

★ PRACTICE ASSIGNMENT #1 ★

## CRAFTING A CAPACITY INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

**Directions:**

1. Read the Final Proposal Review for the Academy for the "Whole Child Charter School" in full. (This document summarizes the review panel's findings on the proposal's primary strengths and weaknesses and will serve as your anchor in this practice activity.)
2. Highlight or annotate the proposal review document to prioritize 3-5 topics within the following three sections that require follow up:

*Mission, Vision, and Description of the Community(ies) to be Served*

*Educational Philosophy, Curriculum and Instruction*

*Assessment System, Performance, Promotion, and Graduation Standards*

*School Characteristics*

*Special Student Populations and Student Services*

*Enrollment and Recruitment*

*Capacity and School Governance*

*Management*

*Facilities, Transportation, and Finances*

3. In a separate Word document, craft an abbreviated interview protocol that:
  - a. Distills the findings from those topics into three main question categories, operating on the assumption that an review panel member with expertise in each area would lead the appropriate section.
  - b. Identifies the categories and explains your rationale for why these are the most important.
  - c. Contains a maximum of 25 scripted questions intended to solicit missing information, clarify or verify information provided, or assess the organizers' capacity in other ways.
  - d. Highlights your most critical questions in yellow.
  - e. Notes any other methods you recommend for further triangulating information contained in the proposal, such as due diligence on certain facts or details, requests for additional submissions, etc.

4. Upload your interview protocol into Saba for instructor review and feedback.



**FINAL APPLICATION REVIEW 2017-2018**

Proposed School Name: Academy for the Whole Child Charter School  
 Grades Served At Full Capacity: K-4  
 Number of Students At Full Capacity: 278  
 Proposed School Location: Indianapolis, IN  
 Proposed Opening Year: FY2019

**Public Statement:**

“The Academy for the Whole Child Charter School which will be located in Indianapolis, IN, will provide an exemplary education for 278 children from the City of Indianapolis in grades K–4. By combining academic rigor with artistic creativity; encouraging personal and social responsibility; and by addressing the intellectual, emotional, and social needs of each child, A4WCCS ensures that each child will attain his/her full potential and will be prepared to succeed in a global economy that demands 21st century skills.”

**Mission Statement:**

“The Academy for the Whole Child Charter School (A4WCCS) will be located in Indianapolis, IN, and will provide an exemplary education for 278 children from the City of Indianapolis in grades K-4. A4WCCS will provide a stimulating, nurturing and inclusive school community that is safe and joyful; encourages academic excellence and innovation; respects the developmental and individual learning styles of children; and recognizes families as a full partner in each child’s success. A4WCCS ensures that each child will attain his/her full potential and is prepared to succeed in a global economy that demands 21st century skills by combining academic rigor, utilizing research-based curricula resources and teacher created materials; development of artistic creativity through arts integration and community partnerships; encouraging personal and social responsibility; and by emphasizing the intellectual, emotional, and social needs of each child.”

**Proposed Growth Plan for First Five Years of Operation:**

School Year	Grade Levels	Total Student Enrollment
First Year	K, 1, 2, 3	180
Second Year	K, 1, 2, 3, 4	234
Third Year	K, 1, 2, 3, 4	252
Fourth Year	K, 1, 2, 3, 4	270
Fifth Year	K, 1, 2, 3, 4	278



## **Mission, Vision, and Description of the Community(ies) to be Served**

### *Primary Strengths*

- The mission and vision define the purpose and values of the school; informs the public about the school; and is consistent with high academic standards, and student success. The applicant group proposes to provide a safe, and nurturing child-centered environment, which was reflected consistently by the applicant group during the interview. (Section I.A. & I.B.)
- The application described how the proposed school will enhance or expand the education options through implementation of a longer school day, smaller class size, foreign language study, daily arts instruction and arts integration into core curriculum, and a Reggio-Emilia inspired approach. (Section I.C.)
- The applicant group proposes to create a “Parents as Partners” program where parents are encouraged to visit the school; volunteer at the school; and attend monthly meetings, and orientation trainings so that parents may become involved in supporting the success of the school and their child. (Section I.C.)

### *Primary Weaknesses*

- The number of components described within the mission, and vision of the proposed school will pose challenges to effective, and successful implementation. All aspects of the mission and vision, such as 21st century skills, and academic rigor, are not consistently reflected throughout the application. (Section I.B.)
- While the vision statement of the applicant group describes the ways in which the proposed school will positively impact its students, the application does not adequately address the impact on all stakeholders, nor does it serve as an organizing principal for the rest of the application. The applicant groups uses two sets of values designated by acronyms interchangeably, CHILD, and CARING. (Section I.B.)
- The applicant group did not provide sufficient evidence of parental support within Indianapolis, and the surrounding communities for the proposed educational program to support projected enrollment aside from anecdotes. (Section I.C.)
- The applicant group has received letters and/or testimony in opposition during the public hearing and public hearing comment process, including, but not limited to Representative Steven DiNatale, Senator Jennifer Flanagan, Mayor Lisa Wong, Superintendent Andre Ravenelle, City Councilor Nick Carbone, and several members of the Indianapolis School Committee. See public comment. (Section I.C.)



## Educational Philosophy, Curriculum and Instruction

### *Primary Strengths*

- The application describes the group's core beliefs and values about education, and 17 specific learning goals identified for students; the applicant group is committed to developing a student-centered educational program, which supports different learning styles, and is based on constructivism. (Section II.A.)
- The proposed school will implement curriculum consisting of both commercially available, and internally-developed curricula. Within the application the applicant group emphasized that teachers will be relied on for curriculum, and assessment development; and provided autonomy in the classroom to implement curriculum and instructional practices, with oversight by the proposed principal, and executive director. (Section II.B.)

### *Primary Weaknesses*

- The curriculum outline provided in the application provides a limited and generalized description of the content and skills student will learn at the proposed school. Additionally, limited progress has been made on the selection and/or development of the core content area curricula to assess the proposed leadership team's ability to effectively implement the necessary curricular components for their proposed opening in the fall of 2014 with 180 students in grades K-3. (Section II.B.)
- While application references a clear plan for 'continuous improvement' that will facilitate the ongoing development, improvement, and refinement of the curriculum, but the collaborative processes and procedures to evaluate the effectiveness and successful implementation of the curriculum remained generalized and unclear.(Section II.B.)
- Within the application, the process that will be used to align the curriculum to state Curriculum Frameworks (CF) was not clearly described.
- The application contains limited information regarding the systems and schedules to support teacher collaboration and professional development. While it is clear that proposed opportunities will occur for a week during the summer, two Wednesday afternoons per month, and within the school day, the applicant group did not clearly articulate its implementation within the proposed teacher schedule, and school year. (Section II.B.)
- While the proposal stated that they would consider adopting parts of the Department's evaluation system after reviewing its effectiveness and seeking input from the faculty, the teacher evaluation system remains underdeveloped. (Section II.B.)



## **Assessment System, Performance, Promotion, and Graduation Standards**

### *Primary Strengths*

- The applicant group provides detailed descriptions of the external assessments, such as Strategic Teaching and Evaluation of Progress (STEP), Achievement Network (ANet), and Sustainability Tracking, Assessment, and Rating system (STAR) that will be implemented to support student learning. (Section II.D.)
- While the applicant group has indicated it has not finished selecting the tools to implement within the proposed assessment system, it is clear that the system will provide multiple measures of student growth, and student performance that can be used to facilitate adjustments to the educational program, and inform a staff development plan that will support the goal of improved student learning.(Section II.D.)

### *Primary Weaknesses*

- By proposing to serve students in grades K-3 during the first year of operation, it remains unclear how students significantly below grade level will be supported to be engaged and successful within the proposed educational program. While high expectations are evident in the described promotion policy, it is not clear if the applicant group has fully considered the strong likelihood of serving students far below grade level, and the potential for a high retention rate. (Section II.C.)
- While the assessment system proposed involves a variety of assessments, it remains unclear how teachers will be supported to effectively use student achievement data to improve student learning. (Section II.D.)
- The assessment system does not describe a meaningful approach to measuring student progress toward attaining non-academic goals, such as the personal and social responsibility aspect of the proposed school's mission. The application indicates the use of standard metrics, such as attendance, and discipline. (Section II.D.)

## **School Characteristics**

### *Primary Strengths*

- The applicant group proposes to implement Insight Education & Research Institute's Readiness Model to effectively develop, implement, and refine the educational program over time to produce a high performing charter school serving an anticipated high poverty student population. (Section II.E.)

### *Primary Weaknesses*

- Within the application, the applicant group explained the intent to implement a joyful, happy, and healthy school culture; consistent with the school's mission, educational philosophy, and educational program; but the strategies to implement school culture were generalized and limited. (Section II. E.)
- While the applicant group proposes to incorporate a before-school 'early birds' program, and an after-school 'Learning Enrichment Time' program, it remains unclear who will be responsible for implementing these programs, how these programs will be assessed, and how students will be transported to and from school to take advantage of these proposed opportunities. (Section II.E.)



### Special Student Populations and Student Services

#### Primary Strengths

- The application provides a generalized description of the process and procedures to identify, assess, and serve students who are English Language Learners (ELLs), including how the proposed school will provide ELLs access to the general education curriculum. While limited, the information was sufficient to indicate knowledge of the obligations of the proposed school to serve ELLs within the proposed educational program. (Section II. F.)
- The application provides a generalized description of the process and procedures to identify, assess, and serve students with disabilities. While limited, the information was sufficient to indicate knowledge of the obligations of the proposed school to serve students with disabilities within the proposed educational program. (Section II.F.)

#### Primary Weaknesses

- The special student populations section did not provide sufficient details to fully address the required criteria regarding the programs to serve students with disabilities, and ELLs, including how the English Language Development (ELD) program will be evaluated. (Section II.F.)
- The application indicates special education staffing levels during the first five years of operation that may be inadequate to meet the needs of the anticipated population of students with disabilities within the proposed educational program. (Section II.F.)

### Enrollment and Recruitment

#### Primary Strengths

- Reviewers noted the variety of recruitment strategies listed in the application to recruit students, and attract a student population reflective of Indianapolis, including supplying information about the school in multiple languages, and detailing the services that will be provided to address the needs of all students. (Section III.A.)

#### Primary Weaknesses

- The application contained a draft recruitment and retention plan that did not include the retention plan as required. (Section III.A.)

## Capacity and School Governance

### *Primary Strengths*

- The proposed board members have a range of experiences and qualifications in areas such as finance, management, and communications media and arts; and have tangible ties to the community the school will serve. Members include the former mayor of Indianapolis. (Section III.B.)
- The proposed employees have significant skills and experiences in areas such as K-12 education, program development, special education, creative arts, and after-school programming; as well as tangible ties to the community the school will serve. Members include a former superintendent, and veteran teachers with experience in Indianapolis Public Schools. (Section III.B.)

### *Primary Weaknesses*

- The proposed board lacks a member with an education background to assist in monitoring the proposed school's academic performance, and the school leader's effectiveness in developing and implementing the proposed academic program. (Section III.B.)
- A proposed member of the board of trustees has formally withdrawn from the applicant group. (Section III.B.)
- The proposed board of trustees is in the early stages of development as a proposed governing body, and does not demonstrate the necessary understanding of the role of a charter school trustee. (Section III.C. & III.D.)
- The draft policies, and action plan submitted within the application are boilerplate in nature, and limit the ability to assess the applicant group's understanding of the obligations and responsibilities as proposed charter school employees, and board members. (Section III.C.)
- The proposed governance model within the application does not encourage an appropriate relationship between the board of trustees, and the school's leadership regarding the governance and management of the proposed school. The proposed board of trustee membership includes two parents, two teachers, the executive director, and principal as non-voting ex officio members. If the proposed board has its maximum of 11 members, only 6 voting members will play the required role in the governance of the school. (Section III.C.)
- Within the application, the proposed board of trustees did not describe a clear process or criteria for the selection of the school leader, as well as the process and criteria the board would use for its own evaluation and development. Additionally, there is not yet a clearly developed process or measurable criteria for the evaluation of the proposed executive director. (Section III.C.)





## Management

### Primary Strengths

- The applicant group has identified highly qualified educators for leadership roles at the proposed school. The proposed executive director is a former superintendent; and the proposed principal is a veteran educator with 20 years of experience; both individuals are members of the design team, and primary authors of the charter application. (Section III.D.)
- The application describes the school's plan for recruiting high quality teachers, which is consistent with the proposed school's mission, vision, and educational philosophy. (Section III.D.)

### Primary Weaknesses

- There is limited evidence to support the implementation of five administrators for a proposed school that will serve 278 students once fully enrolled. It is unclear how the proposed collaborative decision-making by a five person leadership team encourages clearly delineated roles and responsibilities. For example, there is limited distinction between the role and responsibilities of the executive director, assistant executive director, and principal. (Section III.D.)
- While the application provides the proposed compensation for teachers, it does not clearly indicate the salary schedules for administrators, and non-instructional staff, and indicates it is still being developed. (Section III.D.)
- Reviewers noted concerns regarding the sustainability of a 9.5 hour work day proposed for instructional staff. The working conditions of classroom teachers remains unclear; including responsibilities for curriculum and assessment development; duties outside the classroom; and common planning times amongst grade level teams and specialists.(Section III.D.)
- The application states that a teaching assistant will be assigned to each class to aid the teacher; however, the proposed staffing chart and budget does not accurately reflect this commitment. Additionally, the proposed staffing reflected in the three operational years of the draft budget exceeds the staffing plan by approximately 10 hires annually. (Section III.D. and III.F.)





## **Facilities, Transportation, and Finances**

### *Primary Strengths*

- The applicant group has identified two potential facility options for the proposed opening date of 2019-2020, which have both previously housed a charter school. (Section III.E.)

### *Primary Weaknesses*

- The application provides a limited description of the fiscal controls and financial management policies the proposed board of trustees will employ to maintain financial viability, and remain informed of the school's financial position. (Section III.F.)
- The application contains a proposed budget that does not accurately reflect all of the commitments proposed in the application. (Section III.F.)
- The budget narrative submitted in the application does not provide sufficient details to explain projected amounts in the draft budget, including descriptions of administrative, and instructional staff, and other operating expenses. Without additional information, it is unclear if the applicant group has sufficient knowledge of the practical matters related to the operation of a charter school. (Section III.F.)