

**InspireNOLA Charter Schools:  
Expanding Exemplary Educational Options within Louisiana**

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## Absolute Priority 1: Experience Operating or Managing High-Quality Charter Schools

### ***[Also addresses Application Requirement (n)]***

InspireNOLA Charter Schools currently operates three charter schools in New Orleans, Louisiana, serving over 2,400 students, and is authorized by Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB). Founded in 2013, the mission of InspireNOLA is to transform and inspire an educational movement. Consistently outperforming both city and state assessment proficiency averages, InspireNOLA is currently the top performing, open-admissions charter management organization (CMO) in New Orleans, as it is the only CMO to operate two A-graded schools.

InspireNOLA's foundation elementary school, Alice M. Harte Charter School, serves 790 students in Prekindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grades; it earned an A letter grade from the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) and is the second highest performing open-admissions elementary school in New Orleans. Alice Harte was also designated as a Top Gains School by the LDOE for the 2013-14 school year – one of only three schools in Orleans Parish to receive this designation. According to a study from Stanford University's Center for Research on Educational Options (CREDO), Alice Harte achieved an effect size of 0.28 in Math and 0.20 in Reading, which is statistically significant and translates to an additional 202 days of learning in Math and 144 additional days in Reading<sup>1</sup>.

InspireNOLA's foundation high school, Edna Karr High School, serves 1,100 students in 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grades; it also earned an A letter grade from the LDOE and is the highest

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<sup>1</sup> “Urban Charter School Study Report on 41 Regions, 2015.” Center for Research on Educational Outcomes, Stanford University.

<https://urbancharters.stanford.edu/download/Urban%20Charter%20School%20Study%20Report%20on%2041%20Regions.pdf>

performing open-admissions high school in New Orleans. InspireNOLA has achieved a 100% high school graduation rate for the past two years, exceeding state graduation rates by 25%. 77% of Edna Karr graduates from the Class of 2014 enrolled in college for Fall 2014, far exceeding district (72%), city (59%), and state (59%) averages.<sup>2</sup>

With high levels of community support and parent demand, InspireNOLA has already begun replication of its high-quality charter schools program by taking over Andrew H. Wilson Charter School in 2015-16, the second-lowest performing elementary school in New Orleans whose charter with its previous operator was revoked the Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education due to failing academic performance. Though state assessment results have not yet been released for the 2015-16 school year, InspireNOLA has already seen impressive academic gains at Andrew Wilson, as measured by nationally normed Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Measures of Academic Performance (MAP): the percentage of students performing at or above the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile from the beginning to the end of the year increased by 5.3% in ELA and 5.5% in Math.

With CSP funding, InspireNOLA will replicate its successful model of high-quality charter schools over the next five years to ultimately operate 8 open-admissions charter schools in Louisiana, serving approximately 5,000 students. Please see *Section A: Quality of the Eligible Applicant* and *Appendix F: Student Academic Achievement* for further evidence of academic achievement by students at all InspireNOLA schools.

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<sup>2</sup> Louisiana Department of Education, “2013-2014 College Enrollment Report.”

<http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/data-management/2013-2014-college-enrollment-report.xlsx?sfvrsn=4>

## Absolute Priority 2: Low-Income Demographic

In the 2015-16 school year, InspireNOLA served over 2,400 students at three school sites. Of the 2,400 InspireNOLA students overall, 85% are economically disadvantaged (as determined by the Community Eligibility Provision), 98% are minority, and 8% receive special education services. As shown below in *Figure 1: Student Subgroup Demographics*, InspireNOLA serves a greater percentage of low-income students than the current district of Orleans Parish, future district of East Baton Rouge Parish, and state of Louisiana. InspireNOLA Charter Schools serve a greater minority population than comparable districts and the state, and a similar special education and ELL population.

*Figure 1: Student Subgroup Demographics*

|                                    | <b>Minority</b> | <b>Economically Disadvantaged</b> | <b>Special Education</b> | <b>ELL</b> |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|------------|
| <b>InspireNOLA Overall Average</b> | <b>98%</b>      | <b>85%</b>                        | <b>7%</b>                | <b>5%</b>  |
| InspireNOLA: Alice Harte           | 98%             | 79%                               | 8%                       | 4%         |
| InspireNOLA: Edna Karr             | 99%             | 83%                               | 7%                       | 2%         |
| InspireNOLA: Andrew Wilson         | 96%             | 97%                               | 7%                       | 12%        |
| Orleans Parish                     | 79%             | 70%                               | 7%                       | 6%         |
| East Baton Rouge                   | 89%             | 81%                               | 9%                       | 6%         |
| Louisiana                          | 55%             | 69%                               | 11%                      | < 5%       |

## Competitive Preference Priority 1: School Improvement (b)

InspireNOLA is currently authorized by the Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB) for its three existing schools and received approval from the East Baton Rouge Parish School System (EBR) in May 2016 to open four charter schools in Baton Rouge over the next five years. (Please see *Appendix H: Other Attachments* for minutes of the East Baton Rouge Parish Board meeting during which the board voted for approval.) With the support of CSP funds, InspireNOLA plans

to replicate its success within operating high-quality charter schools by taking over five low-performing elementary schools in New Orleans and Baton Rouge over the next five years.

*Figure 2: Potential School Site Takeovers* below shows possible takeover sites that InspireNOLA may potentially takeover and transform into high-quality schools that produce increased academic achievement and attainment for students. All schools listed below are not currently meeting standards for charter renewal in Louisiana, as each of the schools must achieve a D letter grade or higher if it is their first renewal, or a C letter grade or higher if it is their second or later renewal. Each school listed below has also been identified as a “priority” school, meaning that they are among the lowest performing schools in Louisiana. They have been transferred to the Recovery School District (RSD) “because of consistent low performance.”<sup>3</sup>

*Figure 2: Potential School Site Takeovers*

|                                     | Location    | Year of Charter Renewal |           |         | Achieved Letter Grade (SPS) | Priority School? |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------|-----------|---------|-----------------------------|------------------|
|                                     |             | 2017                    | 2018      | 2019    |                             |                  |
| James M. Singleton                  | New Orleans | Renewal                 |           |         | D (47.4)                    | Yes              |
| Paul Habans                         | New Orleans | Extension               | Renewal   |         | F (39.8)                    | Yes              |
| Gentilly Terrace                    | New Orleans |                         | Renewal   |         | D (52.0)                    | Yes              |
| Sylvanie Williams                   | New Orleans |                         | Renewal   |         | D (52.4)                    | Yes              |
| KIPP New Orleans Leadership Academy | New Orleans |                         | Renewal   |         | D (64.5)                    | Yes              |
| Celerity Crestworth                 | Baton Rouge |                         | Extension | Renewal | F (25.6)                    | Yes              |
| Celerity Lanier                     | Baton Rouge |                         | Extension | Renewal | F (30.2)                    | Yes              |
| Celerity Dalton                     | Baton Rouge |                         | Extension | Renewal | F (35.5)                    | Yes              |
| William J. Fischer                  | New Orleans |                         |           | Renewal | F (39.6)                    | Yes              |

<sup>3</sup> “Highlights of Louisiana’s ESEA Flexibility Request.”

<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/eseaflex/highlights/la.pdf>

|                                   |             |  |  |         |          |     |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|--|--|---------|----------|-----|
| Nelson                            | New Orleans |  |  | Renewal | F (41.2) | Yes |
| ARISE Academy                     | New Orleans |  |  | Renewal | D (47.8) | Yes |
| McDonogh #32                      | New Orleans |  |  | Renewal | D (54.5) | Yes |
| Success Preparatory Academy       | New Orleans |  |  | Renewal | D (56.9) | Yes |
| Kenilworth Science and Technology | Baton Rouge |  |  | Renewal | D (50.8) | Yes |

InspireNOLA has experience with successfully taking over an elementary school in New Orleans, which has an extremely similar student population to the future site of Baton Rouge. In spring of 2015, InspireNOLA was chosen to become the new operator of a previously failing elementary school, Andrew H. Wilson Charter School, that was chartered under the Recovery School District (RSD). A group of RSD district leaders, community organizations, and current Andrew Wilson parents collectively chose InspireNOLA as the new operator of the school, starting July 2015. Though state assessment data is not yet available for the first year of operation (2015-16), InspireNOLA saw impressive gains on the NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) test, which is a nationally normed and adaptive assessment that measures proficiency in reading and math. InspireNOLA, with the support of CSP funds, plans to replicate its successful takeover strategy to provide high-quality school options to students who have been attending low-performing and failing schools in Louisiana by taking over the schools and transforming them into rigorous learning institutions.

**Competitive Preference Priority 2: Promoting Diversity**

***[Also addresses Application Requirement (j)]***

InspireNOLA Charter Schools serves all students that are matched to each respective school through New Orleans’s centralized enrollment process, OneApp. Through this process,

parents complete applications and rank schools in order of their preference. InspireNOLA schools host multiple open houses and community events to promote access and understanding of InspireNOLA schools and programming that they offer.

As shown in *Figure 1: Student Subgroup Demographics* in the “Absolute Priority 2: Low-Income Demographic,” InspireNOLA schools serve a diverse student population, as 98% of InspireNOLA students are minority, 85% are economically disadvantaged, 7% receive special education services, and 5% are English Language Learners. InspireNOLA schools serve a higher percentage of economically disadvantaged and minority students than public schools in the surrounding area of New Orleans and in proposed school location of Baton Rouge. Special education rates for OPSB and EBR are 7% and 9%, respectively, and ELL rates are 6% for both districts; these rates are comparable to those of InspireNOLA schools on average.

The ELL population in the City of New Orleans has risen significantly in the past two years, which has impacted school populations as well. Since InspireNOLA’s foundation schools (Alice M. Harte and Edna Karr) sustain high student retention rates, those two schools do not enroll a substantial number of new students except in entry grades of kindergarten and ninth grade. Therefore, the ELL percentages at InspireNOLA’s foundation schools are slightly lower than the district average. Andrew Wilson, the school that InspireNOLA began operation of in 2015-16, has a significantly higher ELL student population because of the increase of new students to the school in the past year. InspireNOLA anticipates that we will attract ELL students at this rate at future schools both in New Orleans and Baton Rouge, and welcome the diversity of student body with this increase.

InspireNOLA promotes diversity within its student population by reaching out to a diverse potential student population through student recruitment efforts by the network and

individual InspireNOLA schools, and is working to continue to increase diversity in the future. All marketing materials for InspireNOLA schools are available in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese, and translation services are available at all schools. InspireNOLA focuses recruitment efforts in neighborhoods and communities with the greatest need in order to provide an educational option to students who may not have access to high-quality schools. Additionally, InspireNOLA works to increase the number of students from higher income strata as well, partially by employing gifted teachers and providing gifted and talented services at all InspireNOLA schools.

### **Competitive Preference Priority 3: Novice Applicant**

InspireNOLA have neither applied for nor received funding as per the CSP Replication and Expansion grant. Additionally, InspireNOLA has not directly received any federal grants.

### **Invitational Priority: Rigorous Evaluation**

InspireNOLA has designed a rigorous independent evaluation plan that will not only assess outcomes related to its growth plan and student learning, but also how the four pillars of InspireNOLA's educational model contribute to its success and are maintained, enhanced, or even threatened as the organization grows. We anticipate adding important knowledge to the field by not only showing the success of the InspireNOLA approach writ large, but also how its specific components contribute to this success and, potentially, which elements are most critical to success (or most vulnerable during expansion efforts.) This information will assist the InspireNOLA organization as it grows and will also provide tactics that are generalizable to 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 descriptive and regression analyses. Please see *Section E: Quality of Evaluation Plan* for further details regarding the proposed evaluation plan and the independent evaluator.

### **A: Quality of Eligible Applicant**

***[Also addresses Application Requirement (n)]***

#### **InspireNOLA's History and Accomplishments**

Founded in 2013, InspireNOLA Charter Schools currently operates three open-admissions charter schools in Orleans Parish, serving over 2,400 students in prekindergarten through twelfth grades. InspireNOLA students are representative of the students of Orleans Parish and Louisiana as a whole: 85% are economically disadvantaged, 98% are minority, and 14% receive special education services (including gifted and talented services).

InspireNOLA was formed with two foundation schools, Alice M. Harte Charter School and Edna Karr High School. InspireNOLA's foundation schools routinely outperform other schools in the city, even outperforming selective admissions schools in some grades and subject areas. Alice Harte and Edna Karr were among the five most sought after schools during the 2014-15 school year, as measured by applications submitted through New Orleans' centralized enrollment system (OneApp). More than 3,000 applications were submitted by parents for less than 400 open seats at the two schools, thus demonstrating parent demand and community need for high performing, open-admissions schools.

InspireNOLA recognized this need, and in keeping with the organizational mission of inspiring an educational movement, took over Andrew H. Wilson Charter School in 2015. Under its previous operator, Andrew Wilson received an F letter grade and an SPS of 39.7 for the 2014-

15 school year – one tenth of a point above the lowest performing elementary school in the New Orleans – and the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education did not renew its charter. Instead, InspireNOLA was chosen by a group of district leaders, community organizations, and Wilson parents to take over operation of the school. InspireNOLA just ended its first year of operation and transformation at Andrew Wilson, but has already experienced cultural and academic successes and progress in just 10 months.

Receiving “A” letter grades in 2015 for both schools that it operated, InspireNOLA is the highest performing open-admissions charter school network in New Orleans. Two foundational aspects of InspireNOLA schools that contribute to achieving results for students are the InspireNOLA pillars and instructional model.

### ***Pillars***

InspireNOLA’s educational model is grounded in four main pillars: positive culture, rigorous academics, continuous growth, and accountability. InspireNOLA creates a strong, positive culture in its schools, inspiring and motivating students in a variety of ways that invest students in learning and success. Relatedly, InspireNOLA’s rigorous academic framework and model, which encompass both teaching and learning, is crucial to current and future success in InspireNOLA schools by ensuring that students are constantly challenged and achieving. The pillar of continuous growth is a foundation of InspireNOLA, as it is committed to continuous growth of all employees in order to develop and retain outstanding staff members through ongoing and job-embedded professional development. Finally, in order to ensure that all members of InspireNOLA schools are striving for success and achieving at the highest level, accountability is an InspireNOLA pillar that promotes responsibility and ownership of success

for all. By setting ambitious goals and expectations and by holding all stakeholders accountable to them, InspireNOLA can better ensure that it is collectively striving for excellence.

### ***Instructional Model***

All InspireNOLA schools and teachers follow a consistent instructional framework with common academic components of pacing guides, interim benchmarks, and learning goals. InspireNOLA schools hold students to a high academic bar and support them to achieve it.

Backwards planning is a critical element of effective instruction, and InspireNOLA proactively assists teachers with reverse engineering their instructional approaches by providing teachers with a pacing guide for each subject. This document includes units with aligned grade-level standards, suggested time allotments, focused essential questions, and vocabulary terms that contribute to higher-level discussions.

Aligned to the standards and units prescribed on the pacing guides, interim assessments are administered every six to eight weeks for students in 2<sup>nd</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade to provide current data regarding student achievement and progress. As Louisiana has recently moved from Common Core State Standards to the newly created Louisiana Student Standards, InspireNOLA revises and adjusts pacing guides and instructional content to address the current state standards and expectations. Assessment data is used to create rigorous achievement goals in all core content areas, both for individual students and entire grade levels. Tracking data is posted in classrooms, hallways, and common areas to reinforce our focus on academic achievement and growth. Teachers participate in data meetings during which they, along with master teachers and leaders, analyze new data at the classroom and student levels, understand emerging trends and areas of need for improvement, and create action plans to meet individual student needs moving forward.

All InspireNOLA classes follow the same instructional order and framework by utilizing the research-based gradual release model, which promotes increased student accountability as the teacher shifts the ownership of learning to students during a class period.<sup>4</sup> The standard InspireNOLA instructional framework, which was developed based on the gradual release model, includes the following components: do now, I do, we do, you do, and exit ticket.

### **1. Demonstrated Success in Significantly Increasing Student Academic Achievement and Attainment for All Students**

The mission of InspireNOLA Charter Schools is to transform and inspire an educational movement so that students are prepared to be productive, positive citizens of their city, state, and the world. All InspireNOLA schools are open admissions, meaning that they welcome all students who apply and obtain a seat via a random lottery selection, regardless of academic proficiency. InspireNOLA schools are among the highest performing public schools in the city of New Orleans, as measured by Louisiana Department of Education School Performance Scores (SPS). Alice M. Harte, InspireNOLA's foundation elementary school, achieved a 100.0 SPS in 2014-15, which is an A on Louisiana's grading scale; this score is calculated completely from student assessment scores on the state mandated end of year PARCC and LEAP assessments. Alice Harte's SPS of 100.0 ranks it as the second-highest performing open-admissions elementary school in New Orleans, compared to both OPSB and RSD schools. Edna Karr, InspireNOLA's foundation high school, achieved a 111.1 SPS in 2014-15, also an A letter grade on Louisiana's scale. High school SPS are calculated based on 4 equal parts: state assessment

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<sup>4</sup> Fisher, Douglas and Nancy Frey. Better Learning Through Structured Teaching: A Framework for the Gradual Release of Responsibility. ASDC, 2014.

proficiency, ACT scores, graduation rate, and graduation index (strength of diploma). Edna Karr’s 111.1 SPS qualifies it as the highest performing open-admissions high school in New Orleans, again including both OPSB and RSD schools. (InspireNOLA is in its first year of operation of Andrew H. Wilson school, so therefore an SPS is not yet available.) *Figure A-1: School Performance Scores* shows SPS growth for InspireNOLA schools over the past three years in comparison to SPS for Orleans Parish (InspireNOLA’s current parish) and East Baton Rouge Parish (InspireNOLA’s future parish with expansion).

*Figure A-1: School Performance Scores*

|  | 2014-15   | 2013-14   | 2012-13  |
|--|-----------|-----------|----------|
| InspireNOLA: Alice Harte Elementary School   | 100.0 (A) | 106.6 (A) | 94.2 (B) |
| InspireNOLA: Edna Karr High School           | 111.1 (A) | 96.7 (B)  | 93.6 (B) |
| InspireNOLA: Andrew Wilson Elementary School |           |           |          |
| Orleans Parish                               | 83.4 (C)  | 83.4 (C)  | n/a*     |
| East Baton Rouge                             | 78.6 (C)  | 79.6 (C)  | n/a*     |

\*District SPS and letter grades were not reported for districts in 2012-13.

In addition to state assessment data, InspireNOLA foundation schools, Alice Harte and Edna Karr, received CREDO (Stanford University’s Center for Research on Education Outcomes) data for the 2014-15 school year. Compared to other charter schools in 41 regions across the United States, InspireNOLA schools achieved statistically significant effect sizes in both reading and math, outperforming other charter schools nationally, and in 3 of 4 areas within the New Orleans region.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> “Urban Charter School Study Report on 41 Regions, 2015.” Center for Research on Educational Outcomes, Stanford University.

Figure A-2: CREDO Effect Size, 2014-15

|  | Reading     |                             | Math        |                             |
|--|-------------|-----------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------|
|  | Effect Size | Additional Days of Learning | Effect Size | Additional Days of Learning |
| InspireNOLA: Alice Harte Elementary School | 0.20        | 144                         | 0.28        | 202                         |
| InspireNOLA: Edna Karr High School         | 0.10        | 72                          | 0.14        | 101                         |
| New Orleans Region                         | 0.119       | 86                          | 0.087       | 63                          |
| Average of All 41 Regions                  | 0.055       | 40                          | 0.039       | 28                          |

Please see *Appendix F: Student Academic Achievement* for additional data that demonstrates the success of InspireNOLA students and achievement in comparison to the current district, future district, and state.

## **2. Achieving Academic Gains for All Populations of Students**

As noted, the vast majority of InspireNOLA students are economically disadvantaged, minority youth. InspireNOLA is committed to ensuring that all students, regardless of their race, socioeconomic status, English proficiency, or disability, receive a high-quality education that ultimately prepares them to be successful, productive citizens in their future. Wraparound services are an integral part of the InspireNOLA educational model, as InspireNOLA firmly believes that students cannot ultimately be successful academically unless their emotional, physical, and social needs are also met. Therefore, InspireNOLA schools employ fulltime social workers, counselors, nurses, culture deans, interventionists, and parent liaisons. Students in upper elementary and high school grades engage in advisory periods at least once a week, during which behavioral skills and coping strategies are presented and then practiced and internalized by students. Additionally, InspireNOLA schools proactively involve parents and the community into their school family, hosting multiple events, programs, and opportunities for adults to become interwoven into the makeup of the school and have a voice in their child’s education.

This holistic approach to education has resulted in all InspireNOLA students achieving at high levels and outperforming their peers at the district and state level. As shown below in *Figure A-3: Elementary State Assessment Proficiency by Subgroup*, there are no significant achievement gaps between any of the subgroups of students served by InspireNOLA. Overall, InspireNOLA subgroups were on par or above the average InspireNOLA proficiency rate. In almost 95% of cases, InspireNOLA student subgroups outperformed their peers in Louisiana overall.

*Figure A-3: Elementary State Assessment Proficiency by Subgroup*

| Year       | Subject | InspireNOLA Overall | African American | Hispanic | Students with Disabilities (IEP) | ELL   | Econ. Disadv. | State Average |
|------------|---------|---------------------|------------------|----------|----------------------------------|-------|---------------|---------------|
| 2012-13    | ELA     | 85.5%               | 85.8%            | 86.0%    | 79.7%                            | 72.2% | 84%           | 68%*          |
|            | Math    | 87.0%               | 86.7%            | 91.7%    | 79.7%                            | 72.2% | 86.7%         |               |
| 2013-14**  | ELA     | 83.2%               | 83.7%            | 86.0%    | 77.7%                            | 62.5% | 76.2%         | 68%*          |
|            | Math    | 84.5%               | 85.2%            | 91.7%    | 80.7%                            | 62.5% | 76.2%         |               |
| 2014-15*** | ELA     | 80.5%               | 80.5%            | 79.2%    | 73.5%                            | 72.8% | 78.2%         | 68.8%         |
|            | Math    | 82.5%               | 85.8%            | 73.0%    | 80.3%                            | 71.2% | 80.5%         | 60.3%         |

\*Louisiana did not report separate proficiency averages for ELA and Math in 2012-13 or 2013-14, only one combined proficiency score for both.

\*\*Louisiana migrated to Common Core State Standards in 2013-14

\*\*\*Louisiana implemented PARCC assessments

As described in *Section C: Quality of Project Design*, InspireNOLA will be monitoring student achievement as one measure of success within expansion under the CSP program, including the average 4th and 8th grade student proficiency on state ELA and math assessments, to ensure that students overall and in indicated subgroups meet or exceed 70% proficiency by the 3rd year of operation by InspireNOLA. Below are subgroup proficiencies for 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades for the past three years in both ELA and Math, demonstrating current success of subgroups in achieving this goal in almost every instance.

Figure A-4: ELA and Math State Assessment Proficiency by Subgroup

| Subgroup                         | Grade and Subject            | 2014-15* | 2013-14** | 2012-13 |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|----------|-----------|---------|
| African American                 | 4 <sup>th</sup> Grade – ELA  | 75%      | 93%       | 95%     |
|                                  | 4 <sup>th</sup> Grade – Math | 97%      | 86%       | 86%     |
|                                  | 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade – ELA  | 92%      | 81%       | 84%     |
|                                  | 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade – Math | 93%      | 92%       | 95%     |
| Hispanic                         | 4 <sup>th</sup> Grade – ELA  | 75%      | 100%      | 100%    |
|                                  | 4 <sup>th</sup> Grade – Math | 63%      | 100%      | 100%    |
|                                  | 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade – ELA  | 50%      | 81%       | 100%    |
|                                  | 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade – Math | 25%      | 100%      | 100%    |
| Students with Disabilities (IEP) | 4 <sup>th</sup> Grade – ELA  | 78%      | 90%       | 100%    |
|                                  | 4 <sup>th</sup> Grade – Math | 82%      | 80%       | 84%     |
|                                  | 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade – ELA  | 81%      | 74%       | 80%     |
|                                  | 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade – Math | 84%      | 93%       | 90%     |
| English Language Learners (ELL)  | 4 <sup>th</sup> Grade – ELA  | 67%      | 100%      | 100%    |
|                                  | 4 <sup>th</sup> Grade – Math | 80%      | 100%      | 100%    |
|                                  | 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade – ELA  | 0%       | 100%      | 100%    |
|                                  | 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade – Math | 0%       | 100%      | 100%    |
| Economically Disadvantaged       | 4 <sup>th</sup> Grade – ELA  | 74%      | 73%       | 94%     |
|                                  | 4 <sup>th</sup> Grade – Math | 77%      | 73%       | 85%     |
|                                  | 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade – ELA  | 88%      | 73%       | 84%     |
|                                  | 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade – Math | 89%      | 73%       | 96%     |

\*Louisiana implemented PARCC assessments

\*\*Louisiana migrated to Common Core State Standards in 2013-14

### **3. Exceeding Academic Results in District and State Comparisons**

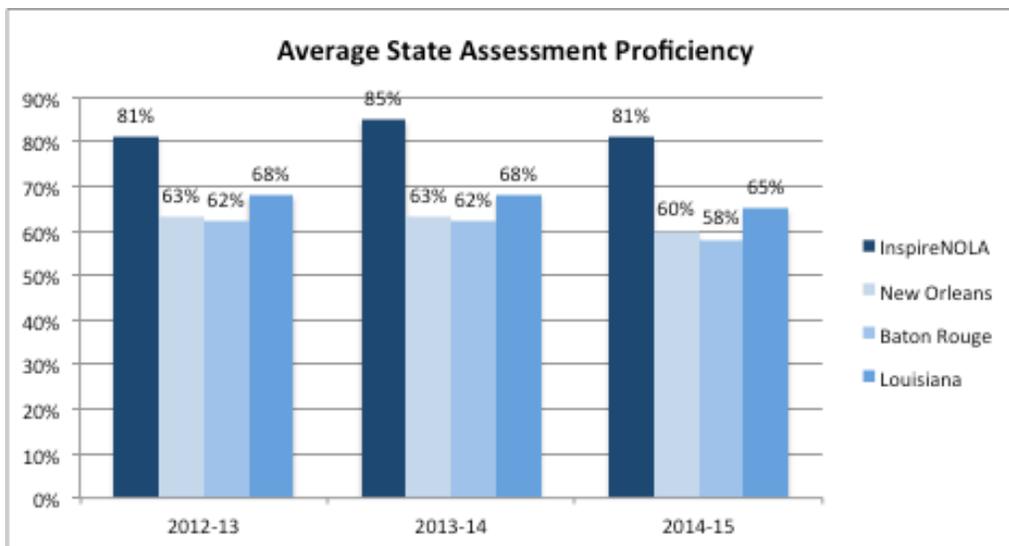
InspireNOLA students have consistently achieved results that are significantly above the average academic achievement results for other students in Louisiana and its local districts. The vast majority (85%) of InspireNOLA students are economically disadvantaged, while the state of Louisiana averages 69%. In addition, 98% of InspireNOLA’s student population is minority,

compared to the state average of 55%. InspireNOLA’s 5% ELL percentage is equivalent to that of Louisiana. Collectively, InspireNOLA serves student sub-populations that are higher than that of Louisiana overall, but still achieve academic results that are dramatically higher than overall state proficiency averages.

***State Assessments***

For the past three years, InspireNOLA students have outperformed their peers in New Orleans, Baton Rouge, and Louisiana overall on both elementary and high school end-of-course and end-of-year state assessments. Each year since 2012-13, InspireNOLA’s elementary state assessment proficiency has averaged above 80% across tested grades (3<sup>rd</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup>), more than 10% above average state proficiency and more than 15% above city proficiency. In 2014-15, the most recent school year for which data is available, 81% of students scored proficient or above on PARCC assessments in ELA and Math, far surpassing New Orleans proficiency of 60%, Baton Rouge proficiency of 58%, and state proficiency of 65%.

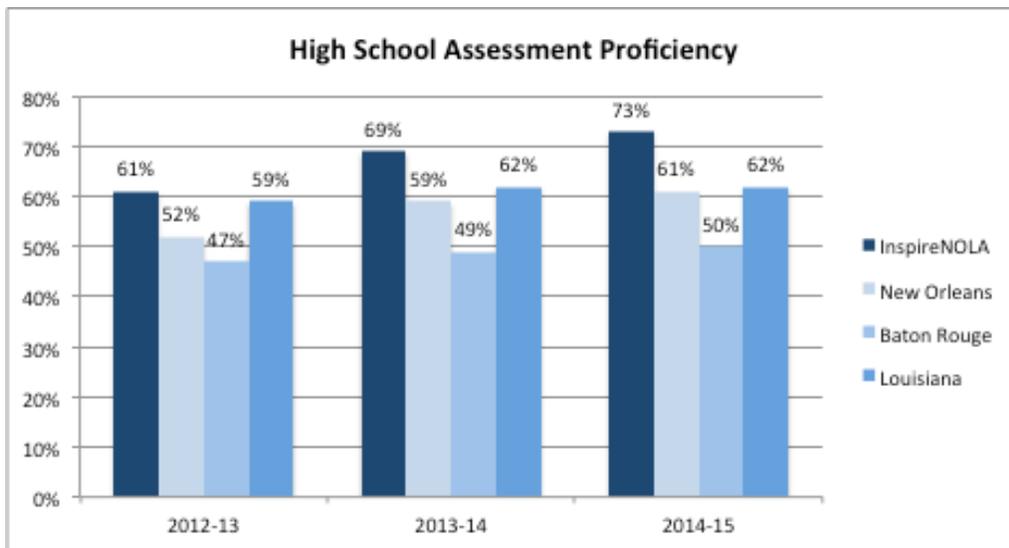
*Figure A-5: Elementary (3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>) State Assessment Proficiency*



Analysis of high school assessment proficiency shows similar achievements of InspireNOLA students when compared to current and future city locations and statewide

proficiency. Louisiana high school students take End-of-Course (EOC) tests in six subjects over the course of their secondary school tenure: Algebra I, Geometry, English II, English III, Biology, and US History. As shown in *Figure A-6: High School State EOC Assessment Proficiency*, InspireNOLA students have outperformed New Orleans, Baton Rouge, and Louisiana for the past three years, increasing proficiency averages overall at a higher rate than any of these comparable groups. In 2014-15, the most recent year for which data is available InspireNOLA high school students achieved an average proficiency rate of 73%, which is 11% greater than Louisiana proficiency of 62%.

*Figure A-6: High School State EOC Assessment Proficiency*



Furthermore, InspireNOLA students outperformed their peers in each subject area when compared to their peers statewide during the 2014-15 school year.

*Figure A-7: 2014-15 End-of-Course Assessment Proficiency*

| Subject Area | InspireNOLA | Louisiana | Difference between InspireNOLA and State |
|--------------|-------------|-----------|--|
| Algebra I    | 58%         | 54%       | 4%                                       |
| Geometry     | 77%         | 59%       | 18%                                      |
| English II   | 74%         | 72%       | 2%                                       |

|                |            |            |            |
|----------------|------------|------------|------------|
| English III    | 64%        | 62%        | 2%         |
| Biology        | 73%        | 58%        | 15%        |
| US History     | 89%        | 65%        | 24%        |
| <b>Average</b> | <b>73%</b> | <b>62%</b> | <b>11%</b> |

***Student Attendance***

InspireNOLA recognizes that student attendance is a critical component of student success and achievement. If students are not at school and in class, they miss valuable learning time, which may lead to academic struggles in their current grade and in the future. Each InspireNOLA school has a Student Support Team that consists of the head of school, dean of culture, social worker, counselor, and nurse. One facet of the team’s work is identifying and responding to chronic absenteeism. InspireNOLA schools have averaged a 95% attendance rate over the past three years, which meets or exceeds the current district, future district, and state attendance averages, as shown in *Figure A-8: Student Attendance Data*.

InspireNOLA does not have student attendance rates by subgroup, but there is no evidence to suggest that the attendance rate for any subgroup is notably higher or lower than the network average of 95%. Additionally, local districts and Louisiana do not report attendance rates by subgroups, and therefore InspireNOLA is unable to make a comparison in this manner.

*Figure A-8: Student Attendance Data*

|  | 2015-16    | 2014-15    | 2013-14    |
|--|------------|------------|------------|
| <b>InspireNOLA Overall Average</b>           | <b>95%</b> | <b>95%</b> | <b>95%</b> |
| InspireNOLA: Alice Harte Elementary School   | 97%        | 97%        | 97%        |
| InspireNOLA: Edna Karr High School           | 95%        | 94%        | 94%        |
| InspireNOLA: Andrew Wilson Elementary School | 94%        |            |            |
| Orleans Parish                               | 95%        | 95%        | 95%        |
| East Baton Rouge                             | n/a*       | 94%        | 95%        |

|           |      |     |     |
|-----------|------|-----|-----|
| Louisiana | n/a* | 94% | 95% |
|-----------|------|-----|-----|

\*Attendance data for 2015-16 is not yet available East Baton Rouge Parish or Louisiana.

### ***Student Retention***

Student retention is a priority for InspireNOLA schools, as InspireNOLA believes that consistency and stability have a positive effect on students’ future success and academic achievements. InspireNOLA’s average retention rate for the most recent school year is 96%, which demonstrates that students and parents are satisfied with InspireNOLA academics, programming, culture, and the supports that the schools offer, as parents are choosing to continue their child’s education at their InspireNOLA school. As shown in *Figure A-9: Student Retention Data*, InspireNOLA rates have risen overall and for each school over the past three years. Unfortunately, the state of Louisiana does not report overall student retention or subgroup retention, so comparison is not possible.

*Figure A-9: Student Retention Data*

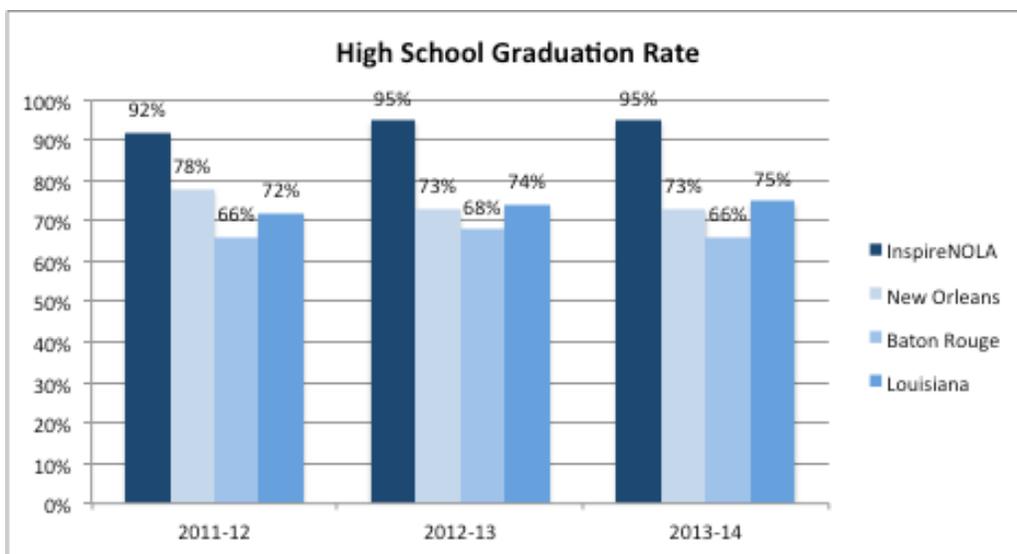
|  | 2015-16    | 2014-15    | 2013-14    |
|--|------------|------------|------------|
| <b>InspireNOLA Overall Average</b>           | <b>96%</b> | <b>92%</b> | <b>91%</b> |
| InspireNOLA: Alice Harte Elementary School   | 98%        | 95%        | 93%        |
| InspireNOLA: Edna Karr High School           | 95%        | 90%        | 89%        |
| InspireNOLA: Andrew Wilson Elementary School | 96%        |            |            |

### ***High School Graduation Rates***

The mission of InspireNOLA is to transform and inspire an educational movement, and this begins with ensuring that InspireNOLA graduates are fully prepared for post-secondary lives and careers. InspireNOLA provides comprehensive support services to students, including college and career counseling, high school advisors, and family FAFSA and college information nights. For the past three years, InspireNOLA students have achieved a graduation rate that is at

least 20% higher than the state graduation rate, as shown in *Figure A-10*. InspireNOLA does not have graduation data by subgroup, and neither the state nor district reports the data as such. However, because the vast majority of InspireNOLA students are educationally disadvantaged at a higher rate than that of Louisiana, coupled with the substantially higher graduation rate for InspireNOLA, one can deduce that InspireNOLA student subgroups have achieved higher graduation rates than such students in the state.

*Figure A-10: High School Graduation Rates*



*\*Figure B-3 Note: 2013-14 is the most recent school-level data available, as officially released by the state.*

*\*Figure B-3 Note: Louisiana does not report exact graduation rates over 95%. InspireNOLA's Edna Karr students achieved graduation rates that are indicated as ">95%."*

### ***College Attendance***

InspireNOLA not only enables students to graduate on time from high school, but also prepares them to be accepted to and attend college after graduation. InspireNOLA students are enrolling in college in the fall semester of their graduation year at rates that surpass Orleans Parish (which includes selective admissions schools), New Orleans as a whole, East Baton Rouge Parish, and the state of Louisiana. As stated in *Figure A-11: College Attendance Rates*,

77% of InspireNOLA students enrolled in college after graduating in 2014, compared to only 59% of Louisiana students on average.

*Figure A-11: College Attendance Rates*

|   | 2013-14    | 2012-13    |
|---|------------|------------|
| <b>InspireNOLA: Edna Karr High School</b> | <b>77%</b> | <b>69%</b> |
| Orleans Parish                            | 72%        | 67%        |
| New Orleans (OPSB + RSD)                  | 59%        | 55%        |
| East Baton Rouge                          | 65%        | 60%        |
| Louisiana                                 | 59%        | 58%        |

*\*College attendance data is not yet available for the 2014-15 or 2015-16 school years.*

Please note that the most recent college attendance data is only available from 2012-13 and 2013-14 school years and Louisiana does not disaggregate college attendance data into subgroup categories. Since InspireNOLA has only been in existence for three years, college persistence and college graduation data is not yet available.

## **B: Contribution in Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students**

### ***[Also addresses Application Requirement (k)]***

As described in *Section A: Quality of Applicant*, the vast majority of students that InspireNOLA serves are economically disadvantaged and minority youth. The percentage of InspireNOLA students who receive special education services or are English Language Learners is comparable or higher than that of the local district and state. Since its creation three years ago, InspireNOLA has positively impacted educationally disadvantaged students, achieved by implementing the following aspects: 1) InspireNOLA Model; 2) Commitment to Serving All Students and Subgroups; 3) Holistic Education with Wraparound Services; and 4) Engaging and Investing Families and Communities.

### ***InspireNOLA Mission***

The mission of InspireNOLA Charter Schools is to transform and inspire an educational movement. InspireNOLA is committed to ensuring that its students are fully prepared for future success in college or career, as it is preparing the future citizens of the state, nation, and world. InspireNOLA is accountable to its students, families, community, board, district, and state, and consistently measures its progress and share its successes and areas for improvement in a spirit of transparency. InspireNOLA creates a solid foundation in core content areas for its young students, building upon this foundation and increasing rigor, critical thinking, and interdisciplinary connectivity as students progress. In addition to academics, InspireNOLA is committed to meeting students' social, emotional, and physical needs so that they can become productive citizens who positively impact society in the future.

### ***Commitment to Serving All Students and Subgroups***

InspireNOLA is expanding to an additional five schools in the next five years in New Orleans and Baton Rouge, as a great need exists for additional high-quality school options that serve students who have traditionally been educationally disadvantaged within Louisiana. There are over 85,000 students attending public schools in New Orleans and Baton Rouge combined, attending a total of 162 schools. Of the 73 schools in New Orleans, only 11% are A-graded while 39% are D or F graded. Of the 89 schools in Baton Rouge, only 10% are A-graded while 47% are D or F graded. (Please see *Appendix F* for district and region report cards issued by the Louisiana Department of Education.)

Figure B-1: 2014-2015 Demographic Data

| District/School            | % Economically Disadvantaged | % Special Education | % ELL     |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|-----------|
| <b>InspireNOLA Average</b> | <b>86%</b>                   | <b>7%</b>           | <b>5%</b> |
| InspireNOLA: Alice Harte   | 79%                          | 8%                  | 4%        |
| InspireNOLA: Edna Karr     | 83%                          | 7%                  | 2%        |
| InspireNOLA: Andrew Wilson | 100%                         | 7%                  | 12%       |
| OPSB only                  | 67%                          | 7%                  | 7%        |
| RSD only                   | 93%                          | 13%                 | n/a       |
| New Orleans (OPSB and RSD) | 85%                          | 11%                 | n/a       |
| Baton Rouge (EBR and RSD)  | 81%                          | 9%                  | n/a       |

*\*Data on ELL percentages for the RSD, New Orleans, and Baton Rouge is not available.*

InspireNOLA students in educationally disadvantaged subgroups are outperforming New Orleans, Baton Rouge, and the state of Louisiana on multiple academic indicators, including elementary state assessments, high school end-of-course assessments, and high school graduation rate. Minority students, students who receive special education services, and economically disadvantaged students are exceeding Louisiana state and citywide proficiency rates in both New Orleans and Baton Rouge on both elementary and high school state assessments, as shown in *Figure B-2* and *Figure B-3* below. (The state of Louisiana has only published disaggregated subgroup data for minority students, special education students, and economically disadvantaged students, and only began doing so during the 2014-15 academic year. Thus, only one year of available data could be provided below.)

Figure B-2: 2014-15 Elementary Assessment Proficiency, by Subgroup

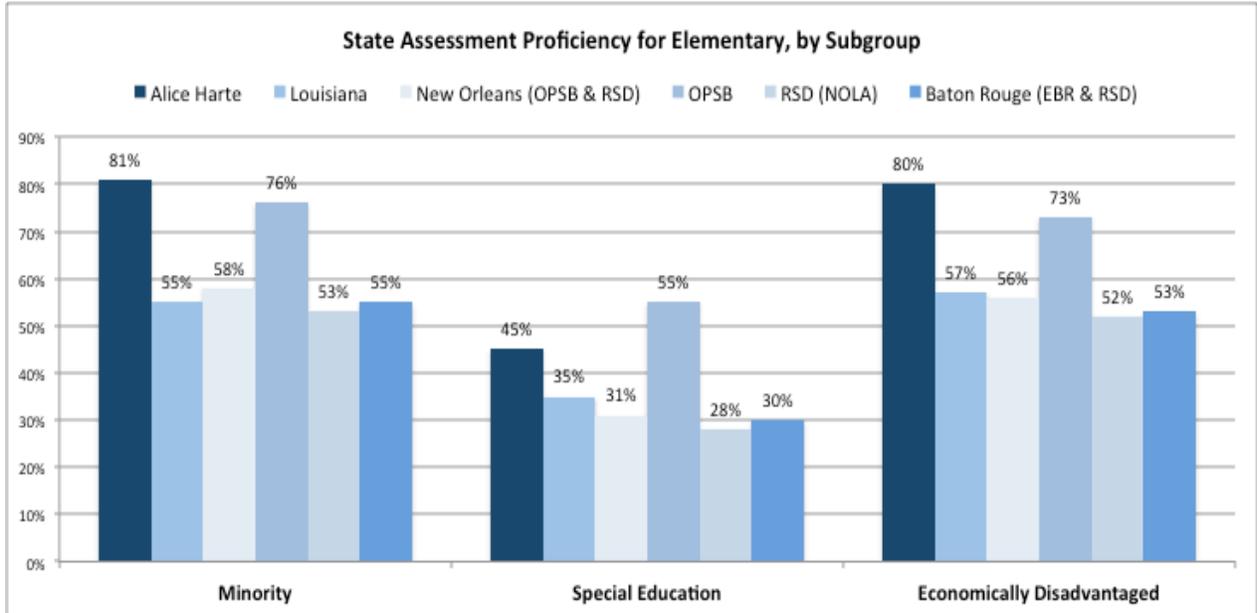
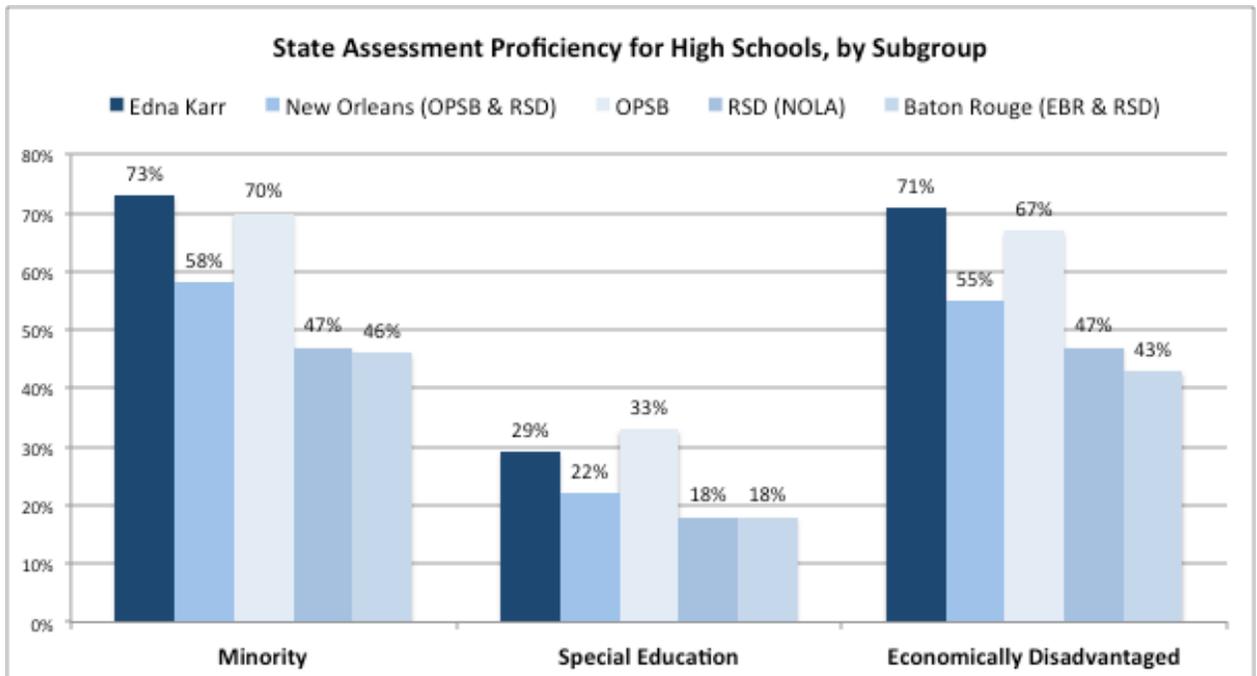


Figure B-3: 2014-15 High School Assessment Proficiency, by Subgroup

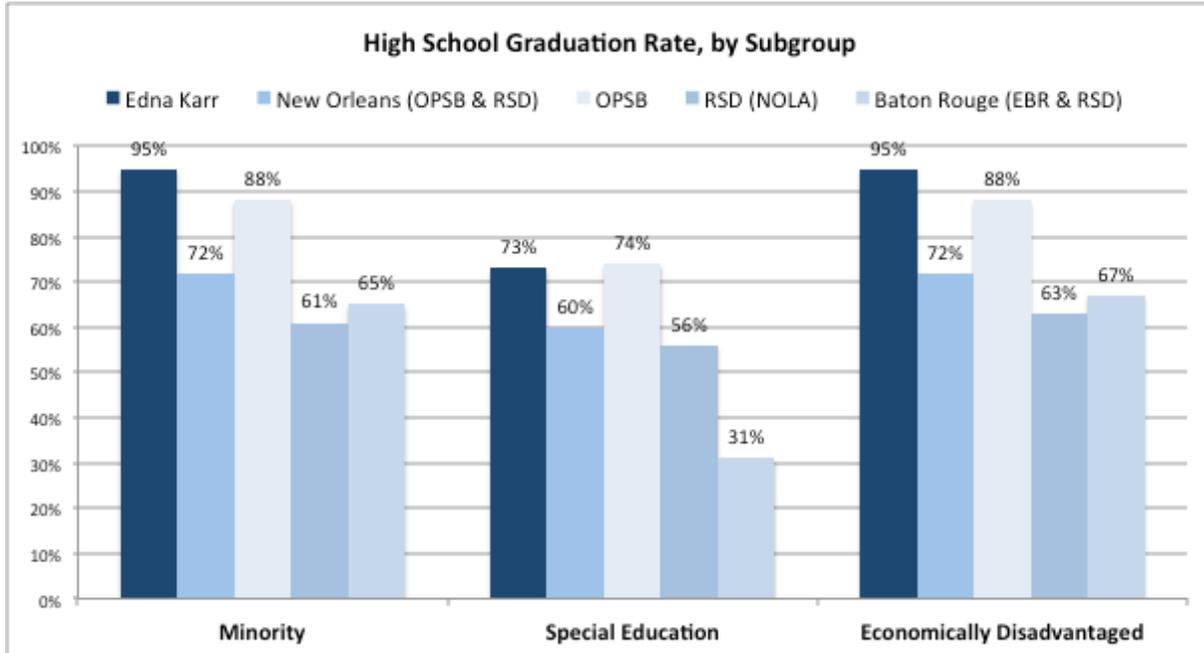


Orleans Parish (OPSB) is one of two New Orleans school districts. After Hurricane Katrina, most schools in New Orleans were chartered under the Recovery School District due to

low performance. Thus, the Orleans Parish current school portfolio includes only schools that were already high performing, have met the minimum academic requirements to return to OPSB, or are newly opened. Orleans Parish also includes selective admissions schools, which collectively make up over 27% of the entire student population of OPSB. Despite the inclusion of this large percentage of selective admissions seats, InspireNOLA is committed to student achievement and exceeding expectations for all students. InspireNOLA competes with both selective and non-selective admissions schools when compared to OPSB district averages, but still consistently achieves results that are comparable to or exceeding these averages. As shown in *Figure B-2* and *Figure B-3*, InspireNOLA minority students and economically disadvantaged students are outperforming their peers in all comparable districts, including OPSB.

Not only are InspireNOLA students, both overall and by subgroup, exceeding the academic achievements of their peers in local districts and the state, they are also achieving significantly higher graduation rates from high school. As shown in *Figure B-4* below, InspireNOLA's Edna Karr High School minority students and economically disadvantaged students both achieved a 2014 graduation rate of over 95%, surpassing all other comparative district and city averages. Special education students at InspireNOLA's high school achieved a graduation rate of 73%, which is only 1% below OPSB's average (including the rates of two selective admissions high schools) and which is more than double the 31% graduation rate for special education students in Baton Rouge.

Figure B-4: 2013-14 Elementary Assessment Proficiency, by Subgroup



\*Figure B-3 Note: 2013-14 is the most recent school-level data available, as officially released by the state.

\*Figure B-3 Note: Louisiana does not report exact graduation rates over 95%. InspireNOLA’s Edna Karr minority and economically disadvantaged students both achieved graduation rates that are indicated as “>95%.”

InspireNOLA serves a small population of students who are classified as English Language Learners (ELL), though this subgroup of students is growing. InspireNOLA schools’ ELL populations range from 2% to 12%. InspireNOLA’s network average of 5% is only slightly lower than the OPSB district average of 6%. Please see *Appendix F: Student Academic Achievement* for additional details regarding subgroup proficiency, including that of English Language Learners.

**Holistic Education with Wraparound Services**

***[Also addresses Application Requirement (d)]***

InspireNOLA supports educationally disadvantaged students in meeting and exceeding academic standards by providing comprehensive academic programming and holistic support services to ensure that the individual needs of all students are met.

All students, both struggling and advanced, receive differentiated instruction at their appropriate level each day. Students in kindergarten through second grade receive small group literacy instruction daily within an hour-long guided reading block, which is in addition to their whole class reading and writing instruction. Teachers and support staff provide concentrated instruction to small groups of four to seven students, targeting specific skills and reading strategies that the group of students has not yet mastered. Students who are reading above grade level also engage in this targeted instruction, as teachers focus on advanced skills that will continue to support their development and achievement. All students benefit from this small group and individualized instruction, including special education students and English Language Learners who often need intensive reading and literacy instruction.

Similarly, for the first 60 minutes of each school day, students in 3<sup>rd</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grades receive small group instruction in tiered classes that target specific skills and standards to advance student understanding and foundational skills. The block is titled “Innovation Period” intentionally, as teachers are encouraged to facilitate instruction through new, inventive, and engaging forms and strategies, leading to investment and engagement from students to begin the day and resulting in accelerated progress. Technology and research-based programs are also used during the Innovation Period, allowing students to engage in instruction in multiple modalities. Because all staff members are utilized for Innovation Period, including intervention, enrichment, special education, and support staff, Innovation Period class groups are comprised of no more than twelve students, which provides extra attention and support to struggling students and to those with specific learning needs.

In addition to the deliberately planned and differentiated guided reading and Innovation Period classes, InspireNOLA assists economically disadvantaged students in succeeding at high

levels and closing the achievement gap by employing fulltime interventionists, special education teachers, and ELL teachers to provide academic support throughout the day. InspireNOLA schools utilize a push-in model, as interventions take place within the regular classroom setting whenever possible so that students are engaged in grade level material while receiving additional supports and individual instruction. InspireNOLA also provides afterschool, weekend, and summer tutoring opportunities to provide additional instructional time for students who benefit from reinforcement of skills or who need additional time to solidify knowledge of material.

Many students that InspireNOLA currently serves and will continue to serve in the future require additional supports outside of solely academics. To ensure that all students are supported both socially and emotionally, InspireNOLA schools employs a comprehensive leadership, instructional, and support staff to achieve a 10 to 1 staff to student ratio. Key support positions that each school employs include fulltime social workers, counselors, nurses, behavioral deans, and parent liaisons. The student support team provides assistance to students and families in the following key areas: trauma and grief counseling, routine attendance, behavioral improvements, and health concerns and issues.

### **Engaging and Investing Families and Communities**

#### ***[Also addresses Application Requirement (g)]***

Engaging and investing families and communities of InspireNOLA schools is critical to the success of InspireNOLA students, their siblings, schools, and the organization. InspireNOLA knows that parents and community have a direct stake in school practices and outcomes and that their influence and support can be a significant factor in the perpetuation of a healthy culture and the academic success of students, and therefore involves parents by providing multiple options and venues for them to participate within the school. When InspireNOLA prepares to assume

operation of an existing, low-performing school, the leaders host multiple parent and community information and feedback sessions. Current and prospective parents and community leaders are invited to attend sessions that are held at different times and on different dates, to ensure that all interested parties are able to attend. InspireNOLA leaders gather feedback on both positive aspects of the school that parents wish to see continue or be expanded and on negative aspects of areas that could use improvement or revision moving forward. InspireNOLA then uses this feedback when planning for the takeover of the school so that they are meeting the specific needs of the students, parents, and community of that school.

InspireNOLA leaders and staff members invite parents to the school on numerous occasions throughout the year. Each school hosts a parent welcome session in the summer and open houses in the fall and spring. Report card nights occur once a quarter, with parents coming to the school to meet with teachers and discuss their child's progress. Families are invited to attend biweekly school celebrations, field trips, performances, showcases, and extracurricular activities. Parent-teacher organizations (PTOs) are formed at each school so that parents have an avenue to provide constructive feedback about their opinions and viewpoints on all aspects of the school. The school leader and PTO collectively work together to understand the challenges and successes of the school, co-planning events and strategies to continuously improve the environment and programming to best meet the needs of students.

## **C: Quality of the Project Design**

### **1. Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes to be Achieved by the Proposed Project**

#### ***[Also addresses Application Requirement (a)]***

InspireNOLA Charter Schools was formed in 2013 with two high-performing foundation schools, Alice M. Harte Charter School and Edna Karr High School. Recognizing the need for

transforming existing schools that are struggling to achieve results for students, InspireNOLA took over operation of Andrew H. Wilson Charter, the second-lowest performing elementary school in New Orleans, in July 2015. In the proposed project, InspireNOLA seeks support to add an additional five schools in New Orleans and Baton Rouge, doubling the number of students served by InspireNOLA, increasing the number of high-quality charter schools in the nation (GPRA goal #1) and expanding to a new community, enabling InspireNOLA to provide additional high-quality seat options to students of Louisiana. With support of CSP funds, InspireNOLA plans to take over operation of three elementary schools in New Orleans and two elementary schools in Baton Rouge, all of which are struggling schools that would not be granted charter renewals because of their lack of demonstrated progress and achievement for students. InspireNOLA plans to assume operation of the schools and transform them into high-performing schools that meet the needs of their students and community.

As shown in *Figure 1: Student Subgroup Demographics in Absolute Priority 2: Low-Income Demographic*, InspireNOLA serves a student population that is representative of the surrounding two districts of New Orleans, and is comparable to that of Baton Rouge as well.

InspireNOLA’s projected timeline, including school and seat expansions, is detailed below in *Figure C-1: School and Seat Expansion Timeline*. At the summation of this five-year project, InspireNOLA will have added an additional 2,500 high-quality seats at 5 schools in Louisiana.

*Figure C-1: School and Seat Expansion Timeline*

|                            | Grade Levels | Year 1<br>2016-17 | Year 2<br>2017-18 | Year 3<br>2018-19 | Year 4<br>2019-20 | Year 5<br>2020-21 |
|----------------------------|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Alice Harte Charter School | PK – 8       | 780               | 780               | 780               | 780               | 780               |
| Edna Karr High School      | 9 – 12       | 1100              | 1100              | 1100              | 1100              | 1100              |

|                              |        |          |          |          |       |       |
|------------------------------|--------|----------|----------|----------|-------|-------|
| Andrew Wilson Charter School | PK – 8 | 600      | 620      | 650      | 650   | 650   |
| New Orleans Elementary #3    | PK – 8 | Planning | 500      | 500      | 500   | 500   |
| New Orleans Elementary #4    | PK – 8 |          | Planning | 500      | 500   | 500   |
| New Orleans Elementary #5    | PK – 8 |          |          | Planning | 500   | 500   |
| Baton Rouge Elementary #1    | PK – 8 |          | Planning | 500      | 500   | 500   |
| Baton Rouge Elementary #2    | PK – 8 |          |          | Planning | 500   | 500   |
| Total Schools                |        | 3        | 4        | 6        | 8     | 8     |
| Total Seats                  |        | 2,480    | 3,000    | 4,030    | 5,030 | 5,030 |
| Total New Schools            |        | 0        | 1        | 2        | 2     | 0     |
| Total Funded New Seats       |        | 0        | 500      | 1,500    | 2,500 | 0     |

InspireNOLA is a results-driven organization that sets ambitious yet attainable goals and progress monitors against them, setting clear objectives and measurable outcomes to track provide clarity and define success for each goal.

**Goal #1:** Provide an additional 2,500 high-quality seats in 5 schools in Louisiana, thus providing students an exemplary education that prepares them with a foundation to become productive citizens and members of society. (Goal #1 is aligned to GPRA performance indicator 1: increasing the number of high-performing charter schools in operation around the nation, as well as performance indicator 2: increasing the percentage of fourth-and-eighth grade charter school students who are achieving at or above the proficient level on state examinations in mathematics and reading/language arts)

**Goal #2:** Achieve a successful, high-performing charter organization model at InspireNOLA that is both financially sustainable and supported by the community.

Figure C-2: Project Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes

| <b>Goal #1: Provide an additional 2,500 high-quality seats in 5 schools in Louisiana, thus providing students an exemplary education that prepares them with a foundation to become productive citizens and members of society.</b> |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <b>Objective</b>  | <b>Category</b>                          | <b>Outcome</b>   |
| Increase number of students served by InspireNOLA to approximately 5,030 at 8 schools   | Number of Students                       | Approximate student enrollment by Project Year:<br>Year 1 (2016-17): 2,480<br>Year 2 (2017-18): 3,000<br>Year 3 (2018-19): 4,030<br>Year 4 (2019-20): 5,030<br>Year 5 (2020-21): 5,030                         |
|   | Number of Schools                        | Schools in operation by Project Year:<br>Year 1 (2016-17): 3<br>Year 2 (2017-18): 4<br>Year 3 (2018-19): 6<br>Year 4 (2019-20): 8<br>Year 5 (2020-21): 8   |
| Implement a rigorous academic program that enables students to achieve at high levels   | Academic Achievement (State Assessments) | Average 4 <sup>th</sup> and 8 <sup>th</sup> grade student proficiency on state ELA and math assessments meets or exceeds 70% by the 3 <sup>rd</sup> year of operation by InspireNOLA (Aligned to GPRA Goal #2) |
|   | Academic Achievement (Early Literacy)    | Average K – 3 <sup>rd</sup> grade student proficiency on DIBELS early literacy assessments meets or exceeds 70% by the 3 <sup>rd</sup> year of operation by InspireNOLA  |
| Create a supportive learning environment that attracts and retains staff and students   | Student Attendance                       | Average daily attendance rate meets or exceeds 95%   |
|   | Student Retention                        | Annual student retention rate meets or exceeds 90%   |
|   | Staff Retention                          | Annual staff retention rate meets or exceeds 80%   |
|   | Staff Satisfaction                       | Semiannual satisfaction survey results indicate that 80% or more of staff members agree or strongly agree that they are content with working for the InspireNOLA organization                                  |
|   | New Offer Acceptance                     | New staff member offer acceptance rate meets or exceeds 85%  |
| <b>Goal #2: Achieve a successful, high-performing charter organization model at InspireNOLA that is both financially sustainable and supported by the community.</b>  |  |  |
| <b>Objective</b>  | <b>Category</b>                          | <b>Outcome</b>   |
| Attract students and parents to attend InspireNOLA schools  | Student Applications                     | New student applications will outnumber available seats by at least 50% by the 3 <sup>rd</sup> year of operation by InspireNOLA  |

|   |                          |   |
|---|--------------------------|---|
|   | Student Enrollment       | Student population totals meet or exceed target enrollment numbers by as measured by 10/1 enrollment counts by the 3 <sup>rd</sup> year of operation by InspireNOLA |
| Achieve financial sustainability within schools | Financial Sustainability | Schools operate within their Board of Director's approved annual budget   |

Performance Indicator 3 focuses on the cost per student for adding high-quality charter school seats. Over the five years of the project, InspireNOLA will add 2,500 seats in 5 new schools. The project budget for establishing new schools and student seats is \$4,000,000 over five years. This budget means that InspireNOLA will be able to achieve its goals at an average cost per student (unduplicated) of \$1,600 per student.

#### **D: Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel**

##### **1. Adequacy of the Management Plan to Achieve Outcomes**

InspireNOLA's comprehensive management plan ensures that the objectives of the proposed project will be achieved on time and within budget. *Figure D-1* below details the project tasks, milestones, timeline, and responsibilities of personnel that the CSP project entails. InspireNOLA's Central Office, located in New Orleans, will manage the plan with support from the Regional Offices and School-Based Leaders.

*Figure D-1: Management Plan*

| <b>Task</b>                                    | <b>Milestone</b>                                   | <b>Timeline</b>       | <b>Owner</b> | <b>Support</b> |
|--|--|-----------------------|--------------|----------------|
| <b>Project Administration &amp; Management</b> | Hire and train project director                    | Upon grant award      | CEO          | EDSA, DHC      |
|  | Develop project plan for grant                     | Upon grant award      | CEO, EDSA    | PD             |
|  | Train all staff involved in grant administration   | Upon grant award      | EDSA, PD     | CFO            |
|  | Provide ongoing professional development for grant | Ongoing and as needed | CFO          | DF             |

|  |   |  |           |              |
|--|---|--|-----------|--------------|
|  | finances and management   |  |           |              |
|  | Attend CSP DOE training   | Annually   | PD        |              |
|  | Obtain charter approvals (as needed)  | One year prior to school opening   | EDSA      | CEO, CFO     |
| <b>Staffing</b>                          | Draft, post, and widely circulate job descriptions for regional positions to be hired | One year prior to new regional expansion   | DHC       |              |
|  | Hire and train Regional Director and Community Relations Manager                      | One year prior to new school opening   | CEO, EDSA | DHC          |
|  | Hire and train new Heads of School  | One year prior to new school opening   | CEO, RD   | CAO, DHC     |
|  | Hire and train new Academy Administrators   | Six to nine months prior to new school opening   | RD, HOS   | CAO, DHC     |
|  | Hire and train new teachers and support staff   | Six to nine months prior to new school opening   | HOS       | RD, CAO, DHC |
| <b>Community &amp; Parent Engagement</b> | Design and implement recruitment campaign for new students                            | Annually, beginning six to nine months prior to new school opening                           | RD, CRM   | EDSA         |
|  | Plan and execute community engagement events  | Ongoing  | RD, CRM   | EDSA         |
|  | Host lottery for student seats and/or participate in the Common Enrollment process    | Annually: lottery in spring; Common Enrollment as per deadlines throughout winter and spring | CRM       | EDSA         |
|  | Engage parents and families   | Ongoing  | HOS, CRM  | RD           |
| <b>Operations &amp; Facilities</b>       | Identify school facility  | Nine to twelve months prior to new school opening  | DO        | CFO          |
|  | Bid and negotiate vendor contracts  | Six months prior to new school opening   | DO        | CFO          |
|  | Furnish classrooms with furniture and supplies  | One to three months prior to new school opening  | DO        | CO, HOS, AA  |
|  | Analyze organization and school financial health                                      | Annually, quarterly  | CFO       | DF           |
| <b>Instruction &amp; Development</b>     | Engage newly hired HOS in planning year and training                                  | Ongoing during year prior to new school opening  | CEO, CAO  | RD           |
|  | Create yearlong PD plan for   | Three to six months  | CAO       | RD, HOS      |

|  |   |  |           |              |
|--|---|--|-----------|--------------|
|  | school staff  | prior to new school opening; revised as needed throughout year |           |              |
|  | Facilitate summer PD training for school staff  | One month prior to new school opening                          | HOS, AA   | RD, CAO      |
|  | Implement the InspireNOLA academic framework, instructional practices, and designated curriculums | Ongoing (daily)  | AA        | HOS, RD, CAO |
|  | Provide ongoing PD for all teachers and support staff   | Ongoing (daily, weekly, monthly)                               | HOS       | RD, CAO      |
| <b>Evaluation</b>  | Administer internal assessments   | Quarterly, monthly, weekly                                     | HOS       | CAO          |
|  | Administer mandatory state assessments  | Annually   | HOS       | CAO          |
|  | Collect data on attendance, retention, graduation, etc., rates                                    | Ongoing (daily, annually)                                      | PD        | HOS          |
|  | Complete budget analysis to ensure expenses are being used as per the application                 | Annually and as needed   | CFO       | DF           |
|  | Evaluate program goals and objectives   | Annually   | Evaluator | PD           |
|  | Complete all project reporting  | Annually and as requested                                      | CEO       | PD, RD       |
| <b>Personnel Key:</b><br>AA: Academy Administrator<br>CAO: Chief Academic Officer<br>CFO: Chief Financial Officer<br>CEO: Chief Executive Officer<br>CRM: Community Relations Manager<br>DF: Director of Finance<br>DHC: Director of Human Capital<br>DO: Director of Operations<br>EDSA: Executive Director of Strategy & Advancement<br>HOS: Head of School<br>PD: Project Director<br>RD: Regional Director |   |  |           |              |

## **2. Business Plan for Improving, Sustaining, and Ensuring Quality Beyond the Grant**

***[Also addresses Application Requirement (b)]***

***Governance, Oversight, and the Central Office***

***[Also addresses Application Requirement (e)]***

The Board of Directors governs InspireNOLA Charter Schools, a 501(c)(3), and holds all of the charters for the existing and future schools in both New Orleans and Baton Rouge.

Jamar McKneely, CEO of InspireNOLA, reports to the Board of Directors, who are a group of diverse individuals with a range of professional and personal experiences, areas of expertise, and ties to the community which allow them to effectively oversee and assist Mr. McKneely and the rest of the leadership team with expansion and organizational growth to impact additional students.

Each school to date is authorized by the local district of residence. Along with the Board of Directors, the Central Office provides assistance to each region and school site to ensure that it meets all charter agreement and reporting requirements set by the authorizer, state, and federal government.

InspireNOLA's Central Office exists to provide oversight and support InspireNOLA regions and schools so that resources are focused on the classroom and students receive a high-quality education. InspireNOLA supports regions and schools by providing systems, structures, procedures, guidance, and talent to regional and school teams in the crucial areas of operations, finance, strategy, and academics, so that schools can focus on academic, classroom, and, cultural priorities. The InspireNOLA Central Office is organized so that an experienced leader with demonstrated success (biography for each located in *Section 5: Qualifications of Key Personnel*) leads each area and provides assistance to the region and school leaders. (Please see *Appendix B: Resumes* for resumes and job descriptions for key personnel, as well as *Appendix H: Additional Information* for the organizational charts for InspireNOLA's Central Office and Regional Teams.)

### ***Operations and Facilities***

Acquiring a facility is an absolute necessity for all new and existing schools, and is a responsibility that InspireNOLA's Director of Operations and Chief Financial Officer lead. The

InspireNOLA Central Office operations team also handles soliciting and negotiating vendor contracts and large facility issues, with school operations managers handling school facility and day-to-day operational management. This division of responsibilities allows schools to focus on academic, classroom, and cultural priorities that directly impact students, with the central office leading operational tasks.

### ***Financial Management***

#### ***[Also addresses Application Requirement (c) and (i)]***

The InspireNOLA finance team, led by the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and supported by the Director of Finance (DF), handles the majority of financial operations for regions and schools in conjunction with a school site based Operations Manager. The School Operations Manager provides a direct link from the school to Central Office so that budgetary needs or financial issues can be addressed rapidly. This allows financial management of the school to be administered cohesively and smoothly so that academic instruction is always the top priority. The CFO and DF set preliminary budgets, approve final budgets, and monitor budgetary compliance throughout the year, with school leaders providing input regarding specific school needs and requests. In addition, the Central Office is responsible for all financial reporting, procurement, vendor payables, and payroll processing. Leadership working in tandem assures that students and their success is also the first priority.

### ***Fund Development***

The Executive Director of Strategy and Advancement (EDSA) for InspireNOLA focuses on expansion planning and needs forecasting to ensure that future InspireNOLA schools secure the necessary financial resources to support their long-term sustainability. Each region and school is responsible for soliciting funds for ongoing programming, with the EDSA and Central

Office leading start-up funding acquisitions and network-wide proposals, as well as establishing and maintaining relationships with national and large local funders, including the Charter School Growth Fund, New Schools for New Orleans, and New Schools for Baton Rouge.

### ***Strategy and External Relations***

Led by the EDSA, InspireNOLA Central Office determines all strategic priorities and objectives for each region and the schools in them, establishing goals and progress monitoring toward them. With input from the Regional Director, the Central Office decides on and plans for organizational and regional growth and handles all marketing and external relations strategy associated with it. Regions and schools establish local presence, build community relationships, and lead student recruitment and enrollment campaigns.

### ***Human Resources***

The InspireNOLA Central Office Human Resources team, led by the Director of Human Capital, sets employee policies, determines retirement and benefits offerings and providers, handles all legal and insurance matters, and recruits exemplary talent. Regional teams process initial hire paperwork, oversee employee performance reviews, and handle grievances that may arise, with the support of the Central Office when necessary. School leaders and regional staff are also responsible for interviewing, hiring, and onboarding of school-based employees, while the CEO and Chief Academic Officer (CAO), along with input from the Regional Director, assist with identifying and hiring school leaders and administrators.

### ***Professional Development***

The CEO, CAO, and Regional Director provide initial and ongoing professional development and training to the Heads of School (HOS) and Academy Administrators (AAs) to ensure that they are growing and advancing as instructional leaders who set the culture and

vision of their schools. In turn, the HOS and AAs provide summer training, job-embedded professional development, and routine coaching and feedback to their teachers and staff, equipping them with the skills, techniques, and knowledge to effectively educate their students. The Central Office is keenly involved in the initial training and development of new staff members and leaders, slowly releasing the responsibility to the regional and school team once a solid foundation has been established and the school is performing at or above the city or district average.

### ***Academic Achievement***

The CAO and academic team set the academic vision and priorities for the organization and schools, selecting appropriate curriculum and deciding on instructional strategies that will best meet the needs of students. The academic team analyzes data and assessment results, researches best practices and proven techniques, and keeps abreast of new or changing priorities, deciding on organizational academic frameworks that are implemented in all schools. School leaders follow organization protocols and structures have proven successful in achieving results for students, but are given the autonomy to implement slight variations or innovations to best meet the individual needs of students or the school overall. All school leaders receive and are trained on the requirements of the InspireNOLA Leadership Handbook and Operations Manual.

All InspireNOLA schools utilize the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP), which is a comprehensive teacher development program that provides professional growth, opportunities for career advancement, instructional accountability, and performance based compensation. As an element of TAP, all teachers attend weekly cluster meetings with their grade level or department teams, receiving targeted and tailored professional development and strategies. In addition, teachers, master teachers, and school leaders review student work and data during

vision of their schools. In turn, the HOS and AAs provide summer training, job-embedded professional development, and routine coaching and feedback to their teachers and staff, equipping them with the skills, techniques, and knowledge to effectively educate their students. The Central Office is keenly involved in the initial training and development of new staff members and leaders, slowly releasing the responsibility to the regional and school team once a solid foundation has been established and the school is performing at or above the city or district average.

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### ***Human Resources***

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### ***Professional Development***

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All InspireNOLA schools utilize the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP), which is a comprehensive teacher development program that provides professional growth, opportunities for career advancement, instructional accountability, and performance based compensation. As an element of the CAO and Regional Director provide training and ongoing professional development and training the Head of School (HOS) and Academic Administrators (AAs) to additional teachers, master teachers, and school instructional leaders who seek and data during

cluster meetings, identifying individual student and whole class needs and then creating action plans to address them. All instructional staff members also actively participate in quarterly data analysis on professional development days, during which staff members deeply analyze assessment data from interim benchmark assessments.

### **3. Multi-Year Financial and Operating Model, with Stakeholder Commitment and Support**

#### ***Multi-Year Financial and Operating Model***

#### ***[Also addresses Application Requirement (f)]***

InspireNOLA’s operational model places an emphasis on sustainability and as such performs our core business solely on public funding via per pupil state and local funding and federal entitlement programs (i.e. Title I, Title II, IDEA, etc.). Any philanthropic or competitive grants that are received are treated as supplemental in nature and are utilized to enhance services or programs offered. Annual budget goals and targets are built upon successfully implementing long lasting sustainable initiatives, not short-term “quick fixes” that must be abandoned in future years due to budget constraints. InspireNOLA focuses on providing high quality education while doing so efficiently and within its means. As our School Performance Scores and Net Asset balances demonstrate, we have been successful thus far.

*Figure D-2: 2014-2019 InspireNOLA Financial Breakdown*

| <b>InspireNOLA Operational and Financial Breakdown</b> |              |              |               |               |               |
|--|--------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
|  | <b>14-15</b> | <b>15-16</b> | <b>16-17*</b> | <b>17-18*</b> | <b>18-19*</b> |
| <b>Schools</b>   | <b>2</b>     | <b>3</b>     | <b>3</b>      | <b>4</b>      | <b>6</b>      |
| <b>Enrollment</b>                                      | <b>1,773</b> | <b>2,465</b> | <b>2,485</b>  | <b>3,000</b>  | <b>4,030</b>  |
| <b>Revenue</b>   |              |              |               |               |               |
| Public Funding   | 18.72        | 25.55        | 26.43         | 31.10         | 41.77         |
| Philanthropy/Grants                                    | 0.12         | 1.58         | 0.49          | 1.92          | 1.82          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>18.84</b> | <b>27.13</b> | <b>26.92</b>  | <b>33.02</b>  | <b>43.59</b>  |
| <b>Expenses</b>  |              |              |               |               |               |
| Personnel  | 13.64        | 19.74        | 20.65         | 24.02         | 32.27         |
| Payables   | 4.47         | 7.01         | 6.90          | 8.53          | 11.46         |

|                        |              |              |               |              |               |
|------------------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
| <b>TOTAL</b>           | <b>18.11</b> | <b>26.75</b> | <b>27.55</b>  | <b>32.55</b> | <b>43.73</b>  |
| <b>Surplus/Deficit</b> | <b>0.73</b>  | <b>0.38</b>  | <b>(0.63)</b> | <b>0.47</b>  | <b>(0.14)</b> |
| <b>Net Assets</b>      | <b>8.00</b>  | <b>8.38</b>  | <b>7.75</b>   | <b>8.22</b>  | <b>8.08</b>   |

*Note: Dollars are in Millions; \*Projected*

InspireNOLA averages 73% of all dollars expended on instructional needs. We work to keep operational overhead at a minimum to facilitate maximum resource dedication to students and learning.

Philanthropic dollars acquired are mainly used for new school start-up costs until enrollment demand reaches a point to sustain the school budget on per pupil revenue. The breakeven point typically runs through year three. Philanthropy and competitive grants are also utilized to fund innovative programs such as personalized learning, digital media, and career development focus programs. InspireNOLA has successfully garnered \$4.5 million to fund such requests from partners including the Charter School Growth Fund, New Schools for New Orleans, and Educate Now!.

After CSP funds expire, newly created InspireNOLA schools will be self-sustaining through available funding from state, local, and private sources. CSP funding being requested will primarily fund the planning and start-up of newly acquired schools. Multiple line items, including the salary and benefits for the Head of School during the planning year and for the Academy Principal during the half year prior to school opening, technology for staff and students, and guided reading and classroom library books, are front-end, start-up costs. Replenishment of additional supplies for students is a cost that will be spread over multiple years, and all additional salary costs will be sustainable with student enrollment. Once enrollment hits a minimum of target 500 students per school, the school will be financially self-sustaining.

### ***Stakeholder Commitment and Support***

InspireNOLA, though only three years in existence, has already garnered the support of local and national partners and supporters. InspireNOLA received a \$3 million commitment from the Charter School Growth Fund in 2014 to support expansion to additional schools, in addition to funding received and commitments promised from New Schools for New Orleans, New Schools for Baton Rouge, Educate Now!, the Stephen and Sandy Rosenthal Foundation, the GPOA Foundation, the Rex Pro Bono Publico Foundation, and others, totaling over \$5.5 million. In addition, we also partner with the following community groups and organizations, which provide a broad range of services that benefit our students and schools: 100 Black Men, Silverback Society, Broadmoor Improvement Association, Community Works, Xavier University, and University of Holy Cross.

The ten letters of support for InspireNOLA's expansion and CSP application demonstrate the tremendous community and stakeholder support that government officials and community organizations express, which is critical for InspireNOLA's long-term success. Please see the *Appendix C: Letters of Support* as evidence of broad support from stakeholders, including those from John White, Louisiana State Superintendent of Education; Dr. Henderson Lewis, Jr., Superintendent of Schools for Orleans Parish; Kevin Hall, President and CEO of the Charter School Growth Fund; Kira Orange Jones, Senior Vice President for Teach for America and Louisiana BESE Board Member; and Chris Meyer, CEO of New Schools for Baton Rouge.

### **4. Plan for Closure of Schools Failing to Achieve High-Quality Standards**

InspireNOLA consistently evaluates school performance across multiple indicators throughout each school year in order to ensure that each school is making progress and achieving established goals. InspireNOLA utilizes a dashboard that tracks performance, in relation to both

short and long term goals, in the following areas: academic achievement, human resources and staffing, operations, parent satisfaction, finance, and community engagement. Data is routinely collected and analyzed by school and central office leaders to increase achievement and effectiveness. In addition, InspireNOLA's charter authorizer, Orleans Parish School Board, and the Louisiana Department of Education both conduct yearly evaluations of each InspireNOLA school. InspireNOLA utilizes the annual reviews and report cards that these entities produce when monitoring progress and achievement of each schools. To date, InspireNOLA has remained significantly above the required benchmarks and has not closed schools for any reason, including not for low performance.

In the event that a school is struggling in one or more areas and is not meeting or making progress toward goals, the regional team and central office create and implement an intervention plan with the school leader to address targeted areas for improvement that contains progress benchmarks on a stated timeline. The plan is tailored to meet the specific needs and issues for the individual school, with all plans including direct support and increased involvement by central and regional staff.

If the school does not improve and progress is not made within the stated timeframe, InspireNOLA makes the determination to close the school and completes the following procedures to minimize any negative effects on students, families, and communities:

- InspireNOLA's Board of Directors will make the ultimate decision to close the school, following the recommendation of the CEO.
- InspireNOLA will notify the local authorizer and Louisiana Department of Education of the impending school closure, and will work with the authorizer throughout the closure process accordingly.

- Parents and students of the school will be notified. Information and assistance will be given to families to transfer and enroll students in other InspireNOLA schools or other local public schools. InspireNOLA transfer all student records to the appropriate new schools of former students.
- A final financial audit will be conducted for the school and all assets purchased with public funds shall become the property of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE). All assets purchased with private funds shall remain the property of the charter operator, if the inventory or records of the charter operator demonstrate that the assets were purchased with private funds.<sup>6</sup>

## **5. Qualifications of Key Personnel**

InspireNOLA will hire a Project Director to manage the CSP grant and project. This position will be financed through general funds. (Please see *Appendix B: Resumes and Job Descriptions* for the Project Director job description.) In addition to the Project Director, the CSP project will be led by the following InspireNOLA personnel:

**Jamar McKneely** serves as InspireNOLA’s Chief Executive Officer and co-founded the organization in 2013. Mr. McKneely oversees the entire InspireNOLA network, including setting the vision of the organization and ensuring the success of all schools and leaders. He previously served as a teacher and Assistant Principal of Edna Karr High School and then as the Principal of Alice M. Harte Charter School. Under his leadership, Alice Harte increased its School Performance Score (SPS) by 25 points to achieve an A letter grade and became ranked in the top 10% of public schools in New Orleans. Prior to becoming an educator, he served as a budget

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<sup>6</sup> As per Louisiana Bulletin 126, Chapter 25: §2509. Assets.

analyst for two non-profit organizations in Baton Rouge. Mr. McKneely earned a Bachelor's degree in Finance from Southern University and a Master's degree in Educational Administration from Louisiana State University.

**Charlie Mackles**, InspireNOLA's Chief Financial Officer, oversees InspireNOLA's finance team, ensuring that the Central Office and all schools have the financial tools, information and resources necessary to meet InspireNOLA's mission while simultaneously adhering to all relevant compliance guidelines and industry best practices. He has worked in the non-profit and governmental sector specializing in the K-12 and post-secondary education arena for the past twelve years. Prior to his work with charter schools, Mr. Mackles worked in higher education and research managing multi-million dollar grants awarded by the National Institute of Health and various other universities and foundations, and is invested in the success of public education. Mr. Mackles is a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) and a Certified Fraud Examiner (CFE), and holds a Bachelor of Science in Accounting and Economics from Louisiana State University.

**Dr. Wylene Sorapuru** is InspireNOLA's Chief Academic Officer. Dr. Sorapuru oversees student achievement across the InspireNOLA network through support and management of school and network academic leaders to implement rigorous academic programming, maintain positive school cultures, plan for continuous data driven school improvement, and provide development and accountability structures for teacher and leadership quality. Prior to joining with InspireNOLA, she served in several roles across Orleans Parish Charter School Systems as Chief Academic Officer, School Principal, Director of Reading Initiatives, Director of Early Childhood, Associate Professor of Educational

Administration and Leadership, and first grade teacher. During her tenure, she led three low-performing Charter schools through the turnaround process, each earning Top Gains state results. She holds a PhD in Educational Administration and Master's degree in Educational Leadership from University of New Orleans and a Bachelor's degree in Education from Southern University at New Orleans.

**Emily Hartnett**, Executive Director of Strategy and Advancement, leads strategic planning and growth initiatives for InspireNOLA and manages the organization's external relations and human capital teams. Her core responsibilities include long-term planning, evaluating organizational health, fundraising and grant writing, and cultivating external partnerships. Before joining InspireNOLA, Ms. Hartnett served as a curriculum director, instructional coach, and teacher, and was an administrator of a turnaround school that achieved the highest academic gains of any New Orleans public school in 2014. Ms. Hartnett holds a Bachelor of Science in Political Science and Business from Tulane University and a Master of Arts in Education Leadership from Columbia University, Teachers College.

**Katie Coburn** is InspireNOLA's Director of Human Capital, where she drives InspireNOLA's staff recruitment efforts, manages the human resources and benefits team, and supports school leaders in the execution of our performance management process. Prior to joining InspireNOLA, Ms. Coburn worked for Jefferson Parish Public Schools, where she led the team responsible for the implementation of Compass, Louisiana's educator evaluation program. She started her career in education as a kindergarten teacher. Ms. Coburn received a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Emory University and a Master of Education from the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

**Harold Juluke** serves as InspireNOLA's Director of Operations, where he manages and oversees all aspects of network and school operations, including transportation, food service, procurement, vendor relationships, facilities, technology, and charter compliance. Mr. Juluke has most recently held the position of School Operations Manager at Alice Harte Charter School, and has professional experience in public and private four-year universities, alternative education, and traditional PK-12 schools. Mr. Juluke received a Bachelor of Science in Finance from Southeastern Louisiana University and an MBA from the University of Hartford.

**Caren Johnson**, Director of Finance, manages the day-to-day financial operations of the schools and the Central Office in the areas of accounting, banking, and fiscal accountability. She helps create financial policies and systems that support the schools' mission and culture of achievement. Previously, Mrs. Johnson worked in the New Orleans K-12 Charter Arena for a large CMO where she was the Controller. Mrs. Johnson holds a Bachelor of Science in Accounting from the University of New Orleans.

**Robert Hill** is the Head of School at Alice M. Harte Charter School, InspireNOLA's foundation elementary school. Under Mr. Hill's leadership, Alice Harte achieved an A letter grade with a School Performance Score (SPS) of a 100 in 2015, making it the second-highest performing open-admissions elementary school in New Orleans. Prior to leading Alice Harte as Head of School, Mr. Hill has over a decade of educational experience in Louisiana as a teacher, department chairperson, content specialist, assistant principal, and principal. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering the University of New Orleans and a Master's degree in Educational Administration from Our Lady of Holy Cross College.

**Lee Green** is the Head of School at Andrew H. Wilson Charter School. In this role, Mr. Green leads a team in providing all aspects of school leadership, including instruction, culture and

community relations. Having spent over 20 years as an educator and a school administrator, leading the turnaround efforts of four schools pre- and post-Katrina, Mr. Green has experience in teacher development, data driven instruction, standards based learning, transformational turnaround, and school takeover. Before becoming an educator, Mr. Green served for six years in the United States Air Force. He received a Bachelor's in Secondary Education and Master's in Educational Leadership from the University of New Orleans. Additionally, he studied with the National Faculty of Social Students at Rhodes College in Memphis, TN.

### **E: Quality of the Evaluation Plan**

InspireNOLA has a history of gauging its performance with multiple indicators that align to critical outcomes (e.g., academic achievement, parent satisfaction, community engagement) and operational processes (e.g., human resources and staffing, financial sustainability). Ongoing reflection occurs at all levels of the system, using performance dashboards that support continuous improvement both within and between central office, school, and classroom staff. This culture of evidence-based decision-making will provide an important foundation from which the rigorous evaluation of this initiative will be built and sustained.

#### ***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 the thinking and decision-making of an evaluation working group represented by organizational leaders and its own lead evaluator(s). InspireNOLA feels this approach will simultaneously ground the rigorous evaluation and deepen the capacity of InspireNOLA's leaders for evaluation in a way that will strengthen the organization as it grows.

The evaluation working group will meet in-person exclusively for the purpose of planning and reflecting upon results a minimum of two times during years one and five (when evaluation preparation and reporting burdens are higher) and one time during years two through four. Other meetings, including virtual, will be scheduled as needed. The objectives for the evaluation working group will include:

- Ensuring the evaluation questions, design, tools, execution, and related findings speak to the project goals and grant reporting requirements throughout the course of the assignment.
- 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, including publications, website posting, conference presentations, social media, etc.

### ***Evaluation Framework***

A preliminary evaluation framework (see *Figure E-1* below) has been developed to represent proposed evaluation questions and their alignment to InspireNOLA's two major organizational growth goals and the four pillars of its educational model. The related evaluation methods, including indicators that will be collected and analyses, 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/can be tracked and measured, e.g., number of schools and students, implementation indicators, stakeholder perceptions of school climate, and student achievement indicators. This preliminary framework in represents, at a high level, the supporting information and processes that drive the proposed evaluation design.

Figure E-1: Preliminary Evaluation Framework

| Project Goals   | Pillars of InspireNOLA’s Educational Model  |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|---|--|
|   | Positive Culture  | Rigorous Academics  | Continuous Growth   | Accountability   |
| <p><b>Goal #1:</b> Provide an additional 2,500 high quality seats in 5 schools in Louisiana, thus providing students an exemplary education that prepares them with a foundation to become productive citizens and members of society.</p> <p><b>1a) Is InspireNOLA’s expansion unfolding as planned?</b></p> | <p><i>As InspireNOLA grows to five new schools, 2500 additional seats, and a new city, will it maintain or enhance:</i></p> |   |   |  |
|   | <p><b>1b) ...the strong positive culture in its schools that inspires and motivates students to learn and succeed?</b></p>  | <p><b>1c) ...its rigorous academic framework and model that ensures students are constantly challenged and achieving?</b></p> | <p><b>1d) ...continuous growth of all employees to develop and retain outstanding staff through job-embedded PD?</b></p>  | <p><b>1e) ...a culture of responsibility and ownership of success for all, anchored by ambitious goals and expectations?</b></p> |
| <p><b>Methods:</b> Descriptive trends over time in relation to Inspire NOLA’s proposed milestones and benchmarks (See Figure C-2: Project Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes) with proposed indicators below:</p>  |   |   |   |  |
| <p>Number of students,<br/>Number of schools</p>  | <p>School climate survey: students</p>  | <p>Assessment of curriculum choices</p> <p>Summative and formative assessments</p>  | <p>Descriptive trends over time (e.g., current staff retention, evaluations of professional development opportunities, assessment of professional development plans, staff satisfaction surveys, exit</p> | <p>School climate survey, board members, leadership, faculty</p>   |

|   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|   |   |   | interviews)   |   |
| <p><b>Goal #2:</b> Achieve a successful, high performing charter organization model at InspireNOLA that is both financially sustainable and supported by the community. (Aligned to GPRA Goal #2)</p> | <p><b>2a) Will demand for InspireNOLA schools be strong in new schools and communities?</b></p>   | <p><b>2b) Will InspireNOLA schools outperform comparison schools in terms of student academic growth?</b></p>   | <p><b>2c) Will InspireNOLA successfully attract quality staff in new schools and communities?</b></p> | <p><b>2d) Will InspireNOLA, as a CMO and within each school, be recognized as transparent, fiscally sound, and academically rigorous to its stakeholders?</b></p> |
|   | <p><b>Methods:</b> Descriptive trends over time and, where *, between group differences (i.e., InspireNOLA schools vs. Comparison schools) with benchmarking to city and statewide trends where appropriate. Proposed indicators include:</p> |   |   |   |
|   | <p>Student applications, enrollment, attendance, and retention</p>  | <p>* State assessments in Reading/ELA, Math; Formative assessments (DIBELS, MAP); InspireNOLA students compared with Randomized Control group; Hierarchical Linear Modeling</p> <p>* Between-student demographic group comparisons of performance (i.e., percent proficient) each year and over time; benchmark in relation to state trends</p> | <p>Staff new offer acceptance, New staff retention</p>  | <p>Financial sustainability in relation to Board of Director’s approved budget</p> <p>* Louisiana School Performance Score (SPS)</p>                              |

## ***Evaluation Design***

As InspireNOLA expands to new schools and a new city, it will monitor enrollment and

As such, a rigorous quasi-experimental evaluation is proposed and will be designed to meet

- Geographic locations near InspireNOLA schools. As InspireNOLA opens new schools,
- Grade levels served within comparison schools.
- Student demographic similarities
- Baseline equivalence on outcomes (e.g., Louisiana’s School Performance Score, a

### **Goal #1**

For the first goal related to growing quality seats in new schools, the evaluation will leverage existing data that are tracked descriptively and aligned to the four pillars of InspireNOLA’s educational model at the macro (e.g., important organizational milestones for expansion) and micro level (e.g., critical factors for implementation with fidelity, such as

instructional observations and formative student assessment data, such as the NWEA MAP). These data will be complemented by original data collection as appropriate, such as surveys and interviews of teachers, administrators, parents, and students. As new schools open, surveys can be timed to collect early feedback from these stakeholder groups and may serve both as needs-sensing information and baseline information to detect growth and change over time. When appropriate, case studies may be developed to describe specific innovative and effective practices within or across new InspireNOLA schools.

### **Goal #2**

For the second goal, the InspireNOLA 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 InspireNOLA school, or, vice versa, “drop” from an InspireNOLA school to a traditional school), overall attrition and sample equivalence, and will determine appropriate adjustments (e.g., stratification or covariation) if necessary.

Both groups of students (i.e., InspireNOLA intervention students and the distinct comparison group) will be tracked longitudinally, particularly on standardized assessments in Reading and Math, and comparisons of student growth as a whole and by demographic subgroups will be analyzed. Group effects will be analyzed through Hierarchical Linear Modeling, nesting students within schools and schools within their CMO and/or District.

Benchmark data, such as the performance of InspireNOLA schools in relation to other schools within New Orleans and Baton Rouge and throughout the state will also be reported via descriptive, longitudinal trends to provide the larger contextual framework within which the schools are operating and to represent how InspireNOLA schools are comparatively positioned.

### ***InspireNOLA Pillars***

The contribution of the four pillars of InspireNOLA’s educational model to student outcomes will be explored using regression analysis, given the necessary assumptions are met. It is anticipated that this analysis will be completed as summative reporting for the CSP grant is generated, giving InspireNOLA 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.

### ***Reflecting Upon and Reporting Results***

Data will be analyzed 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 will convene to 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.

variety of clients and federal grants and is experienced in federal reporting. Furthermore,

InspireNOLA's

organizational and growth goals. Key evaluation team members and their bios follow.

**Allison Crean Davis, Ph.D.** is a Senior Advisor with Bellwether Education Partners and leads the evaluation practice. Allison acts as Coordinator for Evaluation at the federally funded (US Department of Education) Center on Innovation in Learning at Temple University and has provided evaluation and planning support for several summer learning initiatives, including those funded by The Wallace Foundation and The John T. Gorman Foundation. Allison leads current evaluation efforts for RePublic Charter Schools federal CSP grant. She is a Founder and Chair of the Board of Directors at Baxter Academy for Technology and Science, Maine's first charter high school. In addition to providing evaluation services, Allison has done extensive work building the capacity of organizations to evaluate their own efforts for continuous improvement, including state education agencies, districts, schools, and foundation grantees. Prior to her work as a consultant, Allison was the Program Director for Research at the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory's (now part of American Institutes for Research) Center for Data Systems and Development. Allison earned her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the Illinois Institute of Technology and a B.A. in both Psychology and Spanish from Lafayette College.

**Melissa Steel King, Ed.D.**, is an Associate Partner with Bellwether Education Partners. Her current work focuses on issues related to traditional and alternative teacher preparation, personalized learning, and program evaluation. Melissa serves as Project Manager for Bellwether's current evaluation efforts for RePublic Charter Schools federal CSP grant. Previously, Melissa worked at SUNY Albany's Center for Human Services Research (CHSR),

where her projects included evaluation of the Albany school district's federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers and Magnet Schools Assistance Program grants, evaluation of a local parenting education initiative, facilitation of school improvement planning with Albany High School, and data management and evaluation for The Albany Promise, a cross-sector partnership to improve cradle-to-career outcomes for Albany students. Prior to joining CHSR, Melissa conducted effectiveness research on pre-K through 12 curricula in the Research and Validation Department at Scholastic Inc., and worked as a trainer and evaluator for a social and ethical awareness program in Boston public schools. Melissa's work has included research and analysis related to pre-k through 12 literacy instruction and intervention, children's social and emotional development, effectiveness and quality of implementation of instructional programs, and school improvement. Melissa holds a bachelor's degree from Williams College and a master's in Elementary Education from Teachers College, Columbia University. She completed her Ed.D. in Human Development and Psychology at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. She began her career as an elementary school teacher in New York City and Boston.

**Lynann Barbero, M.Ed.** is a Senior Consultant to Bellwether and has deep experience in the development and evaluation of curriculum and instructional programs; research-based instructional methodologies (particularly related to literacy), Response to Intervention (RTI), Special Education, and the use of formative assessment data for ongoing evaluation and continuous improvement. In her work with RAND and The Wallace Foundation, Lynann has evaluated the summer learning Reading curricula and professional development efforts for six urban school districts nationwide. She has also led the development of various curricula for BELL (Building Educated Leaders for Life). Lynann is the former Director for the Statewide System of Support and Director of Educational Enhancement Programs for the Bureau of Indian

Education (BIE), served as a Coordinator for Special Education for BIE schools, and served as Director of Education for the New Mexico School for the Deaf. She earned her M.Ed. in Special Education/Education Administration from the University of New Mexico and a B.S. in Deaf Education/Elementary Education from Illinois State University.

### **Application Requirements**

(a) Project objectives

Please see *Selection Criteria, Section C: Quality of the Project Design*, beginning on page 30 of the Project Narrative, for details on this requirement.

(b) Current operation of charter schools

Please see *Selection Criteria, Section D: Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel*, beginning on page 34 of the Project Narrative, for details on this requirement.

(c) Commensurate share of Federal education funds

Please see *Selection Criteria, Section D: Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel*, beginning on page 34 of the Project Narrative, for details on this requirement.

(d) Educational program

Please see *Selection Criteria, Section B: Contribution in Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students*, beginning on page 22 of the Project Narrative, for details on this requirement.

(e) Administrative relationship between charter schools and authorized public chartering agency

Please see *Selection Criteria, Section D: Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel*, beginning on page 34 of the Project Narrative, for details on this requirement.

(f) Continued operation of the new schools once Federal funding has expired

Please see *Selection Criteria, Section D: Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel*, beginning on page 34 of the Project Narrative, for details on this requirement.

(g) Parents and community member involvement

Please see *Selection Criteria, Section B: Contribution in Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students*, beginning on page 22 of the Project Narrative, for details on this requirement.

(h) Request of waivers

InspireNOLA Charter Schools does not request waivers of any Federal statutory or regulatory provisions.

(i) Use of grant funds

Please see *Selection Criteria, Section D: Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel*, beginning on page 34 of the Project Narrative for details, on this requirement.

(j) Recruitment of educationally disadvantaged students

Please see *Competitive Preference Priority 2: Promoting Diversity*, beginning on page 6 of the Project Narrative for details, on this requirement.

(k) Compliance with IDEA

Please see *Selection Criteria, Section B: Contribution in Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students*, beginning on page 22 of the Project Narrative, for details on this requirement.

(l) Past significant compliance issues

InspireNOLA Charter Schools has not had any significant compliance issues identified within the past three years or within the existence of the organization.

(m) Schools currently operated

Please see *Appendix E: Schools Operated by the Applicant* and *Appendix F: Student Academic Achievement* for details on this requirement.

(n) Objective data showing applicant quality

Please see the following sections and appendixes of the application for details on this requirement: *Absolute Priority 1: Experience Operating or Managing High-Quality Charter Schools; Selection Criteria, Section A: Quality of Eligible Applicant; Selection Criteria, Section B: Contribution in Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students; and Appendix F: Student Academic Achievement.*