through informal interviews with parents, and through a survey administered twice annually during Report Card Day.

Orleans Parish School Board requires that CMOs have at least one parent of a child in their network their board—currently CCS has two to ensure that the perspective of parents is heard at the board level. CCS rotates the locations of board meetings, so that the board meets at each school at least twice a year, to ensure that the board is more accessible to parents. The board also meets in the evening to accommodate working families. CCS is the only CMO in New Orleans that rotates board meeting locations to be more accommodating to parents—even the district board does not follow this practice.

As a turnaround operator, CCS believes it is important to honor the traditions of the school community that it turns around. For example, when CCS added Akili to the network in 2012, that school had a strong parent teacher organization (PTO). CCS nurtured the PTO and it has grown over years. CCS might be assigned to replicate its model (open CCS4) at a school that has a thriving PTO, and if so, will work to ensure it continues. CCS might be assigned a school whose PTO is either dormant and has never existed. The CCS team would then work with families to determine the best methods for ongoing communication, and explore building a PTO with parent support.

CCS also recognizes that there are times that families are frustrated with a policy or a situation, and the network works to ensure they understand the grievance policy so they can feel comfortable that their concern is addressed by the appropriate people. CCS publishes the grievance policy in our handbook every year to provide process clarity. (Policy in Appendix I15). Please see Selection Criteria B2, page 16 for additional family engagement information.

***(J) Describe lottery and enrollment procedures to be used if more students apply than can be admitted***

Please see Selection Criteria B2, page 14 for details.

***(K) Describe how applicant will ensure SWD receive appropriate public education***

Please see Selection Criteria B2, page 21 for details.

***(L) Describe how project will assist ED students to master state standards***

About 94% of students served by CCS are educationally disadvantaged, so the network has built all instructional programming with ED students in mind. Please see response to Application Requirement C1 on page 45 for explanation of plans to assist ED students in mastering state standards.

***(M) Budget narrative aligned with logic model***

Please see Appendix I16.

***(N) Most recent financial audits***

Please see Appendix H.

***(O) Policies and procedures to assist students enrolled in a charter school that closes to attend other high-quality schools***

As described in Selection Criteria B2 (page 14), Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB - city school board) is responsible for running centralized enrollment for New Orleans public schools. In addition to managing OneApp processes, OPSB's EnrollNOLA office also coordinates with families at schools cited for closure or transformation under a new operator, to ensure they have support in exploring their options and getting re-enrolled at another school. Families at closing schools are given preference in OneApp processes and all students that wish to remain at the transformed school have the option to do so. OPSB also contracts with local nonprofit Ed Navigator to provide services to families at schools sited for transition or closure. Ed Navigator works with families one-on-one to give personalized support and help them navigate everything from school choice and re-enrollment to communicating with school administrators. This partnership recently resulted in 90% of the families at a closing school site submitting their paperwork to enroll in a new school on time.

CCS does not anticipate any of its schools will close but commits to supporting students and families through any unexpected transitions by following all OPSB regulations and procedures. In the unlikely event of closure, CCS commits to communicating changes with parents as soon as relevant data is available, and supporting families through reenrollment processes by ensuring they are connected to EnrollNOLA's and Ed Navigator's services.

***(P1) Request and justification for federal statutory/regulatory waivers***

CCS does not request any federal statutory or regulatory provisions be waived to execute this project.

***(P2) Description of state or local rules applicable to public schools to be waived***

CCS does not request any state or local rules applicable to public schools be waived to execute this project. New Orleans' public school system is a network of public charter schools. CCS meets all relevant state and local rules for school operation and management.