Voices College-Bound Language Academies

Bilingual, Multi-cultural, and College-Bound:

Expanding an Exemplary Dual-Immersion Model

in California.

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Introduction

Overview

Voices College-Bound Language Academies (Voices Academies) is a growing Charter Management Organization (CMO) committed to serving educationally underserved students in Santa Clara County and its surrounding communities. In California, 58% of students are from low-income families, 54% are Latino, 43% speak a language other than English in their homes, and of this last group, 85% speak Spanish.[1] The Voices Academies program is specifically designed for these students - meeting their unique needs and celebrating their diverse assets through an academically rigorous dual-language program that prepares them for success in high school, college, career, and life.

The Voices Academies flagship school, Voices Franklin-McKinley, was opened in 2007 by East San Jose native, National Board Certified Teacher, and New Leaders for New School's trained leader Frances Teso. The K-8 school has garnered remarkable results - it outperforms the district, county, and state across demographic groups and is one of the top three performing dual-language schools in California. This has resulted in multiple recognitions, including:

- California Distinguished School (2012)
- State Title I Academic Achievement Award (2014)
- California Charter School Association's Charter School of the Year (2015)
- Innovate Public Schools' Top Bay Area Public Schools for Underserved Students (2016)

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[1] Source: http://www.ed-data.org/state/CA

As a result of this success, Voices Academies educators and parents from across the region have visited the school to learn from its best practices.

Voices Academies did not initially set out to be a CMO. In 2012, Innovate Public Schools published a document called *Broken Promises* exposing the achievement gap in Santa Clara County and surrounding counties experienced by Latino students and ELs - and how Voices Academies was a clear exception, with students' academic achievement soaring in comparison to students in both charter and district schools across the board.[2] Interest in the school rose even higher and increasingly this interest was accompanied by requests from families and advocates to bring Voices Academies to their communities. Given Voices Academies success - and the drastic need exposed in *Broken Promises* - the Board of Directors made the decision to replicate so that more parents had the privilege of choice in other high need communities.

In 2015-16, Voices Academies opened two additional Transitional Kindergarten (TK) through 8th grade schools in underserved communities in Santa Clara County - Voices Morgan Hill and Voices Mount Pleasant. With support from this grant, the CMO intends to open a fourth school in 2018, fifth school in 2019, and sixth school in 2020. In 2026 when these schools are fully grown, Voices Academies will be a network of six schools serving over 3,000 students.

Theory of Action and Logic Model

Voices Academies believes that California's future is directly tied to the educational success of today's students, the majority of whom are from low-income families and are Latino. Each day, Voices Academies prepares these students with world-class teaching that honors and

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[2] Broken Promises, Second Edition. Innovate Public Schools. December 2013.

further develops their cultural heritage through a dual-immersion language program. When schools tap into the multicultural strengths of these communities, California and the nation win.

All Voices Academies' schools demonstrate superior student achievement and provide choice in neighborhoods with the widest achievement gaps. The network's ultimate vision is that exponentially more students who are from low-income families and Latino graduate from 4 year colleges and become civically engaged citizens in their community. Through the replication of three additional schools, Voices Academies will double the number of seats in high-quality schools, setting a total of 3000 students annually on this path.

Project Goals

Voices Academies has established two specific, attainable, and measurable goals in developing this project within this theory of action:

- **Goal 1:** Increase access to an outstanding TK-8 dual-immersion education for the most underserved neighborhoods in Santa Clara county and its surrounding communities.
  - Action: Replicate the Voices Academies TK-8th grade dual-immersion model to create three new schools of 504 students each in high needs communities, creating a total of 1512 new seats.
  - Measures: 1512 new students attend schools in Santa Clara and its surrounding communities that 1) meet or exceed academic and performance standards of existing district schools and the state average, as measured by state assessments for all significant subgroups, and 2) are operationally sound and financially stable during and beyond the grant period, as measured by annual budget and audit.
- **Goal 2:** Be a leader in providing models and practices for outstanding education of students from low income families, who are Latino, and who are ELs.

○ Action: Engage in a rigorous evaluation of core practices over the course of the grant period, disseminating interim and final findings with stakeholder groups and the broader TK - 12 public education sector.

○ Measures: Annual and final reports are produced that share core findings in an accessible format for all stakeholders. Findings are disseminated through a variety of venues, including conferences, school site visits, and a white paper.

Section I - Absolute Priority - Low-Income Demographic

Voices Academies was founded to meet the unique needs and celebrate the diverse assets of educationally underserved students, who in its state and community are most often from low-income families, Latino, and ELs. As of 2016-17, Voices Academies serves nearly 800 students across three schools - 67% of these students are from low-income families as determined by participation in the Free and Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL) program and illustrated below.

Student from Low-Income Families					
	2012-13	**2013-14**	**2014-15**	**2015-16**	**2016-17**
Voices FM	68%	69%	75%	69%	63%
Voices MH	n/a	n/a	n/a	68%	67%
Voices MP	n/a	n/a	n/a	67%	67%
Voices CMO	**68%**	**69%**	**75%**	**68%**	**65%**
Key:	Voices FM = Voices Franklin-McKinley, Voices MH = Voices Morgan Hill,				

Sources: 2012-16 Data from www.ed-data-org for Voices FM. Internal Data for 2015-17 Voices MH and MP and 2016-17 Voices FM, and provided in detail in *Appendix E.*

A. Competitive Preference Priority 1 - Promoting Diversity

Voices Academies is uniquely positioned within the charter school landscape to recruit and retain a diverse student body, while maintaining a focus on increasing educational opportunities for students who are educationally underserved. The innovative dual-language model coupled with exceptional achievement rates make its schools attractive to a broad range of constituents. The open enrollment policies and lottery practices are designed to provide equitable access for all students, while ensuring compliance with applicable local, state, and federal law. Voices Academies does not discriminate against any student on the basis of race, color, national origin (including ELs), ethnicity, sex, gender identity or expression, religion, ability, native language, sex, sexual orientation, or against students with disabilities or any other basis prohibited by state and federal law. See *Section IV.B. Serving Educationally Disadvantaged Students and Communities* for further detail on recruitment, enrollment, and lottery practices.

- **Socio-economic Diversity** - 67% of Voices Academies students are from low-income families, with the remaining 33% bringing the diversity of not being socio-economically disadvantaged. Families across economic backgrounds see the value of being bi-literate and therefore seek a seat at Voices Academies for their children, which promotes this diversity. A lottery preference for students from low-income families, that is permissible under state and federal law, is utilized to prioritize service to these students.

- **Linguistic Diversity** - 59% of Voices Academies students are ELs, while 41% speak English as a primary language. The dual-language model attracts students from both

constituencies, who bring the strength of their first language to support the second

language learning of their peers.

- **Learning Needs Diversity** - 11% of students at the fully-grown Voices Franklin-
  McKinley school and 10% of students across the CMO have identified special needs.
  When all schools are full grown, it is expected that the network rate will be 11%, which
  mirrors California.[3] Voices Academies differentiated support structures ensure that
  students with diverse learning needs receive an outstanding education.

The summary overview of demographics below demonstrates that Voices Academies serves a

diversity of students comparable to levels served by the local districts and state. For complete

student demographics by school, please see *Appendix E: Schools Operated by the Applicant*.

Student Demographics									
	Voices	Voices	FMSD	Voices	MHUSD	Voices	MPESD	Santa	State of
FRL	**67%**	66%	80%	67%	39%	70%	81%	37%	59%
Latino	**92%**	92%	61%	91%	50%	93%	74%	39%	54%
EL	**59%**	46%	49%	80%	75%	79%	47%	23%	22%
SPED	**10%**	11%	8%	6%	12%	8%	15%	10%	11%
Key	FMSD = Franklin-McKinley School District, MHUSD = Morgan Hill Unified School								

Sources: 2015-16 Data from www.ed-data-org and www.kidsdata.org for Voices FM, Districts, County, and State. Internal Data for Voices MH and MP and provided in detail in Appendix E.

Voices Academies is aware of the concerns and potential challenges that come from

racial isolation, including lagging academic achievement, fewer effective teachers, higher

teacher turnover rates, less rigorous curricular resources, and inferior facilities and other

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[3] As of 2016-17 Voices Morgan Hill and Voices Mount Pleasant serve TK - 2nd grade, which

have traditionally low identification rates. The rate is expected to increase as 3rd - 8th is added.

educational resources.[4] This said, the majority of all students (54%) in California are Latino and this percentage skyrockets in the communities that Voices Academies serves. As a result, the Voices Academies student body is 92% Latino. Rather than see this concentration as a deficit, Voices Academies embraces it. In doing so, Voices Academies has developed a program that in fact closes the academic achievement gap, develops and retains effective teachers, and provides a rigorous curriculum within a school setting that nurtures learning and community.

B. Competitive Preference Priority 3 - Novice Applicant

Voices Academies is a Novice Applicant in terms of receipt for this grant, as it has never received a Replication and Expansion grant, has never been a member of a group application that received such a grant, and has not had an active discretionary grant from the Federal Government in the five years before the deadline. This said, while a Novice Applicant the Voices Academies team has the experience and expertise necessary to successfully implement a project of this scale during the grant period and ensure its sustainability after the grant period is complete. For details on the management plan, experience and expertise of team members, and financial and organizational model please see *Section IV.D Management Plan*.

Section III - Invitational Priority - Rigorous Evaluation

Voices Academies has achieved exceptional results in its first decade of operation. The use of data to drive decisions at all levels has been a core practice in realizing this success. Voices Academies is committed to ongoing monitoring and assessment of its program and practices as well as rigorous independent evaluation of its schools that will, if well implemented,

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[4] *Guidance on the Voluntary Use of Race to Achieve Diversity and Avoid Racial Isolation in Elementary and Secondary Schools*, U.S. Department of Education.

meet What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards. Voices Academies intends to disseminate successful practices to support other schools and school systems in adopting them to improve outcomes for their students. For information on Voices Academies current and future evaluation methods, please see *Section IV: Selection Criteria, Subsection C: A Quality Evaluation Plan.*

Section IV - Selection Criteria

A. Voices College-Bound Language Academies - A High Quality Applicant

A1. Mission

Voices Academies believes that California's future is directly tied to the educational success of today's students, the majority of whom are from low-income families and are Latino. The Voices Academies mission speaks to this purpose:

Voices College-Bound Language Academies will prepare all students for the challenges of higher education through the context of an academically rigorous dual-language program. In addition, we will ensure students demonstrate high academic achievement and apply critical thinking skills while making sense of their role within their own culture and the greater society.

Voices Academies has garnered remarkable results since its opening in 2007, resulting in the opening of two additional schools in 2015 to increase access to its outstanding model of education and meet increasing parent demand from surrounding communities. With this application, Voices Academies seeks to once again expand its impact by doubling the number of high quality seats available in its network. In doing so, Voices Academies will dramatically increase the number of students prepared for the rigors of high school and who ultimately become college graduates in the educationally underserved communities of Santa Clara and the

greater Bay Area. Furthermore, by disseminating its practices Voices Academies will support other schools and districts in dramatically improving the education provided to students from low-income families, who are Latino, and who are ELs across California and the nation.
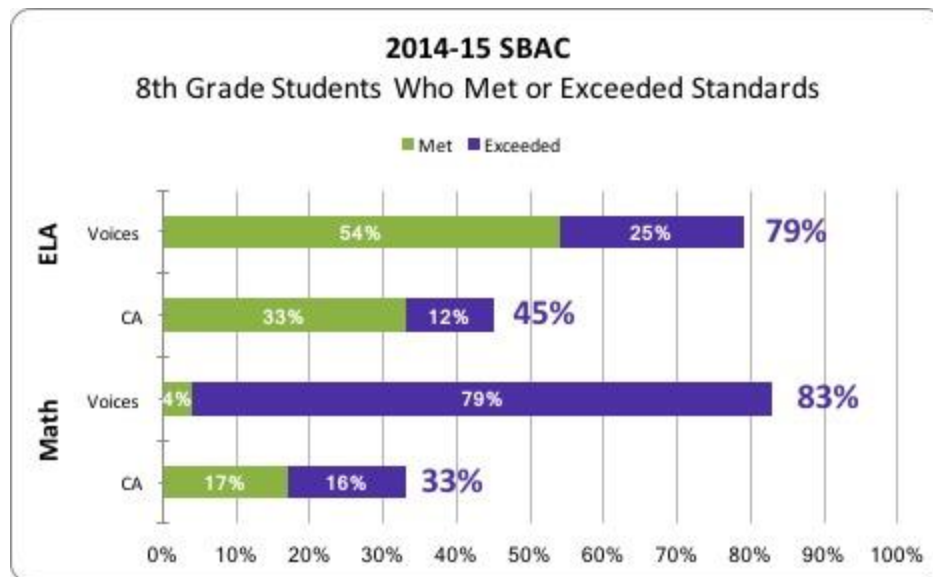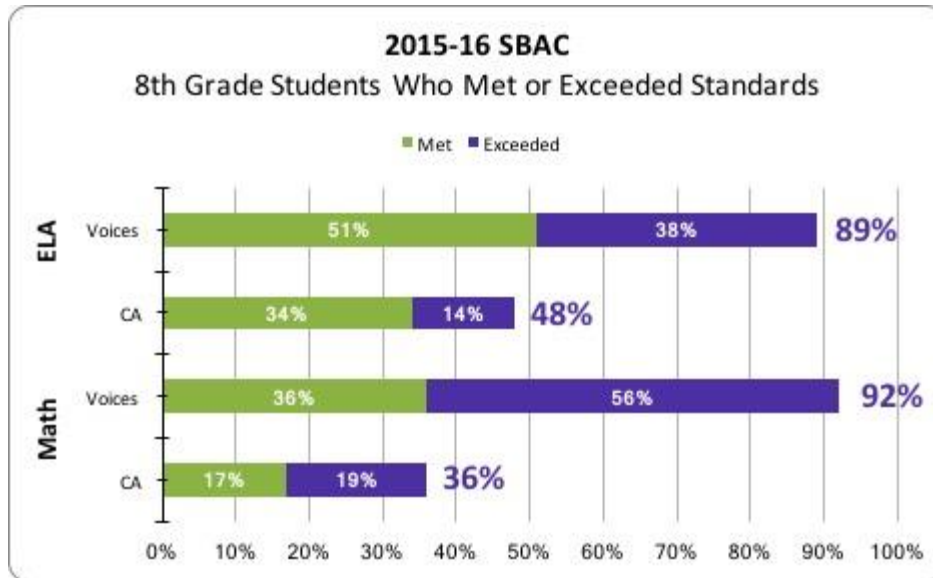
A2. Increasing Achievement for All Students

Since opening its first school in 2007, Voices Academies has established a clear track record of increasing academic achievement for all students and for each of the numerically significant subgroups of students it serves in its schools. Utilizing its dual-immersion model, student proficiency is built year upon year until students graduate 8th grade with proficiency rates that far surpass that of the district, county, and state.

To fully illustrate this work, it is best to start at the end point - looking at Voices Franklin-McKinley's first two classes of graduating 8th grade students. These are students for whom the majority started as Kindergarteners in 2007 and spent the next nine years within its dual-immersion model. Their success speaks volumes. As seen in the following tables, these students reached **overall** proficiency rates nearly double the state average in English Language Arts (ELA) and nearly triple that in Mathematics on the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) Assessment in each of the first two years of its administration.[5] In 2015-16, 89% of **all** Voices 8th graders met or exceeded standards in ELA and 92% did so in math. This was an increase over the previous year's already strong performance, in which 79% of all 8th graders met or exceeded standards in ELA and 83% did so in Math.

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[5] California suspended state testing in ELA and Math during 2013-14, as it transitioned to the Common Core. As such, only the past two years of data are available for these content areas.

2015-16 SBAC
8th Grade Students Who Met or Exceeded Standards

Met / Exceeded

ELA — Voices: 51% Met, 38% Exceeded — 89%
ELA — CA: 34% Met, 14% Exceeded — 48%
Math — Voices: 36% Met, 56% Exceeded — 92%
Math — CA: 17% Met, 19% Exceeded — 36%

2014-15 SBAC
8th Grade Students Who Met or Exceeded Standards

Met / Exceeded

ELA — Voices: 54% Met, 25% Exceeded — 79%
ELA — CA: 33% Met, 12% Exceeded — 45%
Math — Voices: 4% Met, 79% Exceeded — 83%
Math — CA: 17% Met, 16% Exceeded — 33%

These are rates **regardless** of ethnicity or program participation - while 92% of Voices Academies students are Latino, 67% come from low-income families, and 59% are ELs they have countered the trend seen for students with their demographics by significantly outperforming the state average in which only 54% of students are Latino, 59% come from low-income families, and 22% are ELs.

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This success is the end result of a program that systematically builds proficiency on a yearly basis for all students. As seen through a cohort analysis, students increased their proficiency between 2014-15 and 2015-16 in both ELA and Math, with the exception of the Class of 2020 who stayed at an already extremely high 89% in each year. In addition, SBAC data demonstrates that proficiency levels steadily increased at each grade level.
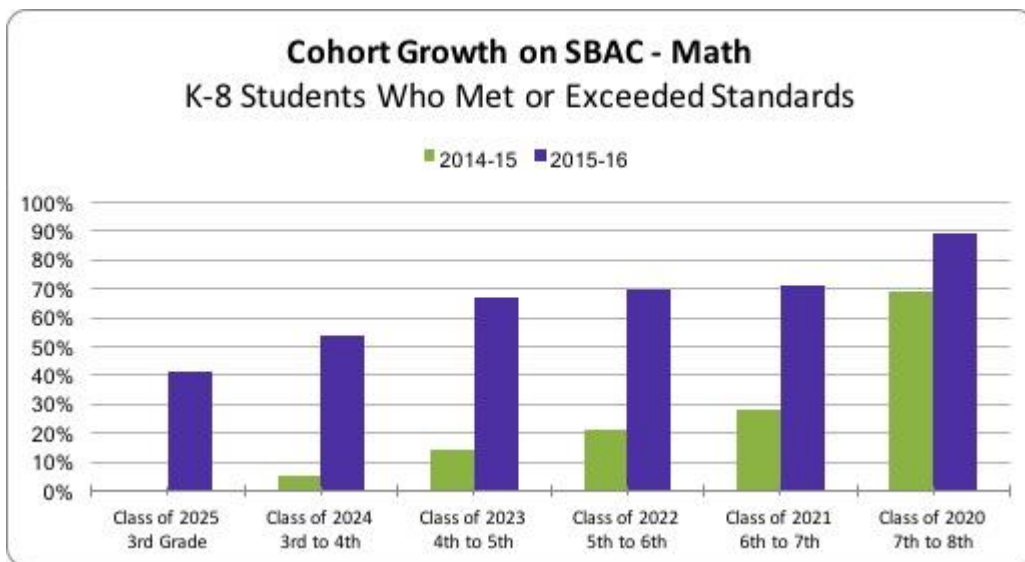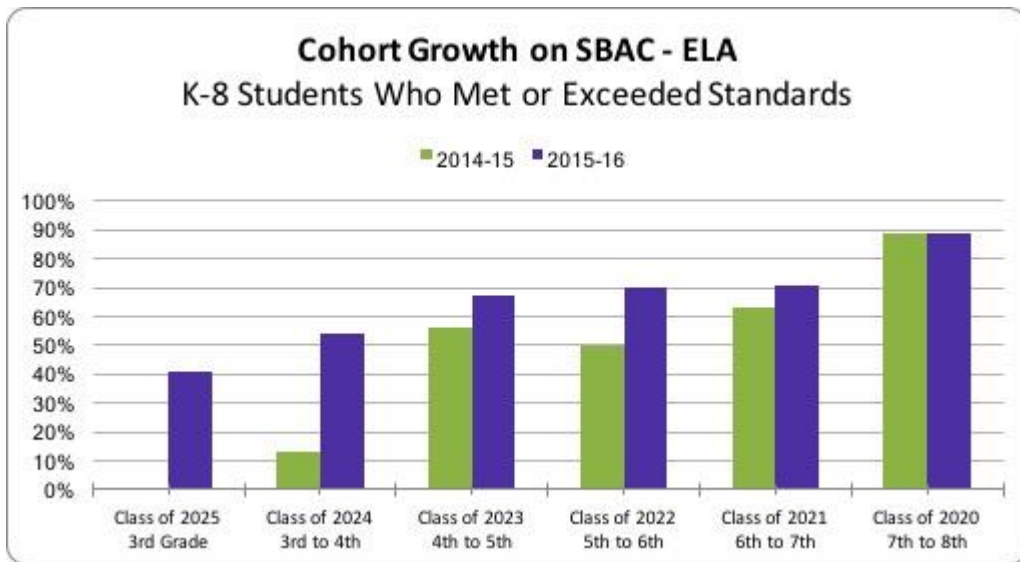
Finally, SBAC data clearly demonstrates that these results are being realized across all subgroups of students at Voices Franklin-McKinley - and that these results drastically outperform results being achieved for these subgroups in the district, county, and state. In 2015-16, Voices Academies students outperformed the district, county and state in all subgroups and overall regardless of subgroups in ELA.
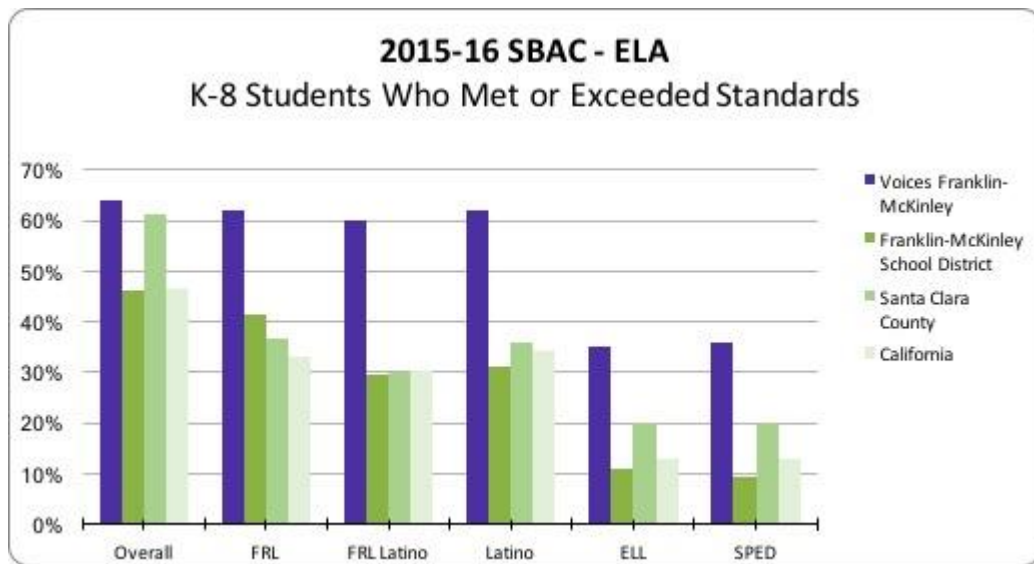
These results were built upon the foundation set in 2014-15, in which Voices Academies outperformed the district, county, and state across all subgroups and outperformed the district and state overall in the percent of students who met or exceeded state standards in ELA.

2014-15 SBAC - ELA
K-8 Students Who Met or Exceeded Standards
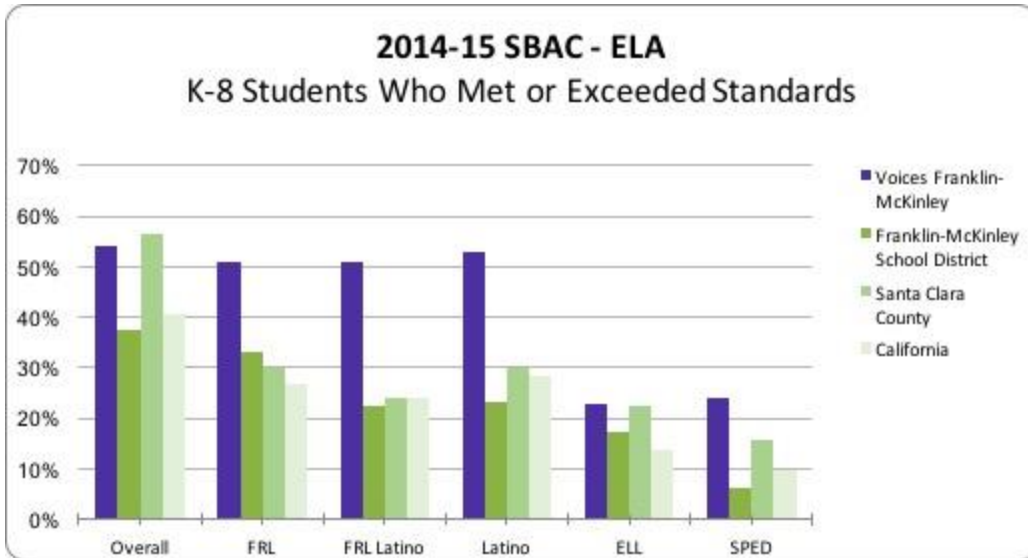
In Math, Voices Academies students outperformed the district and state overall and for all subgroups, and outperformed the county (which includes very affluent neighborhoods in Silicon Valley) in four out of five subgroups in 2015-16.

2015-16 SBAC - Math
K-8 Students Who Met or Exceeded Standards

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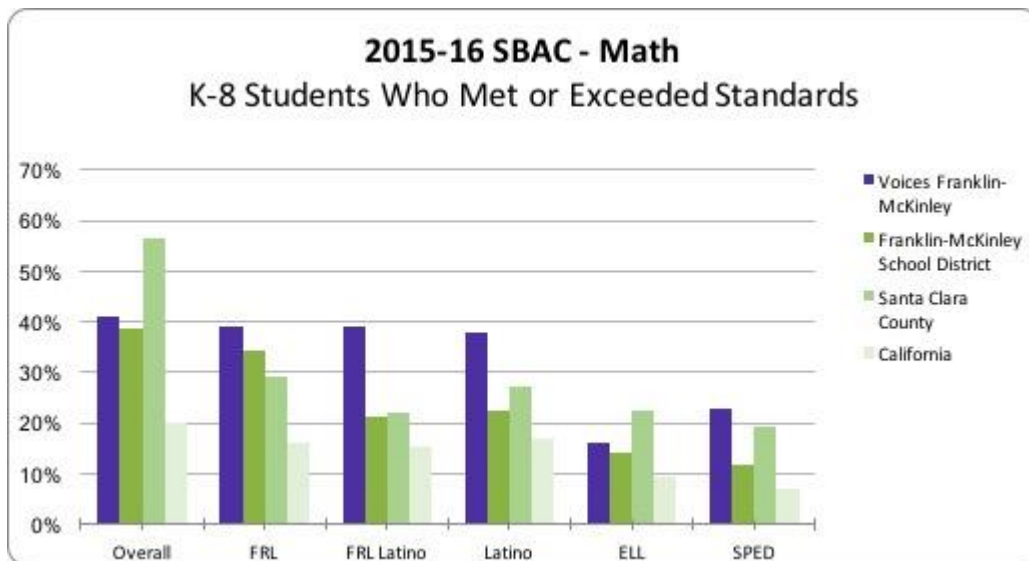
This has been an area of significant growth, as Voices Academies students outperformed the district, county, and/or state in only 15 of 20 subgroup comparisons in 2014-15 and did not outperform these entities in overall performance levels.

2014-15 SBAC - Math
K-8 Students Who Met or Exceeded Standards
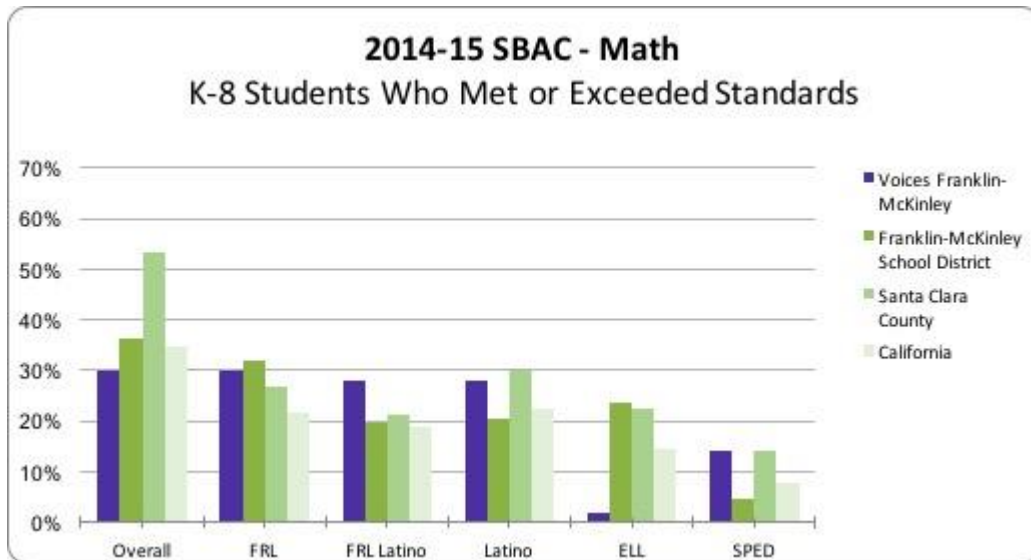
Please see *Appendix F: Student Achievement* for details on how Voices Academies is already increasing academic achievement for K - 1st grade students at its two new schools.

A3. Closing the Achievement Gap and Exceeding State Averages

The academic achievement results for educationally disadvantaged students served by Voices Academies schools have exceeded the average academic achievement results for similar students in the State of California. This includes annual student performance on statewide assessments, school ranking, student attendance rates, and retention rates. As a result, Voices Academies is rapidly closing the achievement gap for these students.

a. High Achievement on State Assessments

As demonstrated in *Section IV.A.2 Increasing Achievement for All Students*, Voices Academies is significantly increasing achievement rates for its students year to year and in

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comparison to their peers overall and across subgroups at both the district and state levels. In doing so, Voices Academies is not only exceeding the state average for each of these subgroups - it is rapidly closing the achievement gap. The clearest examples of this are found in looking at students based on socio-economic status and by ethnicity.

In terms of socio-economic status, the past two years of data clearly demonstrate that these students are achieving at nearly twice the state average in ELA. Furthermore, Voices Academies has increased the percent of these students who met or exceeded standards by a full 11% from 2014-15 to 2015-16, compared to only a 5% increase across the state. As a result, they are rapidly closing in on the achievement rates of their non-socio-economically disadvantaged peers and have nearly closed the achievement gap in ELA.

SBAC ELA - Closing the SES Achievement Gap
K-8 Students Who Met or Exceeded Standards
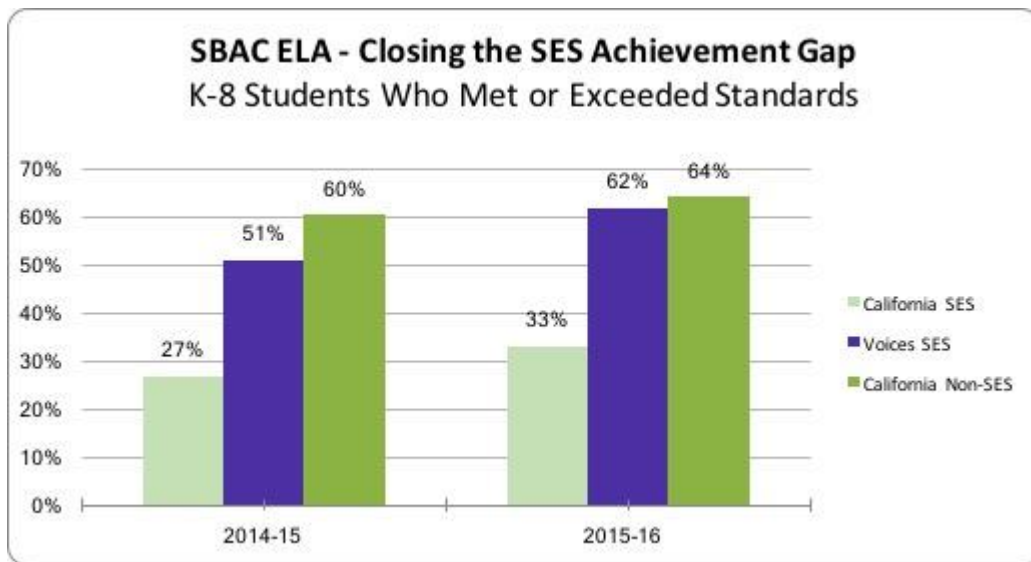
Similar results are found in Math, where Voices Academies students are now achieving at over twice the state average. Again, we see a significant increase in students who met or exceeded standards at Voices Academies from 2014-15 to 2015-16, with a 9% increase

compared to a 6% **decrease** across the state. As a result, these students are rapidly closing in on the achievement rates of their non-socio-economically disadvantaged peers in Math as well.

SBAC Math- Closing the SES Achievement Gap
K-8 Students Who Met or Exceeded Standards

	2014-15	2015-16
California SES	22%	16%
Voices SES	30%	39%
California Non-SES	49%	52%
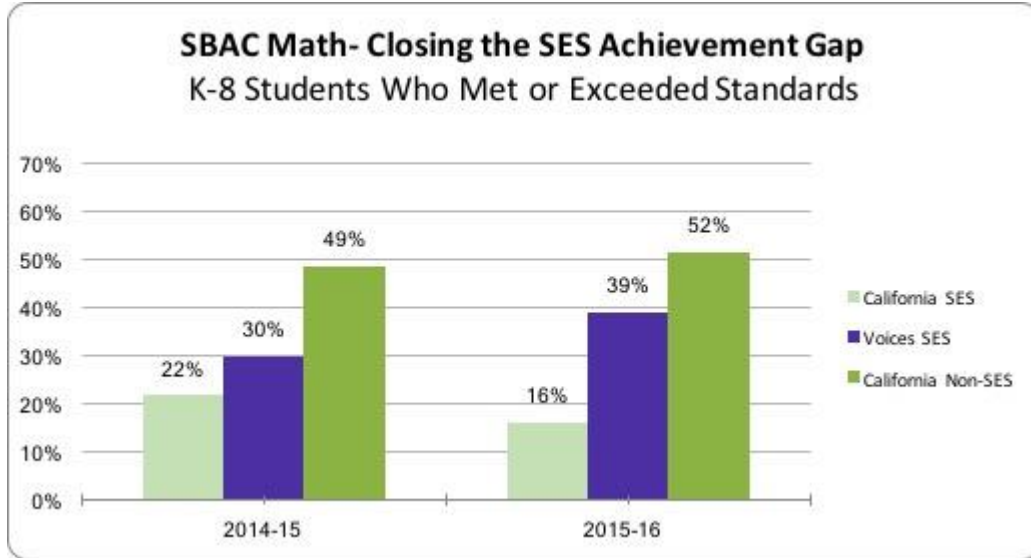
b. Excellent Historical Track Record of School Performance

Until 2013-14, all public schools in California received an Academic Performance Index (API) score which reflected the quality of the school program. The state goal was an API score of 800 or higher. Using the API, schools then received a State Ranking compared to all schools in the state and a Similar Schools Ranking compared to schools that shared similar demographics using a scale of 1 to 10. While this data is not from the previous three years, it provides the historical back drop for the current success of Voices Academies. Voices Franklin-McKinley, the flagship school and only school open during these years, consistently exceeded the state API target of 800 points, received the highest ranking for schools serving similar students, and was in the top tier of schools in the state regardless of demographics served.

Voices Franklin-McKinley - Performance Scores and Rankings[6]			
	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
API	839	859	898
State Ranking	7	7	9
Similar Schools Ranking	9	10	10

Strong Student Attendance

Regular attendance at school has a positive impact on student achievement, especially for students from low-income families and for students in grades TK through 1st.[7] As such, Voices Academies works explicitly with students and families to support strong attendance. In the current year, students across all three schools are attending at a rate of 95% or higher. In comparison, California's attendance rate was just 87.70% in 2014-15, which is the most recent year of publicly reported data.

Attendance Rates[8]			
	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Voices FM	TBD	95.99%	96.49%
Voices MH	n/a	94.72%	96.61%
Voices MP	n/a	92.89%	95.10%
California	87.70%	Not available	Not available

High Student Retention

The Voices Academies program has a strong cumulative effect on student achievement, as seen in *Section IV.A.2 Increasing Achievement for All Students*. As such, Voices Academies works with students and families to ensure strong retention and decrease mobility to the greatest degree possible. Voices Franklin-McKinley, the fully-grown flagship school, maintains a very

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[6] Source: http://api.cde.ca.gov/

[7] *Attendance in The Early Grades*, Attendance Works 2014.

[8] California data source: www.ed-data.org; Voices Academies data source: CALPADS Reports

low mobility rate. The two new schools, which are in their second year of operation, had higher mobility rates in their first year of operation that has now stabilized. The single greatest cause for student mobility across the CMO is relocation. The second cause is fit with program, which was experienced primarily at Voices Mount Pleasant in its opening year when families had a change of mind on committing to a dual-language program.

Student Mobility			
	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Voices FM	2.44%	3.68%	1.23%
Voices MH	n/a	8.08%	7.43%
Voices MP	n/a	18.33%	4.62%

Low Suspension and No Expulsion

Voices Academies believes that strong school culture supports learning and works proactively with students to develop positive behavior and support healthy decision making. This proactive approach has created a student culture and school climate in which suspensions are the exception rather than the norm. Suspension rates at all schools are well below the county and state average. There has not been a single expulsion since opening.

Suspension Rates			
	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Voices FM	1.1%	1.9%	0.4%
Voices MH	n/a	0.0%	0.0%
Voices MP	n/a	0.6%	0.9%
Franklin-McKinley School District	2.1%	Not available	Not available
Santa Clara County	2.5%	Not available	Not available
California	3.8%	Not available	Not available

Sources: 2014-15 data from www.ed-data.org. 2015-17 data is internally tracked and provided in *Appendix F: Student Academic Achievement*.

A4. Strong and Sustainable Organizational Model

Voices Academies is a strong operator and manager of schools with no compliance or management issues, as follows:

- All three schools opened by Voices Academies continue to be in operation, with no closures or revocations. Voices Franklin-McKinley was opened in 2007, renewed for its second term in 2012, and renewed for its third term in February 2019 by unanimous vote. Voices Morgan Hill and Voices Mount Pleasant are in their second years of operation and will be up for renewal in 2018 and 2020, respectively. All three schools remain affiliated with Voices Academies.

- Voices Academies has had no significant issues in the area of financial or operational management. The CMO has received clean audits with no findings since opening, maintains a balanced budget with positive cash flow, has developed strong reserves at its flagship school to mediate times of uncertainty, and maintains strong attendance (95% or higher) and a deep waiting list (770 students).

- Voices Academies has experienced no significant problems with statutory or regulatory compliance that could lead to revocation of the school's charter. It maintains a strong relationship with its authorizers, Franklin-McKinley School District (FMSD) for Voices Franklin-McKinley and Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE) for Voices Morgan Hill and Voices Mount Pleasant. It is part of a Compact with FMSD.

- Voices Academies has experienced no significant issues with respect to student safety. Families consistently rate student safety extremely high, with a 97% satisfaction rating for their child's school's work in ensuring their child's safety.

B. Serving Educationally Disadvantaged Students and Communities

B1. Current Service to the Educationally Disadvantaged

Voices Academies was founded by a group of dedicated educators with the goal of preparing the educationally underserved students of Santa Clara County for a rigorous high school education, in turn preparing them to gain admission and graduate from college. Since its opening in 2007, Voices Academies has stayed true to this goal recruiting a high population of educationally disadvantaged students and providing an educational program specifically tailored to their needs. As detailed in *Section IV.A. Voices College-Bound Language Academies - A High Quality Applicant*, Voices Academies has realized high levels of success. It now seeks to expand this service to students and families in additional high needs communities.

a. Student Population

As detailed in *Section II.A Competitive Priorities, Promoting Diversity*, Voices Academies focuses on preparing educationally disadvantaged students for higher education through an academically rigorous dual-language program. The Voices Academies network, as well as each of the three schools, serve a higher percentage of students who are from low-income families, are Latino, and are ELs than the state average. In addition, it serves nearly an equivalent number of students with special needs.

Student Demographics					
	Voices CMO	**Voices FM**	**Voices MH**	**Voices MP**	**California**
FRL	**67%**	66%	67%	70%	**59%**
Latino	**91%**	92%	91%	93%	**54%**
EL	**59%**	46%	80%	79%	**22%**
SPED	**10%**	11%	6%	8%	**11%**

The demand for seats within Voices Academies schools currently exceeds supply, with 770 students on the waiting list which is enough to fully enroll one and a half additional schools.

2016-17 Wait List			
Grade	Number	Grade	Number
Kindergarten	90	5th Grade	134
1st Grade	68	6th Grade	103
2nd Grade	107	7th Grade	78
3rd Grade	87	8th Grade	23
4th Grade	80	**Total**	**770**

b. Educational Model Tailored to Strengths and Needs

The educational model at Voices Academies is specifically tailored to leverage the strengths and support the needs of its target student population. All instructional strategies and techniques have been selected because they are research-based and have been proven as best practices in serving students from low-income families, students of color, and ELs. The model includes the following key components: (1) Dual Language Immersion, (2) Rigorous, Common Curriculum, (3) College-Bound Focus, (4) Data Driven Culture and Practices, (5) Differentiated Supports for Students with Special Needs and ELs, and (6) Technology Integration that Prepares Students for High School, College, and Career.

(1) Dual Language Immersion Model

The Dual Language Immersion Model is a culturally responsive approach to the Voices Academies target population that both celebrates and leverages the assets with which they enter school. Voices Academies offers an 80:20 Dual Immersion model, in which teachers are trained to use appropriate differentiated instruction to help students reach both English and Spanish language proficiency. The 80:20 refers to the distribution of instruction in Kindergarten, with 80% in Spanish and 20% in English. The percentage of English instruction increases by 10% per year until it reaches 50:50 in third grade where it remains.

Research shows that bilingual students who learn in a dual immersion education program outperform English language learners in other programs as well as monolingual native speakers.
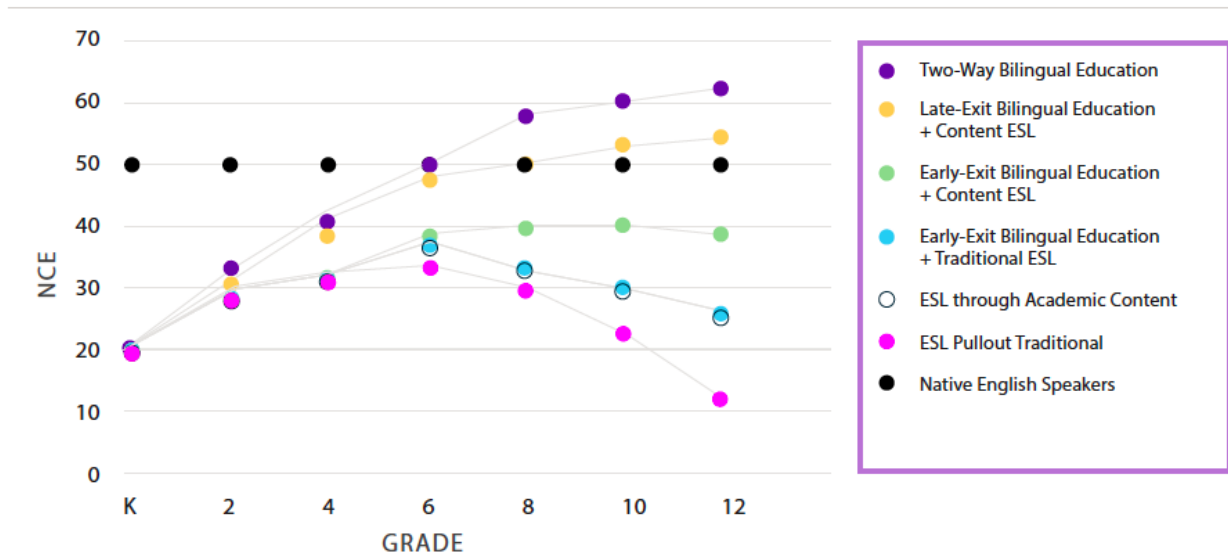
CALIFORNIA DEPT. OF EDUCATION LANGUAGE POLICY AND LEADERSHIP OFFICE
THOMAS & COLLIER, 2000

Furthermore, these gains persist and continue to accelerate into the high school years, when the performance of other EL groups tends to drop dramatically. Finally, Voices Academies expectation that students can perform at high levels in the earlier years rather than expecting results to only occur in upper grades over time has resulted in higher levels of performance earlier than is seen in most dual language programs.

(2) Rigorous, Common Curriculum

Voices Academies utilizes a common set of curricular materials and programs across schools, to support fidelity in implementation of the model and achievement of high results for students and their families. Utilizing the Understanding by Design methodology, units of study in all core curriculum areas have been developed in alignment with the standards for each discipline including the CCSS, NGSS, and CSS. These common sets of curriculum units are

housed on the ATLAS data management system, providing easy access to teachers across the network. Voices Academies continues to refine units as part of its commitment to data-driven continuous improvement, including adding, updating, aligning, and rounding out content.

In the areas of literacy and math, Voices Academies specifically uses a balanced approach as required to master the CCSS. The balanced literacy program supports all students in becoming literate readers and writers in their primary language by third grade and being proficient readers, writers, and speakers in two languages, English and Spanish, by eighth grade. The balanced math program supports students in developing conceptual understanding, procedural fluency, and mathematical reasoning/problem-solving skills as well as the ability to communicate precisely about their mathematical understanding. Mathematical understanding and reasoning are prioritized before introducing algorithms or steps for solving a problem.

Finally, in the middle years an increased focus is placed on developing the "Five Power Mindsets" of explaining, analyzing, evaluating, justifying, and creating. These scaffolded yet rigorous steps support students' critical understanding of subject matter and are used across all content areas with the intention that these become internalized and applied throughout a student's academic and professional career. Please see *Appendix H: Additional Information* for the *Curriculum Guide Overview*.

(3) A College-Bound Focus

While nine in ten Latino young adults say a college degree is important for success in life, only 16% of Latino adults over 25 in California hold an associate or bachelor's degree compared to 38% of all adults in that age group. A focus on higher education at an early age is required to reverse this trend. Voices Academies begins preparing students for higher education and high quality careers from the start of their elementary career. With the tagline "Find your

path and plan for the future!" Voices Academies makes it known that it's never too early and then supports students and their families in developing a realistic plan, becoming academically ready to take on opportunities, and being prepared to overcome any obstacles that stand in their way. Please see *Appendix H: Additional Information* for the *Parent Workshop Calendar* which provides an overview of how Voices Academies works with families to support this progression.

As a critical bridge to achieving college acceptance and graduation, Voices Academies supports students and their families in understanding and evaluating their high school options to ensure they matriculate to schools that will continue them on their college-bound path. The goal is that students attend high schools that offer AP courses, as these become gatekeepers for college success. Students from the first two graduating classes have attended a myriad of high performing district high schools (AP track) and charter high schools, including Summit, Downtown College Prep, University Preparatory Academy, as well as local parochial schools.

(4) A Data Driven Culture and Practice

Implementation of a data driven culture and practice at the classroom, grade level, individual school, and CMO levels supports Voices Academies in continually improving its program and differentiating its instruction in service of all students. Multiple data streams are leveraged, including baseline, formative, and summative internal and external assessments; curriculum-embedded assessments and performance tasks; observation protocols for language development; and survey instruments to gather feedback and input across stakeholder groups. This data is used monitor progress towards goals and student achievement outcomes, inform instruction and differentiation, and evaluate the efficacy of the instructional program. Please see Section *IV.C.1 Quantitative and Qualitative Data Practice* for an overview of measures.

At the school level, the data practice is organized into Results-Oriented Cycles of Inquiry (ROCI). Within each cycle, all grade levels have "Big Goals" that identify research-based, developmentally appropriate, rigorous goals for academic achievement (Please see *Appendix H: Additional Information* for the *Voices Academies Big Goals*). These goals are reviewed by teacher teams prior to each ROCI to develop an Instructional Plan. After each benchmark assessment cycle, teams analyze data to find gaps in their instruction and strengths based on fidelity to best practices, plan support for small groups and individual students, create stronger lessons, reflect on instructional growth, and celebrate success. These learnings are documented in an Assessment Analysis and inform development of the next Instructional Plan. ROCI leads to stronger lessons reaching more students, which leads to growth in student achievement; develops stronger, better teachers by guiding them through a data driven instruction cycle; and prepares instructional leaders to make critical decisions at their sites with the support of the Chief Academic Officer and Chief Executive Officer.

(5) Differentiated Supports for Students with Special Needs and ELs

Voices Academies is committed to serving diverse populations of students, including students with special needs and ELs. As such, Voices Academies focuses on prevention, intervention and acceleration for all students. Supports and scaffolds are provided for students who are not making adequate progress (defined as achieving at less than 80% on interim assessments) via a highly successful Response to Intervention (RTI) framework. In this framework, students receive tiered levels of support primarily as push-in services during their block schedule. Through this approach, Voices Academies is able to provide targeted interventions for students in a risk-free and developmentally-oriented school environment.

Cutting Edge Special Education

The high level of differentiated supports coupled with scaffolded rigor found at Voices Academies draws a population of students with special needs that mirrors the state average. Voices Academies utilizes a RTI model focused on inclusion to 1) prevent the development of learning needs, 2) provide intervention services when they do occur, and 3) ultimately identify students who may have a special learning need and refer them for assessment for services under the Special Education (SPED) program. The CMO's Director of Special Populations oversees implementation and fidelity of the RTI and SPED programs, with a Student Services Manager at each school site overseeing daily implementation.

Students with special needs thrive in the inclusion-based model at Voices Academies due to the abundant small group and 1:1 supports. As a result, they are achieving at over twice the level of their peers statewide - 36% compared to 13% in ELA and 23% compared to 11% in Math. As a result of this success, Voices Academies was asked to serve on an advisory panel to support Franklin-McKinley School District (authorizer of its flagship school) to share best practices and inform the district as it moves toward an inclusion model.

Finally, Voices Academies fully understands its responsibility to identify, refer, and work cooperatively in locating students within its schools who have or may have exceptional needs that qualify them to receive special education services. Toward these ends, each school implements SELPA policies and procedures to ensure timely identification and referral. A student is referred for special education only after the resources of the regular education program have been considered, and where appropriate, utilized (with the exception of direct parent request for assessment). Please see *Appendix H: Additional Information, Serving Students with*

Special Needs for a complete overview of the special education program and assurances as they relate to special education compliance.

Systematic ELD for English Learners

While the Dual Immersion Program is the primary support for ELs, Voices Academies also provides Systematic English Language Development (ELD) to support ELs in developing English proficiency across all four domains (reading, writing, listening and speaking) and increasing students' ability to communicate for a range of purposes. Systematic ELD is taught daily, during time specifically dedicated to teaching English. Systematic ELD instruction 1) Explicitly teaches language to students at their assessed proficiency level, 2) Emphasizes oral language development (listening and speaking) through carefully structured, purposeful, and engaging interactions, 3) Lays out a scope and sequence of grammatical forms and sentence structures needed to communicate for a range of purposes (functions), 4) Teaches vocabulary for social and academic purposes moving from general to increasingly precise words, 5) Provides ample oral and written practice for application of newly taught language in authentic contexts, and 6) Does not replace literacy or other content instruction, but rather equips ELs with the language they are not likely to learn outside of school, will not be taught in any other content area, and are expected to use every day for academic and real life purposes. Students that are English proficient receive ELA instruction during the time that their peers are receiving Systematic ELD instruction. Please see *Appendix H: Additional Information, Serving English Learners* for a complete overview of the ELD program and assurances.

(6) Technology Integration that Prepares Students for High School, College, and Career

To be truly prepared for college and career in the 21st century, students must develop fluency in the "third language" of technology. This requires explicit and thoughtful work to

ensure that students cross the digital divide often found in their communities. Voices Academies leverages technologies to enhance key components of the model and achieve better results/ This includes supporting small group and centers based learning rotations, providing personalized and differentiated learning paths, allowing students to express their ideas and work through multi-media, and developing skills that support high school, college, and career readiness. Voices Academies maintains a 2:1 ratio of iPads in TK through 1st grade and a 1:1 ratio of Chromebooks in grades 2-8 to support this work.

B2. Expanding Service to the Educationally Disadvantaged

Voices Academies has developed a detailed plan for expanding enrollment, identifying new markets, and ultimately green-lighting the opening of its new schools in educationally underserved communities. This will ensure that Voices Academies does not just open new schools, but rather will open them in communities of need with significant parent demand.

a. Expanding Enrollment

Over the next five years, Voices Academies will expand from three schools to a network of six high performing schools in Santa Clara and surrounding counties. When fully built out in 2026-27, Voices Academies will serve close to 3,000 students in TK through 8th grade.

Student Enrollment Plan							
	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2026-27
Number of Schools	**3**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**6**	**6**
TK	39	38	41	44	47	47	19
K	171	162	211	264	317	317	317
1	158	171	224	280	336	336	336
2	108	158	170	224	280	336	336
3	56	108	168	169	224	280	336
4	56	56	109	168	169	224	336

5	56	56	56	109	168	169	336
6	56	56	56	56	109	168	336
7	48	56	56	56	56	109	336
8	47	48	56	56	56	56	280
Total	**798**	**909**	**1147**	**1426**	**1762**	**2042**	**2968**

b. Identifying New Markets

In identifying new markets, Voices Academies holds a primary focus on those communities in which high concentrations of traditionally educationally underserved students live and for whom academic achievement is inexcusably low. It then considers markets against identified green-lighting metrics to evaluate potential and prioritize options. The following markets are currently being researched for potential expansion.

Potential Markets[9]							
District	#	#	%	#	%	# Latino	%
Cabrillo Unified	3,334	1,366	41%	936	28%	1,687	51%
Hayward Unified	22,555	16,651	74%	7,291	32%	14,071	62%
Oakland Unified	48,077	35,829	75%	15,608	32%	21,039	44%
Pajaro Valley Unified	20,354	15,339	75%	9.105	45%	16,782	82%
San Jose Unified	32,454	14,239	44%	7,127	22%	17,301	53%
West Contra Costa Unified	30,596	21,471	70%	10,652	34%	16,148	53%

Of these markets, Voices Academies has selected West Contra Costa for school number four and has submitted a charter petition to open in the 2018-19 school year. This decision was made by the Board of Directors utilizing the green-lighting metrics described below, which included strong parent demand. For schools five and six Voices Academies will conduct

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[9] Source: www.ed-data.org

research; strategize with the board, community members, and funders; meet and train parent leaders; and ultimately green-light two new markets within the next 6 months to 1 year.

c. Green-lighting Metrics

Voices Academies has established a green-lighting process that is used by the Voices Academies Staff and Board of Directors to measure future growth against key priorities using a weighted scale. Voices Academies holds an absolute priority for locations within Santa Clara County and surrounding counties. New markets must be "drive-able" from the Central Office in order to gain the necessary efficiencies from CMO staffing, ensure each new school feels connected to the greater network, and provide ease of support on a daily basis. Once the absolute priority is met, the following seven green-lighting criteria are used.

- *(25%) Need: 30 pt+ Achievement Gap and overall low achievement.* There must be a clear need for Voices Academies, as evidenced by an achievement gap of 30 points or greater.

- *(20%) Demographics: High numbers of English Language Learners and economically disadvantaged in the district/community.* Voices Academies is committed to serving high numbers of students who are from low-income families, Latino, and ELs. While its schools represent diverse communities, Voices Academies will target neighborhoods within districts with a high density of these educationally underserved students.

- *(15%) Political Climate: Favorable with respect to potential authorizers, other charters, legally, etc.* In these particularly litigious times, Voices Academies seeks to grow in places where there is a neutral or favorable political environment. While difficult to come by, and not absolutely essential for growth, Voices Academies works to ensure that in

each community where it will replicate that there is the possibility of receiving district approval and, more importantly, a likelihood of winning county or state appeal.

- **(15%) Facilities: Presence of options that are affordable, close to/in target communities and for which there seems to be a plan forward.** Voices Academies has developed a sharp facilities analysis that allows staff and board to make informed, strategic decisions about replication based on real information about space. This includes identification of multiple appropriate facilities options, development of potential paths forward, and a plan to mitigate the risks that come with uncertain and ever changing facilities issues. Ultimately, Voices Academies is committed to having a signed lease 9-12 months ahead of a school opening and to having a clearly demarcated "go, no go" facilities option in the timeline for green-lighting new schools. This 9-12 month lead time corresponds with the school's notification of district Prop 39 site availability. Voices Academies will run the lease and Prop 39 options on parallel tracks selecting the most favorable option based on a number of critical factors.

- **(10%) Parent Demand: Existing organized parent base.** Voices Academies seeks to grow in regions where parents and community based organizations are actively organizing and demanding stronger educational options for their children, or beginning efforts in this direction. Charter schools have too often attempted to grow in communities where there is no organizing, no demand, and no relationships. Voices Academies seeks to build relationships and prioritize community and parental relationships before opening schools in an area. Toward that end, the Voices Academies Leadership Team includes a Community Engagement Strategist (CES) with 10 years in education and parent organizing. As part of this grant, a Parent Engagement Manager (PEM) with over 5 years

organizing experience will work at the school site level as well. Within each target community, these individuals will develop relationships with families, grassroots and grasstops community members, and other non-profit organizations.

- *(10%) Human Capital: Teacher pipeline.* Given the teacher shortage across the country, Voices Academies must ensure that its schools are located in proximity to a source for teacher talent, such as a university or Teach for America (TFA) hub. To develop future educators and retain those already at Voices Academies, the CMO has built out its own teacher and leadership pipeline as well. Please see *Appendix H, Talent Management and Recruitment Plan* for detailed information on these efforts.

- *(5%) Competition: Presence of other charter schools, other dual language schools, competition for funding and philanthropy.* High quality charter schools in California have a deep commitment to underserved communities. As a result, prime areas for growth are increasing in competition for students as well as other resources. Voices Academies will seek out areas where competition is manageable but the community needs are great, even if it means not attempting to grow in the most obvious regions.

d. Focused Student Recruitment

Voices Academies has developed a robust student recruitment plan designed to identify and attract families with school aged children to its schools while supporting them through the application process. Consistent with the Voices Academies commitment to empowering families and communities, the plan is heavily focused on parent to parent recruitment. The comprehensive recruitment plan includes activities such as door knocking to introduce families to Voices Academies and distribute and collect applications; hosting tables at community events and businesses; conducting outreach at preschools, churches, community centers, and businesses;

attending cultural events within the community; and hosting information sessions and school tours. The Community Engagement Strategist and Parent Engagement Manager provide parents with a script, training that includes role playing, informational materials to support high-quality implementation, and lists of potential community-specific locations to target. Please see *Appendix H: Additional Information* for the complete *Voices Academies Recruitment Plan*.

e. Admissions, Lottery, and Enrollment

Voices Academies does not discriminate against any student on the basis of race, color, national origin (including English language learners), ethnicity, sex, gender identity or expression, religion, ability, native language, sex, sexual orientation, or against students with disabilities or any other basis prohibited by state and federal law. Open enrollment policies and lottery practices have been designed to ensure equitable access for all students, while ensuring compliance with applicable state and federal law. This includes establishing an annual recruiting and admission cycle, which provides reasonable time for all of the following: (1) outreach and marketing, (2) tour sessions for parents, (3) open enrollment and application period, (4) public random drawing ("lottery") if necessary, and (5) enrollment. Voices Academies fills vacancies or openings that become available after this process using a waiting list.

Applications are accepted during a publicly advertised open enrollment period each year for enrollment in the following school year. Following the open enrollment period each year, applications are counted to determine whether any grade level has received more applications than availability. In the event that this happens, a public random drawing is held to determine

admission for the impacted grade level, with the exception of the following students, who are guaranteed admission in the following school year.[10]

- Students currently enrolled at the Charter School

- Siblings of students already enrolled or admitted into the Charter School

- Children of teachers or staff, not to exceed 10% of the total Charter School enrollment

Admission preferences in the case of a public random drawing shall be given to the following students:

- Students who reside in the District

- Students who qualify for free or reduced price meals

At the conclusion of the public random drawing, all students who were not granted admission due to capacity are placed on the waiting list in the order selected according to their draw in the lottery. Applications are accepted for a specified period after the conclusion of the first public random drawing. At the conclusion of this period, a subsequent public random drawing is conducted and students are placed at the end of the waiting list in the order drawn. This waiting list allows the option of enrollment in the case of an opening during the current school year. In no circumstances does a waiting list carry over to the following school year.

Public random drawing rules, deadlines, dates and times are communicated in English and Spanish in the application form, the Voices Academies website, social media sites, and prospective parent tours.

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[10] If the number of exempted students exceeds available capacity at any grade level, a lottery will be held within the group of exempted students to determine admission and begin the wait list.

C. A Quality Evaluation Plan

Voices Academies is data-driven across all levels - classroom, grade, individual school, and CMO. The current quantitative and qualitative data practice drives instruction and informs staff and stakeholders on whether or not students are being served well. There are multiple forms of data collection, from formative and summative assessments to diagnostic and internally-created assessments. Data is consistently and constantly used to monitor progress.

As part of this grant, Voices Academies seeks to build upon this strong foundational practice to conduct a quasi-experimental independent evaluation of both its existing and its replicated schools. Voices Academies will use this data to further refine its program in support of its students, ensure fidelity in replication of best practices, and disseminate results with the broader educational community to increase outstanding educational opportunities for educationally disadvantaged students across the state and nation.

C1. Quantitative and Qualitative Data Practice

Voices Academies currently utilizes both internal and external quantitative and qualitative data to measure the quality of its program to inform continual improvement. These include multiple measures that may also be leveraged in assessing progress toward the project goals of 1) Increasing access to an outstanding TK-8 dual-immersion educational program for the most underserved communities in Santa Clara county and its surrounding communities, and 2) Being a leader in providing models and practices for outstanding education for students who are from low income families, Latino, and ELs. The existing set of measures will be refined and expanded upon in collaboration with the independent evaluator over the course of this project.

<u>Quantitative Data</u>

- **Academic Performance** - Voices Academies uses the full suite of assessments within the California Assessment of Student Progress and Performance (CAASPP) to monitor student academic achievement. This includes the SBAC in ELA and Math for Grades 3-8, the California Standards Test (CST) in Science for Grades 5 & 8, and the Physical Fitness Test for Grades 5 & 7. In addition, Voices Academies utilizes Illuminate's Interim Assessments three times per year to monitor progress toward standards and Northwest Educational Association's (NWEA) Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) annually to measure individual student growth. Furthermore, a Fiction and Non-fiction Reading Assessment is administered in both English and Spanish, including running record, fluency, and comprehension, as well as an on-demand Writing Assessment and Oral Fluency Assessment. Finally, curriculum-embedded assessments are used at the grade and classroom level to monitor ongoing mastery of content and skills, including Exit Tickets, Quizzes, and Tests; Projects, Products, and Presentations; and Performance-based Assessments.

- **Language Development** - Voices Academies uses a range of assessments in both English and Spanish to measure student progress toward fluency in each language and bi-literacy. This includes the annually administered California English Language Development Test (CELDT) for all grades, interim assessments including CELD by Curriculum Associates (aligned to the CELDT), A Developmental English Proficiency Test (ADEPT), LAS Links Online Español, and internally developed assessments of Concepts of Print, Phonemic Awareness, Letter Name and Sound Identification, Sight Words, Vocabulary, Spelling, and Oral and Reading Fluency and Comprehension.

- **School Culture and Climate** - Voices Academies monitors students' non-academic traits as well as school culture through a Student Observation Checklist of Civic Skills and Behaviors. Data on attendance, chronic absenteeism, student and staff mobility, suspensions, and expulsions is also regularly reviewed toward this end. Finally, annual surveys are administered to gather data on stakeholder perception and satisfaction, including the Columbia University Teacher's College Survey Instrument.

Qualitative Data

- **Teacher Practice** - Teachers are regularly assessed against a uniform Teacher Practice Rubric, during both formal and informal observations by Principals.

- **Program Implementation -** School administration regularly conducts walk-through evaluations of all classrooms to monitor program implementation. Key stakeholders are included in these walk-throughs on a rotating basis.

- **Stakeholder Satisfaction** - An annual survey, also used for quantitative data, is administered to gather information on stakeholder perceptions and satisfaction. Interviews and focus groups are held to gather additional, qualitative data to illuminate key areas of strength and need.

- **Outreach and Dissemination** - The CMO tracks community outreach and dissemination efforts. Under Goal 2 of this project, this will be an area to grow and systematize as part of the independent evaluation to gather data on both efforts and their effects.

Voices Academies utilizes its Quantitative and Qualitative data to inform ongoing adjustments in its program and implementation, as well as its outreach and advocacy efforts. In addition, it annually reports on measures through the following:

- **Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP)** - Identifies the school goals, measures, actions and related expenditures, which are developed and reviewed with stakeholders including families, the School Site Council (SSC), and the English Language Advisory Committee (ELAC). They are monitored at the county and state level.

- **California School Report Card** - Goes into effect in 2017-18 and monitors school performance across eight state priorities for the overall population, as well as subgroups.

- **Measurable Pupil Outcomes** - Identifies goals and measures that the school must achieve as a condition of charter renewal and monitored by the authorizer.

C2. Quasi-experimental Independent Evaluation

Voices Academies will build upon this existing practice by contracting with an independent evaluator to design and conduct a quasi-experimental study of its schools. Voices Academies has access to multiple institutions of higher learning across the Bay Area and has held initial discussions with the University of Santa Clara about the possibility of an independent evaluation and research study. The University of California at Berkeley and San Francisco, California State University at San Jose and East Bay, and Stanford University all conduct research within the local TK-12 educational landscape and could also serve as evaluators. WestEd is also a prominent local research institute that could be approached.

The quasi-experimental independent evaluation will, at a minimum, collect quantitative and qualitative data from existing and new data streams to answer the following questions in each goal area:

Goal 1: Increasing access to an outstanding TK-8 dual-immersion educational program for the most underserved communities in Santa Clara county and its surrounding communities.

- How consistent is the program implementation and are results across Voices Academies schools? To what extent do these vary by school, school maturity, and location?

- In what areas do replicated schools require the most support? To what extent does this vary based on location?

Goal 2: Being a leader in providing models and practices for outstanding education for students who are from low income families, Latino, and ELs.

- To what extent does the dual-immersion language program promote TK-8 student achievement in both languages? To what extent does this vary by school, school maturity, and location?

- To what extent does the Voices Academies program impact post-Voices achievement, including high school readiness as measured by enrollment in AP courses, high school graduation rates, college matriculation rates, and college graduation rates?

Data will be collected for each existing and replicated charter school, to inform implementation and continual improvement over the course of the project and beyond to answer these research questions. Data will also be gathered for students within the local district and county for each school, as a comparison set against these community averages. Finally, data will be gathered for students attending other charter schools within the local district for each school, to provide a data set that controls for the variable of school choice being made by parents. Student level data from all sources will be disaggregated by subgroups (i.e. race, ethnicity, English language fluency, and family income) to monitor and address any gaps in achievement.

The Grant Program Manager will be responsible for overseeing the project and serving as the primary liaison to the independent evaluator, working in close collaboration with the Chief

Academic Officer (CAO) and school site Principals. The Data Manager will be responsible for overseeing all data collection, analysis, and dissemination in support of the project.

C3. Dissemination Plan

As demonstrated through the goals of this project, Voices Academies is deeply committed to disseminating its best practices - both those already identified and those recognized through the evaluation process during this grant cycle. Avenues for dissemination include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Establishing a partnership with a local university or research institute, to conduct quasi-experimental research and publish a white paper on findings and best practices

- Developing and distributing annual reports and a final report, that share data and best practices in an easily accessible format for all stakeholders

- Presenting at local, state, and national conferences to share best practices

- Establishing teacher and administrator fellowship programs, to provide training in best practices for serving students who are Latino, from low-income families, and ELs

- Facilitating school site visits to allow observation of the program in action

D. Organizational Structure that Will Ensure Quality Implementation and Sustainability

Voices Academies is an organization ready to grow. By taking 10 years to replicate, Voices Academies ensured that the academic model is effective for its students. This effective and replicable model, combined with strong academic results, parental demand, and unique leadership all pointed Voices Academies in the direction of growth. In 2015-16 two additional school sites were opened, allowing the CMO to road test and prove its model for replication. As such, Voices Academies is now well positioned to replicate three additional high quality schools

between 2018 and 2022, doubling the size of the CMO and schools in operation. To accomplish this growth, Voices Academies will focus on the following four areas:

- **Articulating Core Beliefs for Replication** - To fulfill its mission, Voices Academies has successfully executed on five core beliefs to meet the rigorous standards it holds for schools and students:

    1. All students have the ability to achieve academic excellence;

    2. All students deserve effective teachers that produce outstanding results;

    3. All students receive an equitable education with intentional student supports;

    4. Voices Academies provides clear standards, research-proven curriculum, and frequent assessments;

    5. Voices Academies is a mission-driven school community.

    These beliefs guide all curriculum and instruction, student and staff expectations, and community outreach at existing schools, and guide the launch of future network schools.

- **Building a Strong Charter Management Organization (CMO)** - Voices Academies is a strong CMO that provides support services to all network schools. The CMO will be led by a combination of founding Voices Academies Flagship leaders and highly qualified externally hired staff that will ensure that schools and their leaders have the resources and support needed to fulfill the network's overall mission. The CMO central office will remove barriers from schools and among other services, provide leadership development and academic guidance to school leaders.

- **Ensuring Accountability At All Levels** - By assuming replication responsibilities and management of the schools, the CMO will ensure that all schools and the Central Office are successful in meeting their mission. Holding staff at all levels accountable, proper

governance, and a strong performance management system will ensure that students are obtaining a high-quality education that prepares them to succeed in a college preparatory high school and become bilingual, competent and lifelong learners. Strong test scores, long student wait lists, and positive parent surveys will continue to demonstrate the strength of Voices Academies.

- **Replicating Strategically** - Voices Academies will focus replication specifically within Santa Clara County and its surrounding counties, deepening its roots in these communities. The core beliefs of high academic expectations, strong leadership, a rigorous program, intentional supports, outcomes driven instruction, and a mission-driven community will be first and foremost in the continued strategic replication from three to six schools. Likewise, a strong school culture will be nurtured at each new network school, as this has been vital to the success of Voices Franklin-McKinley, Voices Morgan Hill, and Voices Mount Pleasant.

Having successfully opened two new schools in 2015, Voices Academies will open its fourth school in 2018, its fifth school in 2019, and a sixth school in 2020. The growth pace of one school a year allows Voices Academies to respond to parent demand while also ensuring the cultivation of deep community relationships in their targeted geographic regions. The slow growth model (schools adding one grade a year and Voices Academies adding one school per year to the portfolio) will also ensure the fulfillment of milestones, full support for existing growing schools, and a focus on philanthropic development to support continued replication. Finally, this pace of growth allows Voices Academies to be strategic politically, which is an important component for charter school growth in California.

D1. Strong Management Plan

a. Network Structure and Internal Capacity

Voices Academies has developed a network configuration that ensures internal capacity at both the CMO and individual school site levels. The CMO provides centralized support services in the areas of academic program, operations, community engagement, and finance and fundraising. This allows the individual school leaders to focus on implementation of the Voices Academies model at their school site, working efficiently and effectively toward the shared mission of preparing all students for higher education through an academically rigorous dual-language program. The matrix below shows the level of responsibility that falls between the School Site and the Principal across functional areas. Critical roles responsibilities and decision rights have been defined in each of these areas using the "RAPID" decision making process.

Functional Area	School	CMO
Talent / Human Capital		
Facilities		
Technology		
Finances		
Internal Communications		
External Compliance		
Curriculum		
Instruction		
School Culture		
Assessment		
Development / Fundraising		

The next figures provide the overall governance structure of Voices Academies, as well as the CMO phased organizational structure. Please see *Appendix H: Additional Information* for full size, higher resolution, and more detailed copies of the *CMO and School Site Organizational Charts*.
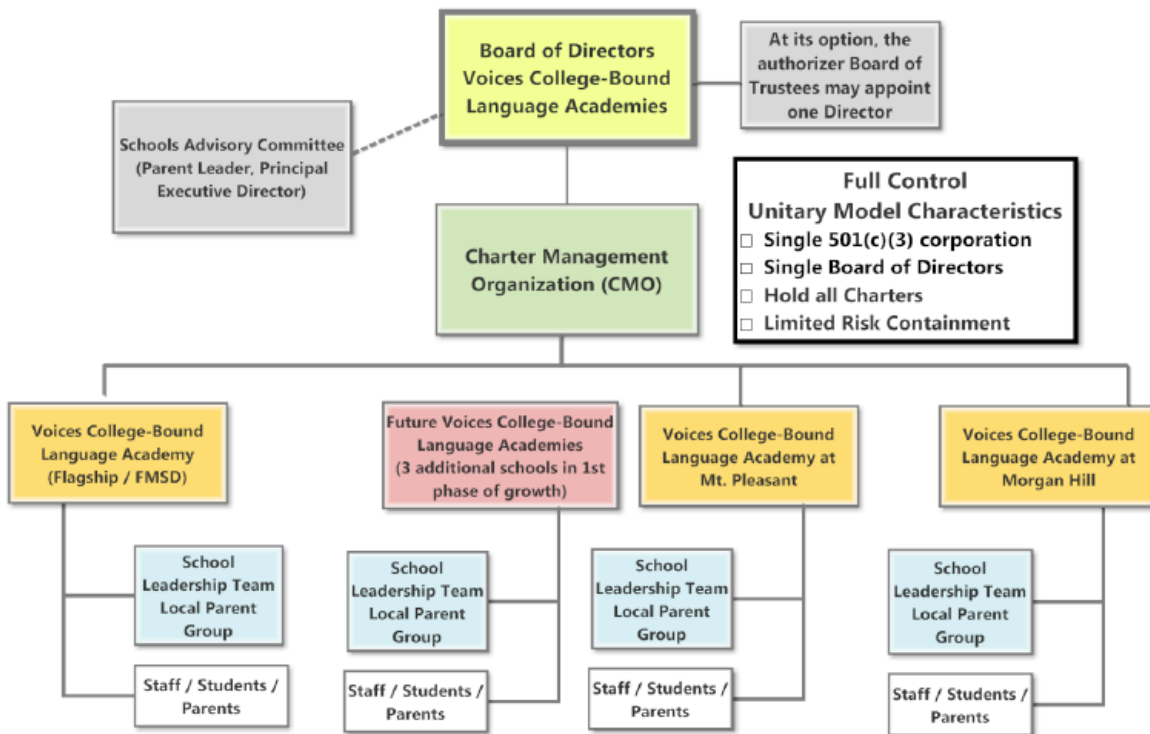
CMO Phased Organizational Chart
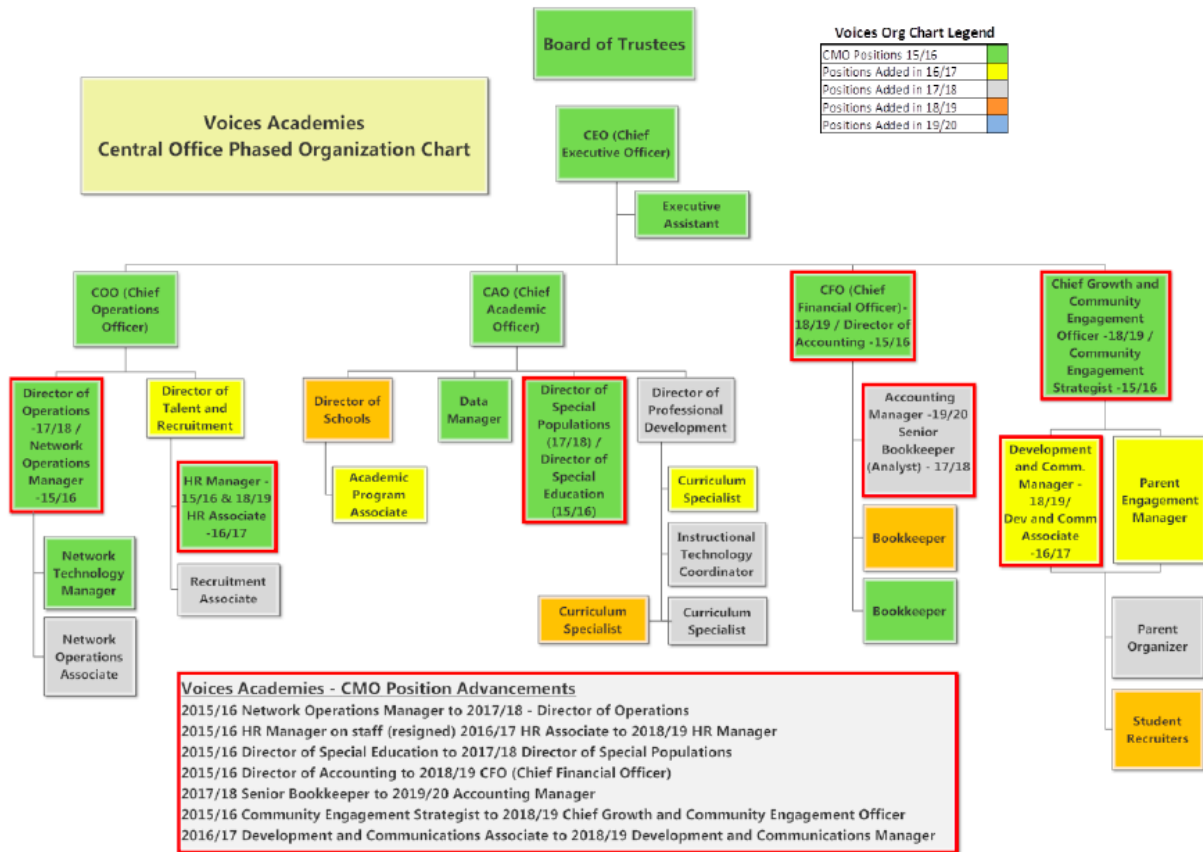
Core CMO support of schools, along with key positions providing these supports, are as follows:

- **Academic Program** - The Chief Academic Officer (CAO) provides oversight and ensures consistency of the instructional model, curriculum, assessment, coaching and professional development across the network. This includes research and dissemination of evolving best practices for serving the target population, managing a robust data practice to inform work at all levels, developing strategic plans based on data and updating these on an annual basis in collaboration with school leadership and stakeholders, supporting school leaders in the development and implementation of annual

professional development plans, and fostering a network-wide community of practice that celebrates and learns from areas of success and collaborates to address areas of challenge.

- **Operations** - The Chief Operations Officer (COO) and team support schools in the areas of talent, technology, and operations. A high-quality staff is perhaps the single greatest lever in realizing success. The operations team supports schools in recruiting, selecting, hiring, and onboarding staff who are mission-aligned (Please see *Appendix H: Additional Information* for the *Talent Recruitment and Management Plan*). In addition, it oversees a teacher and leadership pipeline program to develop internal candidates in their professional trajectory. The team also ensures that schools have technology systems that support functionality and efficiency, as well as operations that ensure a safe, welcoming, and nurturing school environment. Finally, this team oversees facility identification, acquisition, and improvements.

- **Community Engagement** - The Community Engagement Specialist (CES) and team supports all schools, but in particular newly replicated schools, with their marketing, public relations, recruitment, and stakeholder engagement efforts. In alignment with its mission, this team actively supports parents in developing voice and advocating for the education of their children at the individual school sites and across their communities.

- **Finance and Fundraising** - The Director of Accounting works in collaboration with school site Business Managers to ensure strong accounting practices and fiscal health. At maturity, Voices Academies schools are primarily funded by state and federal revenues. This includes funds from the Title I program, Title II program, Part B of IDEA, the Title III program, and other categorical grants. In California, the Local Control Funding Formula provides additional funding for schools serving high concentrations of

educationally underserved students, which Voices Academies receives. CMO and School Site budgets are developed on an annual basis by the CMO in collaboration with school site leaders, stakeholders, and the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors adopts the budget on an annual basis, as well as reviews internal controls and hires an independent auditor. The Board meets regularly throughout the year to review finances, approve expenditures, and monitor budget implementation. Please see *Appendix G: Supplemental Organization Budgets and Financial Information* for the 2015-16 Approved Audit and CMO Strategic Plan Financial Model, as evidence of ability to maintain sound financial practice after the life of the grant.

The CEO holds the leadership team accountable to providing core school services; sets and monitors progress against the organizational vision and theory of action; leads philanthropic efforts towards network sustainability; and is the facilitator of board support of network growth.

b. Project Plan with Responsibilities, Timeline, and Milestones

Voices Academies has developed a comprehensive project management plan that will ensure the proposed project is completed on time, within budget, and at a high level of quality. This management plan will be carried out by the Voices Academies Central Office, in collaboration with School Site Leadership. Core responsibilities, benchmarks, and timelines are provided in the figure below with a key following the figure.

Task	Milestones	Person Responsible	Time-line	PY 1	PY 2	PY 3	PY 4	PY 5
CMO Capacity Building								
Grant Administration	Train relevant staff in grant administration	(CEO), (COO), GM	Sept - Dec	CO				
	Provide ongoing	(CEO),	Jan,		CO	CO	CO	CO

	PD in grant management, including finances and data	(COO), GM, DM	May					
	Submit annual reports to USDOE	(CEO), (COO), GM	June	CO	CO	CO	CO	CO
Replicating Schools								
Talent Identification and Recruitment	Develop and implement broad talent identification and recruitment plan that encourages high-quality applicants with a shared mission	(DTR), (HRA), SP	Aug - Jan	VA4	VA4VA5	VA4 VA5 VA6	(VA4) VA5 VA6	(VA4) (VA5) VA6
	Conduct paper screening, initial interviews, and final interviews with candidates	(DTR), (HRA), SP	Jan - April	VA4	VA4VA5	VA4 VA5 VA6	(VA4) VA5 VA6	(VA4) (VA5) VA6
	Select and contract principal	(CEO), (CAO)	Feb - April	VA5	VA6			
	Select and contract office staff	(COO), SP	Feb - April	VA 3 VA5	VA5 VA6	VA6		
	Select and contract teachers	(DTR), (HRA), SP	Feb - April	VA4	VA4VA5	VA4 VA5 VA6	(VA4) VA5 VA6	(VA4) (VA5) VA6
	Complete HR processing	(HRA), BM	May - June	VA4	VA4VA5	VA4 VA5 VA6	(VA4) VA5 VA6	(VA4) (VA5) VA6
Professional Development (PD)	Planning year for school leader, including enrollment in Innovate Public Schools Leadership Development	(CAO), SP	Aug - July	VA4	VA5	VA6		

	Fellowship							
	Development of annual, data-informed PD plan to support model implementation	(CAO), SP	Nov - July	VA4	VA4VA5	VA4 VA5 VA6	(VA4) VA5 VA6	(VA4) (VA5) VA6
	Onboarding PD for all staff prior to opening in planning year and for staff in new grade levels in implementation years	(CAO), SP	June - Aug	VA4	VA4VA5	VA4 VA5 VA6	(VA4) VA5 VA6	(VA4) (VA5) VA6
Recruitment, Admissions, and Enrollment	Develop and implement broad recruitment and enrollment plan that engages families and community partners across all subgroups	(CES), CEM, SRA, SP	Aug - Feb (Oct - Feb for VA4)	VA4	VA4VA5	VA4 VA5 VA6	(VA4) VA5 VA6	(VA4) (VA5) VA6
	Hold lottery and notify students and families of results	SP, BM, CEM, SRA	Mar	VA4	VA4VA5	VA4 VA5 VA6	(VA4) VA5 VA6	(VA4) (VA5) VA6
	Hold enrollment meetings and registration	SP, BM, CEM	Apr - June	VA4	VA4VA5	VA4 VA5 VA6	(VA4) VA5 VA6	(VA4) (VA5) VA6
Facilities Selection	Identify facility options, select final location by Nov. of planning year, negotiate lease	(COO)	Aug - Nov (Oct - Nov for VA4)	VA4	VA5	VA6		
	Complete tenant improvements	(COO)	Nov - June	VA4	VA5	VA6		
	Furnish and outfit classrooms, offices, and common spaces	(COO), SP	June - July	VA4	VA5	VA6		

	Activity	Responsibilities	Timeline					
	Develop and adopt an emergency plan specific for the school site	(COO), SP, BM	May	VA4	VA5	VA6		
	Secure certificate of occupancy	(COO)	May	VA4	VA5	VA6		
Evaluation	Administer internal and external assessments of academic proficiency and language development	(CAO), SP, DM	Sept, Dec, March, June		VA4	VA4 VA5	(VA4) VA5 VA6	(VA4) (VA5) VA6
	Gather stakeholder input through surveys, interviews, and focus groups	(CES), (CAO), SP	April		VA4	VA4 VA5	(VA4) VA5 VA6	(VA4) (VA5) VA6
	Collect data on attendance, chronic absence, mobility, suspension, and expulsion	(CAO), SP, DM	June		VA4	VA4 VA5	(VA4) VA5 VA6	(VA4) (VA5) VA6
	Conduct analysis of financial health for CMO and individual school sites	(COO), BM	Sept, Dec, March, June	(CO) VA4	(CO) VA4VA5	(CO) VA4 VA5 VA6	(CO) (VA4) VA5 VA6	(CO) (VA4) (VA5) VA6

Key	
Responsibilities	**Timeline**
CEO = Chief Executive Director CAO = Chief Academic Officer COO = Chief Operating Officer DC = Director of Accounting CES = Community Engagement Strategist DTR = Director of Talent & recruitment HRA = Human Resources Associate	CO = Central Office VA4 = Voices Academies School #4 VA5 = Voices Academies School #5 VA6 = Voices Academies School #6 Parentheses indicate activity will take place, but not as part of three-year funded period for that

GM = Grant Manager	school OR position responsible, but not funded
DM = Data Manager	by grant.
SP = Site Principal	
BM = Business Manager	
AC = Academic Coach	
CEM = Community Engagement Manager	
SRA = Student Recruitment Associate	

c. Professional Development and Performance Evaluation to Ensure Quality

Voices Academies is only as strong as the team it assembles and develops. As such, it is committed to the ongoing professional development and evaluation of its staff.

Professional Development

All professional development offered is aligned to the network's priorities and best practices. Professional development is differentiated based on role as follows:

- **Academic Staff** - Professional development takes on multiple forms, including daily grade level collaborative planning at school sites, twice weekly grade level data meetings, and monthly network-wide grade level collaborative planning. There are four to five weeks of Summer PD and two in-service days during the academic year (Please see *Appendix H: Additional Information* for the *Summer PD Calendar*). The Professional Learning Community (PLC) structure is used in implementing professional development.

- **Founding Principals -** During the Planning Year, all Founding Principals take part in a year-long Start-up Fellowship with Innovate Public Schools to develop the knowledge, skills, and expertise necessary to successfully launch and operate a high-quality school.

- **School Leaders** - Principals and coaches meet as a network twice a month to discuss progress on academic priorities and attend school leader PD. They also meet every

benchmark to review interim data and engage in collaborative reflection. Principals have meetings several times a week with key CMO staff and with the leadership team.

Performance Evaluation

Voices Academies utilizes performance evaluation to identify effective practices and inform priorities for improvement for staff, individual schools, and the CMO as a whole.

- **Academic Staff** - The Knowledge and Performance Rubric identifies core practices and attributes to be developed in academic staff. Academic staff - including assistant teachers, teachers, coaches, and principals - are evaluated twice a year using the rubric. Professional development goals are made based on this holistic assessment to advance practice at all levels.

- **School Sites and Leaders** - Schools are formally evaluated on an annual basis through a Critical Friends Visit (CFV), a practice used across the CMO to support schools in their continual efforts to improve. During these full day visits, network leaders, principals, and invited local educational leaders identify areas of strength and relative weakness at the school site, offer actionable feedback, and serve as thought partners in creating targeted solutions for specific challenges. This includes a focus on school-based challenges (instructional model, operational model, and overall effectiveness in regards to leadership). Prior to their visit, principals engage in self-reflection. After receiving feedback, the leadership team debriefs the visit with the principal and develops an action plan. Weekly observation, coaching and feedback are then provided to support implementation. Ongoing formative and summative data streams are used to monitor progress and modify the action plan as needed. A 360 Performance Evaluation Tool for school site and CMO leadership is being developed and will launch in 2017-18.

- **CMO** - The leadership team conducts an annual analysis of the CMO, measuring progress against that year's organizational priorities. This analysis informs the following year's annual planning cycle and is submitted to the Board of Directors for review and approval. In addition, the Board of Directors conducts an annual evaluation of the school's progress toward CMO goals, including progress against the state priorities as expressed in the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP). Please see *Appendix H: Additional Information* for an example of an *Annual Planning Cycle*.

D2. Experienced Team and Personnel

The Voices Academies Project Team brings a depth of experience in support of Voices Academies across the sectors of educational program, data and assessment, high school and college readiness, student services, talent development and management, stakeholder engagement, finance and fundraising, and strategic development. Together, these members have a proven track record of operating Voices Academies in support of its students. This team has both the experience and the expertise necessary to achieve the objectives of this proposed project on time and within budget, in turn doubling the number of schools in its network and the number of high-quality seats available to educationally underserved students in Santa Clara County and its surrounding communities. The Voices Academies Board of Directors will hold ultimate oversight of the project. A summary of expertise for the Leadership Team and Grant Manager are provided below. Resumes for the Leadership Team, Grant Manager, School Site Principals, and Board of Directors are included in *Appendix B: Resumes and Curriculum Vitae.*

Frances Teso, Chief Executive Officer

Ms. Teso is the founder of Voices College-Bound Language Academies. As a child growing up in east San Jose, she dreamed of being a teacher in her neighborhood. Ms. Teso would have been considered an underprivileged child. She spoke only Spanish when she first entered a kindergarten classroom in the neighborhood public school, and her parents did not complete High School. She was one of the few from her neighborhood, and the first in her family who went to college. This provided the motivation to establish a school that built on student's assets and home culture in order to change life trajectories for historically underserved students. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Child Development and a Masters of Elementary Education from San Jose State University. Her graduate work focused on studying the effects of language, culture and society on schooling. In particular, her research examined a new transformational model for staff development. Ms. Teso is a National Board Certified Teacher committed to serving children in urban school settings. In 2005 she was accepted into the prestigious New Leaders for New School principal training program. She has worked as a university instructor, principal coach, school administrator, instructional facilitator and Dual Immersion teacher.

Elizabeth Aguilar, Chief Academic Officer

Ms. Aguilar provides oversight and ensures consistency of the instructional model, curriculum, assessment, coaching and professional development across the network. Ms. Aguilar came to Voices after receiving her bachelor's degree at Stanford University and masters in teaching at the University of Southern California. She was a teacher at Voices for five years before becoming the school's first full-time instructional coach. Ms. Aguilar was drawn to Voices because she saw herself in the students – the daughter of Mexican immigrants and an

English learner herself as a young girl – and she wanted to help these students realize they too could have great success in college and beyond. Ms. Aguilar is passionate about empowering Latino youth and families through education, language and cultural appreciation.

Alma Rico, Chief Operating Officer

Ms. Rico leads the talent, technology, and operations functions at Voices. As a former EL and first generation college graduate, she is excited to be using her business training to make college success a reality for more Latino students. She was formerly the COO at Alpha Public Schools, where she first started as an Education Pioneers fellow. Prior to transitioning to the world of education, Ms. Rico was a management consultant in Washington, DC. Ms. Rico holds a B.S. in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science from MIT, an M.B.A. from UC Berkeley Haas School of Business, and is also a current member of the Broad Residency for Urban Education. She serves on the board of the Astronomical Society of the Pacific.

Beth Nuthals Haagenson, Director of Accounting

Ms. Nuthals Haagenson supports the great work of Voices through financial management and accounting services. No stranger to non-profits, Ms. Nuthals Haagenson's experience with public accounting includes managing audits of colleges/universities, nonprofits, and small companies. Ms. Nuthals earned a B.S. in Accountancy from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. Ms. Nuthals Haagenson has maintained her CPA license since 2007.

Marie Moore, Community Engagement Strategist

Ms. Moore came to Voices after 8+ years organizing with PACT, People Acting in Community Together, and with numerous faith communities and public schools across Santa

Clara County, though primarily in east San Jose. As an experienced and successful organizer, Ms. Moore identifies, connects and trains parents as community leaders to build power and become highly engaged school and civic leaders. At Voices, Ms. Moore is responsible for planning and leading strategic growth and creating an environment in which Voices earns broad community support for opening schools in new and existing regions. She received her Bachelor's Degree from Colorado Christian University and her Master's from Wake Forest University.

Taylor Nyman, Grant Manager

Ms. Nyman will service as the Grant Manager for this project, building on her previous leadership of fundraising and donor communication at Voices Academies. As a first-generation college graduate who learned Spanish as a teenager, she was drawn to the Voices Academies mission to serve historically disadvantaged students with the vision of fostering lifelong learners who are multi-lingual self-advocates. Prior to stepping into her Development role, Ms. Nyman served as a kindergarten teacher at the Voices Academies flagship site, developing curriculum and overseeing best practices as grade level chair. Ms. Nyman earned her B.A in Communication and Spanish from Miami University, and her M.A. in Urban Education Administration and Policy from Loyola Marymount University. She was a 2014 Teach for America corps member.

D3. Sound Multi-Year Financial and Operating Model

a. Multi-Year Financial and Operating Model

Voices Academies is requesting $2,700,000 over five years to support implementation of the grant activities described in this Project Narrative, alongside the Budget and Budget Narrative. Roughly 81% ($2,240,063) of these funds will be used at the school site level to plan, implement, and execute the opening of three new TK through 8th grade schools. The remaining

19% ($540,964) of grant funds will be utilized by the Voices Academies CMO Central Office to build upon its existing infrastructure and expand its capacity and functional expertise. The CMO (1) enables collaboration and resource sharing across the network, while reducing the operational responsibilities at school sites by centralizing business services and support, (2) ensures quality school replications through a thoughtful annual planning cycle beginning in November for the next fiscal year, with the key objective of providing adequate lead time for Principals to set school priorities and action plans that are aligned with CMO leadership team priorities and within a finite organizational budget, and (3) leverages program data and evaluation protocols in overseeing implementation and financial management of grant funds.

Beyond the grant period, schools will continue to be operated locally with support from the Voices Academies Central Office. The majority of operating expenses will be covered by state and federal public revenue, with targeted fundraising to support select expenses such as facilities. Please see *Appendix G: Supplemental Organization Budgets and Financial Information* for the Voices Academies Strategic Plan Financial Model, which demonstrates projected uses and sources of funds as it grows it network over the grant period. A copy of the 2015-16 Approved Audit is also included to demonstrate Voices Academies strong fiscal health.

b. Stakeholder Support

Voices Academies does not shy away or try to limit stakeholder input - it fully embraces and actively works to cultivate it. Voices Academies firmly believes that parents and community partners must mobilize and collaborate in order to advocate for stronger educational options for students in educationally underserved communities. Please see *Appendix H Additional Information, Developing Parent Voice and Advocacy* for an overview of its work in this area.

Over the past decade, Voices Academies has received enthusiastic support from key partners, whose input and support have enabled the organization's successful track record to date and has positioned it to successfully engage in this next stage of growth. These include:

- The students of Santa Clara County, of whom 795 currently attend Voices Academies and 770 of whom fill the wait list. These students' families actively engage in the Voices Academies community, providing critical input through a variety of structures including School Site Councils to guide the CMO's process of continual improvement.

- The Voices Academies Board of Directors, who volunteer their vast expertise and experience in service of educationally underserved students and their families.

- Franklin-McKinley School District and Santa Clara County Office of Education, the authorizers of the three schools currently operated by Voices Academies who work in collaboration with the CMO to increase proficiency and close the achievement gap.

- The State of California, which has recognized Voices Academies work in closing the achievement gap by naming it a California Distinguished School (2012) and Title I Academic Achievement Award Winner (2014)

- Philanthropic partners, whose history of giving supports the ongoing work of Voices Academies. This includes the Charter School Growth Fund, as well as The Sobrato Family Foundation, Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, and many individual donors.

- The institutions of higher education and education departments in Santa Clara County and the surrounding communities, who share Voices Academies commitment to closing the achievement gap for students who are from low-income families, Latino, and ELs.

Voices Academies will continue to work with and broaden this group of stakeholders over the course of this grant, to provide critical input that will ensure that it replicates schools with

fidelity in order to achieve high results in each community served. This will happen as part of the strategic planning process, as well as the independent evaluation, and will include surveys, interviews, focus groups, committee work, and the guidance of community and industry experts. Please see *Appendix C: Letters of Support* for a selection of letters from key stakeholders.

Section V - Application Requirements

The Voices Academies Grant Proposal has met each of the Application Requirements, within Sections I through IV of this proposal and supported with evidence in the Appendix. Please see notes below for the location of narrative and data within these sections that satisfies each of the requirements.

(a) Please see *Appendix E: Schools Operated by Applicant*

(b) Please see *Section III.A.2 Increasing Achievement for All Students, Section III.A.3 Closing the Achievement Gap and Exceeding State Averages, Section III.A.4 Strong and Sustainable Organizational Model*, and *Appendix F: Student Academic Achievement*.

(c) Not applicable.

(d) Please see *Introduction*.

(e) Please see *Section IV.B.2a Expanding Enrollment* and *Section IV.B.1b Educational Program Tailored to Student Strengths and Needs*.

(f) Please see *Section IV.D.1 Strong Management Plan* and *Section IV.D.2 Experienced Team and Personnel*

(g) *Please see Section IV.D.3. Sound Multi-Year Financial and Operating Model*

(h) Please see *Section IV.B.2c Green-lighting Metrics (Parent Demand)* and *Section IV.C.1 Quantitative and Qualitative Data Practice (LCAP)*

(i) Please see *Section IV.B.2d Focused Student Recruitment* and *Section IV.B.2e Admissions, Lottery, and Enrollment*.

(j) Please see *Section IV.B.1b Educational Program Tailored to Strengths and Needs (subsection on Differentiated Supports for Students with Special Needs and ELs) and Appendix H Other Information (Special Education Program)*

(k) Please see *Section IV.B Serving Educationally Disadvantaged Students, Families, and Communities*

(l) Please see *Budget* and *Budget Narrative Form*.

(m) Not applicable

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