



Charter Activation Request Procedure

Revised February 2021

An organizer who has been granted multiple charters by the Indiana Charter School Board (“ICSB”) may request to “activate” an unused charter by submitting a formal request, signed by the organizer’s Board chair, to ICSB’s Executive Director. The request, including all attachments, must be submitted electronically to indianacharterschoolboard@icsb.in.gov.

The request must include the following information:

Please note that, absent special circumstances, ICSB will not approve a school to open in the same year that a request is submitted (e.g., a request submitted in the Spring Application for a school to open in Fall of the same year). If a school wishes to request an expedited opening, the applicant must include, where relevant, information demonstrating how the school will be ready to open in the Fall, including, but not limited to, the impact on facility, staffing, enrollment, community engagement, and any other aspects of an expedited start-up.

[Please limit your request to 30 total pages excluding (1), (2), (3), (4), (6) and (9)]

1. A resolution from the governing board of the organizer approving the activation;

Please see attached.

2. A completed “Budget and Staffing Workbook” which can be found [here](#), and a consolidated budget including all schools operated by the organizer within Indiana found [here](#);

Please see attached.

3. The last three years of audited financial statements and management letters of the school.

Please see attached.

4. A detailed budget narrative that describes assumptions and revenue estimates, including but not limited to the basis for per-pupil revenue projections, staffing levels, facilities expenses, and technology costs. The narrative should specifically address:

Please see attached budget workbook. Additionally, we address the application guidance in the following ways:

- a. The degree to which the school (and network) budget relies on variable income (e.g., grants, donations, fundraising)

Both the school budget and the network budget for PLA are financially sustainable on recurring public funding. Additionally, we reinforce this core framework through the following strategies:

- Ensure positive net income for our schools so that they are sustainable on public funding only;
- Utilize robust student enrollment strategies for year-to-year growth;
- Work towards building a three-month cash reserve;
- Ensure capacity-building initiatives and value-add programs are given priority and are fully-funded;
- Allocate at least 85% of school budget to planned expenses; and
- Secure state and federal grants with balanced budgets that allocate over 80% to planned expenses including systems that are embedded into the school for long-term, sustainable impact.

b. The school's contingency plans to meet financial needs if anticipated revenues are not received or are lower than the estimated budget

We have several mechanisms in place to address potential shortages in revenue:

- As our school-level budget demonstrates, we use non-competitive public funding and highly conservative estimates as the only primary source of revenue. Using this approach, each new school will develop a financial model that is low-risk and well-positioned to address downward pressures on revenue;
- The enrollment set in the Pro-forma employs conservative ADA figures;
- We are conservative in funding estimates and hold them at current levels without any projected increases for future years;
- PLA schools maintain a healthy reserve of at least 60 days of cash at the end of each year; and
- PLA schools have the ability to achieve budget efficiencies while maintaining academic rigor and financial stability.

The plan and priorities to ensure fiscal sustainability are to:

- Maintain a full year monthly cash flow projection to identify any variances against budget and allow time to adjust;
- Staff based on actual enrollment only;
- Evaluate all budgeted expenses again as they arise during the operational year to ensure that they are still necessary and the best use of funds; and
- Adjust for any unexpected increases in expenses or decreases in funding by reducing non-essential operating expenses that do not impact the scholar experience and reducing non-essential staff expenses that do not impact the scholar learning environment.

Accordingly, we will ensure that there are sound contingency plans to meet the budget requirements should anticipated revenues not be generated. At PLA schools, financial responsibilities have been consistently managed with success, including overseeing financial operations, grant allocations, forecasting, budgeting, and long-term strategic financial planning. As a result, financials at our schools show a positive trajectory moving from pre-operational planning through startup and growth to capacity.

c. How the school will ensure it has sufficient funds to cover all anticipated expenses, including but not limited to: (a) special education costs, (b) transportation costs

necessary to ensure the school will be accessible for all enrolled students, and (c) required retirement plan contributions.

As we shared earlier, we utilize a comprehensive process for developing sustainable budgets for our schools. This includes sufficient and compatible allocation of state and federal grants towards anticipated expenses, ranging from special education and retirement plan contributions. Our staffing assumptions are based on proven experience operating financially sustainable schools in the state, and we have thoroughly incorporated the required retirement plan contributions in our calculation of benefits. For special education, we will ensure that the combination of basic grant and federal funds are sufficiently allocated to the school's SPED program expenses. We will also utilize the general operating budget to cover any remaining SPED expenses.

5. A description of the organizer's current or planned capacity to manage multiple schools.

Founded in 2013, PLA is a proven leader in establishing successful schools and has demonstrated to be a strong operator with a strong track record of success. The structured and effective centralized support and oversight that we provide across all components of school operations have resulted in a track record of improving student achievement and successful management of multiple schools. In 8 years, our model and approach has transformed six F-rated schools into A-rated schools and three D-rated schools into B-rated schools. Although we serve among the lowest income communities across Indiana, with over 90% of PLA scholars come from low-income families, our students consistently outperform the state on many key metrics that are listed below.

The structured PLA model, which is tightly managed, also supports our ability to successfully manage multiple schools. The PLA educational model has several unique elements that drive academic growth of our scholars. Our educational model empowers both educators and students to grow and take ownership of learning. As a result, PLA schools consistently demonstrate improved student outcomes. An educational model that supports success leads to greater capacity to sustain and grow excellence overtime. Rigorous curriculum, high quality professional development, a coaching cycle that develops teachers, enrichment opportunities for scholars, and authentic partnership with families are just a few of the elements that help us ensure the success of our students.

Scholar success will be the primary focus of Genai Excellence Academy and implementation of the PLA model will help children achieve significant gains. Examples of PLA success in supporting schools accomplish this includes:

- Outperforming the state at our flagship school on the ELA ISTEP, math ISTEP and IREAD assessments;
- Scoring an average of 92% passing on IREAD at our flagship school over four years;
- Achieving outstanding growth: in 2017-18, 74% of Indianapolis PLA scholars demonstrated standard to high growth in ELA on the ISTEP assessment, and 69% showed standard to high growth in math;
- Earning school rankings of #4 and #5 in the district for strongest growth (with 8.2% and 8.1% increases in state test score proficiency growth, respectively); and
- Empowering Indianapolis PLA scholars in grades K-6 to gain an average of 1.3 years of annual growth toward grade-level proficiency on STAR Reading and Math, a nationally normed assessment.

Furthermore, our leadership team offers exceptional experience in a wide range of functional areas, allowing our school leaders and teachers to focus fully on the academic success of our scholars.

These include the implementation of on-site instructional reviews, climate and culture staff surveys, interviews, comparative analysis, and more in our Comprehensive Analysis framework; talent sourcing and staff recruitment for effective classroom instruction; creating and coordinating year-round, intensive and robust professional development including trainings; supporting operational management and enrollment efforts; establishing strategic community partnerships that support scholar success; securing and allocating state and federal grants; and organizational capacity-building through the development of performance management and project execution dashboards.

The success of PLA scholars can be attributed to the comprehensive, high-quality services that PLA provides to its school partners and scholars. While some educational management organizations only offer human resources and accounting support, PLA provides the spectrum of support that a school needs to thrive:

- An outstanding educational program (i.e., research-based curriculum, pacing guides, and assessments);
- Pre-service professional development and an on-going coaching cycle for teachers, as well as an online educator development portal (PLA Institute);
- Operational support—including payroll, accounting, HR, policy development, legal counsel, and grants management—so that our educators can maximize their efforts in delivering a high-quality educational experience to scholars;
- On-site quality assurance monitoring and support;
- Behavior and classroom management systems; and
- Parental engagement framework.

In addition to an exceptional team, PLA has built an extensive portfolio of tools and processes that support the success of our schools. A few examples of the tools used by our schools include:

- State-aligned weekly assessments, developed using Edulastic, which enable our schools to gauge scholar progress in vocabulary, grammar, cold reads and math, and then use this data to inform instructional decisions;
- Framework for effective Tier 2 instruction, supporting daily small group instruction for every scholar;
- Framework for effective PLCs, ensuring that weekly planning meetings are focused on data and leveraged to consistently improve student performance;
- PLA Teacher Coaching Cycle; supports development of teachers in an intentional manner and includes six domains of observations based on Charlotte Danielson's framework. Each domain includes eight indicators for success, creating a very efficient walk-through form for each domain.
- PLA University; an online training platform accessible to teachers throughout the school year
- PLA Teacher and Leader Evaluation, a rubric outlining the successful behaviors and skillsets of turnaround teachers and school leaders;
- PLA Leadership Coaching Cycle, which systematically supports the development of leaders;
- Pathways to Leadership, which is a uniquely designed fellowship program tailored to building the capacity of aspiring teachers and school leaders; and
- PLA Leadership Institute, a week-long intensive leadership training institute for school leaders.

Moreover, PLA ensures our capacity to successfully manage multiple schools by utilizing procedures and structures already in place to ensure student safety; healthy school finances; and federal, state, authorizer, and local compliance.

School Operations: As a result of the support provided to each school by the central office, we have the capacity and processes in place to ensure the successful operation of multiple schools. The school administration, staff and school leaders will be supported by the central office, whose support services include professional development, payroll, policy development, legal counsel, and grants management. Through this support system, the central office will be able to manage the operational elements of running a school so that our educators can focus their efforts on what they do best—educating children. The strong leadership of our functional teams—development, compliance, finance, and operations—ensures effective coordination with school personnel to obtain the proper information and data points necessary to complete any reporting requirements.

These teams use real-time collaborative project management tools to oversee all school support activities. This is one of PLA’s key strengths: since the central office takes on this responsibility, the school can efficiently provide data when needed and focus their energy primarily on instruction. By implementing a process where school leaders and central office teams can effectively communicate and collaborate, we can ensure that our scholars will benefit from the increased capacity of PLA.

School Finance: A core strength of PLA is our implementation of financial processes and procedures that not only improve the efficiency of school financial operations but also provide strong separation of responsibilities, a clean audit trail, and clear processes for all financial transactions. At our schools, financial responsibilities have been consistently managed with success, including overseeing financial operations, grant reporting, forecasting, budgeting, and long-term strategic financial planning. As a result, financials have steadily improved from pre-operational planning through startup and growth to capacity. PLA schools have successfully managed federal, state, and local funding and have been able to meet all audit requirements.

Statutory, Regulatory, and Authorizer Compliance: PLA schools have a proven track record of compliance with state statutes, authorizer standards, and federal grant regulations, including:

- Maintaining no open corrective action items with the IDOE.
- Submitting 100% on-time, accurate, and compliant authorizer reports and state compliance requirements.
- Meeting standards according to Indiana’s K-12 Accountability System (A-F ratings) under PL 221.
- Consistently receives full accreditation status and showing compliance with all legal standards.

Student Safety: Schools implementing this model have met all key metrics for student rights and safety for the past three years, according to authorizer ratings from the Indiana Charter School Board (ICSB) and IPS. Our safety practices represent the most up-to-date research on risk-reduction measures. PLA’s student safety systems and processes have proven effective; safety measures include a single point of entry for each school, required check in and identification for all visitors, camera surveillance systems, and extensive safety training and drills (threat assessment/awareness, violence prevention, security procedures, and emergency planning). PLA has been, and will continue to be, in compliance with all applicable laws, rules, regulations, and provisions of its charter agreement relating to safety, security, and health related services.

Finally, we ensure the successful management of multiple schools through the excellence of our team. The PLA team is composed of leaders with high levels of expertise in school operations, finance, fund development, grant compliance, and authorizer compliance. The PLA central office has established clear policies, procedures, and guidelines to ensure adherence to all operational requirements. School leaders and central office staff conduct regular monitoring calls and hold biweekly walkthroughs to anticipate, identify, and resolve any potential operational challenges. With these procedures, policies, and systems in place, our team will be able to provide similarly strong oversight and operational performance at the Genai Excellence Academy while continuing to ensure the success of existing PLA schools.

organizer's other Indiana schools. The Workbook may be found [here](#);

Please see attached Academic Performance Workbook, and additional contextual information below. PLA manages four Indianapolis schools. Table 1 summarizes our student demographics.

Table 1. PLA Demographics	Year PLA Management Commenced	Enrollment	Free/reduced price meals	Students of Color	Students in Special Education	English Language Learners
George and Veronica Phalen Leadership Academy (GVP)	2013	368	77%	98%	6%	0%
PLA@Francis Scott Key School #103 (PLA@103)	2015	490	78%	97%	9%	15%
PLA@George H. Fisher School #93 (PLA@93)	2016	434	71%	91%	12%	12%
James and Rosemary Phalen Leadership Academy	2017	469	79%	97%	19%	9%

Below you can find the track record of academic growth for each school: George and Veronica Phalen

Leadership Academy (GVP)

- Earned an A-rating from the state, receiving 92 overall points on the 2017-18 Academic Performance Report;
- Scholars achieved a 92% passage rate on IREAD during the 2017-18 school year—more than 20% above our host district, IPS, and 4% above the state average;
- Students exceeded the ISTEP passage rate of our host district by 25% for ELA and math in 2017-18;
- 10% more scholars passed the ELA ISTEP test in the 2017-18 school year than in the previous year;
- The percentage of scholars passing the math ISTEP test increased 7% from 2016 to 2018;
- Scholars gained an average of 1.6 years of annual growth toward grade-level proficiency on the 2017-18 STAR math end-of-year assessment;
- Overall, math ISTEP passing rates increased 22% over a two-year period (2016-2018); and
- Overall, combined ELA/math ISTEP passing rates increased 11% over a two-year period (2016-2018).

PLA at Francis Scott Key School #103 (PLA@103)

- Earned an A-rating from the state on the 2017-18 Academic Performance Report;
- Overall, math ISTEP passing rates improved 18% from 2015-16 to 2017-18;
- Fourth and fifth graders showed the most progress in math: Math ISTEP passing rates for fourth graders increased by 13% from 2016-17 to 2017-18. Math ISTEP passing rates for fifth graders increased from 2015-16, when not one scholar in the fifth grade passed, to 22% in 2017-18;
- Overall, combined ELA/math ISTEP passing rates increased 9% from 2015-16 to 2017-18;
- Fourth graders made the greatest progress in improved scores overall in year-to-year growth; combined ELA/math ISTEP passing rates for the fourth grade increased by 8% from 2016-17 to 2017-18;
- In 2017-18, 73% of PLA@103 scholars demonstrated standard to high growth in ELA on the ISTEP assessment, and 66% of scholars showed standard to high growth in math; and

- Students of all grades showed 1.4 years of annual gains toward grade-level proficiency on the STAR math assessment for the 2017-18 school year, and fifth graders showed 1.7 years of annual growth.

PLA at George H. Fisher School #93 (PLA@93)

- Scholars outperformed their peers in the local district by 18% in math and 5% in ELA on the ISTEP in 2017-18;
- The percentage of students passing both the ELA and math portions of the ISTEP in 2017-18 was almost 9% higher than the IPS average;
- In the 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18 school years, IDOE gave the school an A-rating after five consecutive years of failing ratings;
- In 2017-18, scholars scored the highest ISTEP passing rates of all Far Eastside elementary schools;
- In 2016-17, PLA@93 students scored the highest math passing rate of all Far Eastside schools by nearly 20%;
- In 2017-18, 67% of PLA@93 scholars demonstrated standard to high growth in ELA on the ISTEP assessment, and 71% of scholars showed standard to high growth in math; and
- Over the course of two years (2016-18), IREAD passing rates increased 17%; in 2017-18, 83% of PLA@93 scholars passed the IREAD.

James and Rosemary Phalen Leadership Academy Middle School (JRP)

- JRP opened in the fall of the 2017-18 school year; during the school's inaugural year, JRP scholars in seventh grade outpaced their IPS peers by 11% on the ELA ISTEP assessment, 3% on the math ISTEP assessment, and 6% on the combined ISTEP metric;
- During the 2017-18 school year, eighth graders at JRP outpaced their IPS peers by 4% on the ELA ISTEP assessment;
- In 2017-18, 81% of JRP scholars demonstrated standard to high growth in ELA on the ISTEP assessment, and 76% of scholars showed standard to high growth in math;
- Earned an A-rating from the state on the 2017-18 Academic Performance Report;
- Scholars showed 1.5 years of annual gains toward grade-level proficiency on the STAR math assessment for the 2017-18 school year;
- In the seventh grade, students showed 1.7 years of annual gains toward grade-level proficiency on the STAR math assessment for the 17-18 school year; and
- In 2017-18, scholars showed a 50% student growth percentile (SGP) on the STAR ELA assessment and a 59% SGP on STAR math (i.e., students at JRP have achieved more growth than 50% and 59%, respectively, of their academic peers nationwide).

Overall, these academic data show that PLA's educational model is positively impacting children who come from some of the most economically distressed communities in Indiana. As a result of continuous improvement processes built into our model, we expect our scholars to continue to make academic gains. Our support staff, teachers, school leaders, central office staff, and leadership have the skills, experience, and passion needed to truly make a difference in young people's lives.

Taken as a whole, PLA's educational model, team, and infrastructure have built a strong capacity for raising student achievement.

- 7. Information demonstrating the need for the new school in the proposed location, including whether or not a facility has been identified. If a facility has been identified, please describe it. Provide a detailed list of any anticipated construction or renovations to get the building ready for students. Include the number and size of classrooms, common areas, recreational space, any**

community facilities, and any residential facilities. Explain how the facility will meet the needs of any students who are physically challenged.

The charter for which we are requesting activation will be located within an educationally underserved and economically challenged community – Elkhart, Indiana. High-quality educational options are needed in this community to help more children meet Indiana’s challenging academic standards.

Of the fourteen schools serving grades K-6 in Elkhart, five earned either a D- or F-rating from IDOE in 2020 and 5 earned a C-rating. There were no schools that earned an A-rating since 2015. Contrast to this to PLA in Indianapolis and HIAT in Merrillville, which all of its campuses are A-rated.

These fourteen Elkhart elementary schools serve populations of children that are already vulnerable; over 50% of the children attending these schools are students of color, and 63% qualify for the free/reduced-price meal program. As Table 2 illustrates below, most of the schools in the Elkhart are struggling:

Table 2: Elkhart School District Demographics and Performance					
School Name	School Rating 2020	Grades Served	Students of Color	Free/Reduced Meals	Enrollment
Cleveland Elementary School	F	K-6	317	69%	388
Osolo Elementary School	F	K-6	481	61%	546
Roosevelt STEAM	F	K-6	456	72%	500
Eastwood Elementary School	D	K-6	253	83%	299
Mary Feeser Elementary School	D	K-6	318	73%	463
Bristol Elementary School	C	K-6	138	40%	452
Beardsley Elementary School	C	K-6	244	56%	522
Mary Beck Elementary School	C	K-6	125	63%	327
Mary Daly Elementary School	C	K-6	332	52%	663
Hawthorne Elementary School	B	K-6	203	53%	569
Pinewood Elementary School	B	K-6	227	69%	448
Monger Elementary School	B	K-6	329	77%	393
Riverview Elementary School	B	K-6	241	63%	414
Woodland Elementary School	B	K-6	307	61%	547

The average passing rate for the 2018 ISTEP ELA/Math assessment is 32%, with one school scoring only 10%. When these percentages are converted into the number of students, we find that 2,660 of the 4,209 children are performing below grade-level proficiency. These numbers look even bleaker in terms of the historical track records of these schools:

Table 3: Far Eastside Historical School Ratings and Averages						
School Name	2019-20	2018-19	2017-18	2016-17	2015-16	2014-15
Cleveland Elementary School	B	B	B	B	B	A
Osolo Elementary School	B	B	B	C	C	A
Woodland Elementary School	B	B	B	B	C	A
Riverview Elementary School	B	B	B	B	B	A
Monger Elementary School	B	B	B	B	B	A
Pinewood Elementary School	C	C	C	B	B	A

Eastwood Elementary School	C	C	C	B	C	B
Mary Feeser Elementary School	C	C	C	C	C	A
Bristol Elementary School	C	C	C	C	C	A
Mary Beck Elementary School	D	D	F	D	D	F
Mary Daly Elementary School	D	D	D	D	D	B
Beardsley Elementary School	F	F	F	C	D	C
Roosevelt STEAM Academy	F	F	F	F	D	D
Hawthorne Elementary School	F	F	F	D	C	A

The need for high quality public elementary schools is made stronger by deep-rooted challenges in Elkhart, Indiana that our children face every day. Instances of criminal homicides across the city have increased by more than 300% since 2010 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). Although the trends are on a downward slope since 2014, the rate continues to be nearly 4 times higher than the state and national average. In 2019, approximately 12.3% of children under 18 were in poverty, which is nearly comparable to the Indianapolis metropolitan area poverty rate. The 2018 unemployment rate for Elkhart was 6% and according to Feeding America, 12% of Elkhart families do not have easy access to food, which is over the national average.

These facts illustrate a stark reality: kids living in Elkhart faces a growing challenge that threatens their ability to achieve overall academic success. Children who are already dealing with the challenges that accompany living in poverty deserve extra care and attention from adults who share their background and possess the expertise to guide them to success. PLA has developed the educational model to meet these needs. The demographics of current PLA schools in Indiana are similar to the demographics of the schools located in Elkhart.

PLA has achieved remarkable success working within communities like Elkhart. Furthermore, PLA is led by a highly diverse leadership team dedicated to serving children of color. PLA’s organizational leadership reflects the community we serve: our organization is one of the very few public-school networks serving children of color in the country that is led primarily by people of color. We understand the needs of our community because we come from the neighborhoods we serve.

At Genai Excellence Academy, the groundwork that has been established through the various efforts of the current leaders, Apostle Edwin Newsome and Lady Chantella Newsome, will further ensure strong connections to the communities we serve. In fact, the leadership of the school are life-long residents of Elkhart who have established a church in the community since 2008. In this capacity, the leadership have engaged thousands of Elkhart members through their efforts at the church, community events, local partnerships, and educational based initiatives such as the Genai Excellence Academy pre-school. This private entity was established since 2015 and provides high quality early childhood for children starting as young as 12 weeks old. In 2019, Genai expanded to serve preschool students 1-5 years old.

Genai Excellence Academy will be located on 2201 Toledo Rd, Elkhart, IN 46516, a location already approved to hold nearly 100 students. Prior to the current ownership, this facility was a private K-8 school until 2014. Currently, part of the building has been used to operate the early childhood and preschool program and once approved, the use of the facility will expand to serve children K-6th grade. The building sits on an additional 8 acres of land that leaves room for development as enrollment increases.

The current two-story facility features 8 full size classrooms that are all approximately (17.5' X 27'), an auditorium that seats 150 (2,800 Square Ft), a kitchen for food preparation (174 Square Ft), 4 offices including the main office (all about 850 Sq ft), an art room (11'3" X 29'), a gym/recreational area (38.4' x 26.9'), a library (12'7" X 10'6"), a staff lounge (12'7" x 10'), 6 bathrooms (all about 11'6" x 9'6") and its very own radio station room (12'7" x 10'). The facility also features a carport that is leveled to the second

floor on the outside of the building which allows any visitor, staff or scholar who is wheelchair bound or with physical disability to access the building main levels without any barriers.

As enrollment grows to full capacity, there is 8 acres of land that Genai Excellence Academy can expand on and are prepared to do so. In the chance that full construction is not possible to provide permanent expansion solutions, we are prepared to adapt the temporary solutions through portable classrooms. Portable classrooms come in various sizes to accommodate our growth plans. Portable classrooms are made with durable, high-quality materials that meet national and state building, electrical, mechanical and plumbing codes. The units include central HVAC with programmable thermostats, florescent lighting, ADA restrooms, and additional door, wall and window features that ensures a secure and effective learning environment. Standard and customized floorplans are also available to meet our specific educational purposes, offering optimal flexibility, promptly and affordably.

8. A plan to engage the targeted community, including a description of community engagement efforts to date.

Genai Excellence Academy will be led by the current leaders of the Genai Excellence Academy Preschool—Lady Chantella Newsome and Apostle Edwin Newsome. As life-long residents of Elkhart, they have strong roots in the community, developed trust among its families and have deep seated relationships that will add a great value to community engagement efforts and ensuring engagement with the targeted community. In addition to establishing the Kingdom Impact Christian Cultural Church in 2008, which has reached thousands of people, Lady Chantella Newsome is a Chaplain for the City of Elkhart, a board member of the Chamber of Commerce for Elkhart County, and serves on the Kids and Families Committee for the Elkhart Community Foundation. Mr .Edwin Newsome leads the Kingdom Impact Christian Cultural Church while also providing oversight for ministries in Tampa, FL and Dallas, TX. He also sits on the Center for Community Justice organization that provides reentry support to released prisoners among other supports.

PLA will continue to build upon these existing relationships and efforts with our extensive community engagement strategies to ensure buy-in from families and community members. Through our proven outreach process, parents and community members are actively engaged in the implementation of the well-rounded school model. This process includes informing parents and community partners of the school's plans through community conversations, by hosting events, and surveying parents during these meetings regarding their children's enrichment interests and needs. Research bears out the importance of parental involvement. When parents are involved, students have higher test scores, increased motivation, and better attendance (Rose et al., 1997). Family participation is in fact twice as predictive of students' academic success as family socioeconomic status (Walberg, 1984).

Genai Excellence Academy leadership have already built great relationships of trust with families in Elkhart through the many programs that they offer, which will support the recruitment, enrollment, and family outreach efforts. As mentioned above, the founding members of the school holds leadership roles throughout the community, which will be a key asset to the engagement efforts for the school. The Genai Excellence Academy preschool, in particular, will create a seamless and important connection directly into the Kindergarten class. It has been in operation since 2015 and has graduated four classes of Kindergarten ready Pre-K scholars—all of whom have since enrolled in district schools. The early childcare and preschool program currently has an enrollment of 32 students who will all feed into the Kindergarten program, once established.

The current leaders also operate a number of community based programs that engages hundreds of families and scholars throughout the year. For example, they run a summer camp called Yes I Can Camp that attracts children ages 5-13 and engages them in the exploration of entrepreneurship, creating and launching their own venture. Our community activities included Carnival Days outside, Art Shows and competitions, church based holiday programs and Harvest Parties, Youth Business Expose and so much

more. The partnership with the preschool and these other existing community relationships provides a strong base of the community we are targeting for the K-6 school.

Our school leadership team will build on these relationships and continue to grow their reach by deploying PLA's comprehensive family engagement plan comprised of a variety of tried and true strategies. Prior to the start of the school year, we host events like the ice cream social which serves as an opportunity for parents to meet teachers and school administrators. This event is typically well attended; in 2015, over 200 families at just one school attended. We then hold an open house to familiarize parents with the core school components as well as expectations. We hold one-on-one parent-teacher meetings each month, called Parents-In-Touch days, where teachers provide an in-depth look at each child's performance and behavior. During the pandemic, these have continued to take place virtually with just as much success and interest. We place a strong importance on these events, and teachers are required to have 100% attendance from the parents of their students. Additional family events include All-Pro Dads breakfasts and Muffins with Moms, which provide a warm environment to get to know our parents, answer their questions and share how we will support their children. We also create and distribute an FAQ document to our families. Our community engagement team ensures that families know about upcoming changes and can express any concerns.

We will analyze the needs of our children by reviewing student achievement data; holding further interviews with stakeholders; conducting further focus groups with scholars, families, and community members; visiting schools; and observing classrooms. School leaders, instructional leaders, and educators will attend pre-service trainings and biweekly meetings to give input on the school's conversion. Our leaders will also meet with PLA students and school leaders to incorporate best practices and further customize our approach.

We will actively engage parents and community members by circulating flyers and posters in highly visible locations in the community, such as community bulletin boards, churches, libraries, and parks. Genai Excellence Academy has established a strong relationship with local churches that runs before and after school programming at their current location. Genai Excellence Academy also has a formalized partnership with a local radio station, which the leaders own, that reaches 125,000 homes.

Building on the robust family engagement already in place at Genai Excellence Academy, our leaders will continue to make personal phone calls and coordinate automated outbound calls to keep families informed on our plans for the 2021-22 school year. To provide a comprehensive view of the plan for the upcoming year, admission policy, and enrollment process, parents and community members will be actively engaged through town hall events and community meetings in which parents and key programmatic partners will have the opportunity to learn about the elements of our instructional approach.

PLA has implemented these outreach strategies at other schools, and they have proven effective. Parent satisfaction is measured by regularly administered surveys. To date, our surveys report strong parent satisfaction with our efforts to engage them. We treat our parents as the critical partners to their children's success that they truly are. Survey results show:

- Ninety-three percent (93%) of families indicated that they were very pleased with their school and the quality of education that their child received.
- Ninety-four percent (94%) of parents would strongly recommend their school to other parents.

To ensure a high level of community engagement, we plan to build on our successful community model and that of Genai Excellence Academy, and identify community partnerships that provide meaningful support to our scholars. Our partnerships typically focus around enrichment services, socio-emotional support, extended learning time services, and family support. Beyond formal partnerships, we want our

community partners to participate in the life of our school. By maintaining an open-door policy and inviting the community to school events where they can meaningfully engage with our scholars, our community members can positively impact the life of our school.

Finally, our coordinated marketing and communications strategy will round out our community engagement efforts. PLA is committed to achieving excellence and building strong relationships with our communities through open, honest and ongoing communications. With the support of our communications and marketing department, Genai Excellence Academy leaders will coordinate a strategic outreach effort to ensure that the community is well informed. The following details PLA's external communication channels, which will be deployed to promote Genai Excellence Academy:

- Formal and informal community outreach: We will notify local churches, community organizations, and after-school programs about Genai Excellence Academy's opening, send letters home, conduct phone blasts, and hold events.
- In person, door-to door outreach: We will engage in canvassing and handing out pamphlets to every home in the area.
- Involvement in the community: We will attend meetings and visit community organizations serving our target population, such as YMCAs, Boys and Girls Clubs, home-school associations, and local churches.
- News/media: We pitch two news stories to the press per month and collaborate with the media on coverage within our schools. In addition, Genai Excellence Academy's access to their local radio station will be used multiple times a week for radio campaigns, to promote the school's opening.
- PLA online presence: Phalen Leadership Academies uses its main web page, social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and a YouTube Channel with features from our schools), and the PLA Mobile App to share news, updates, and events with the community.
- Network external newsletters: Community members have the opportunity to register to receive our e-newsletters. Twice per month, we send out news about the schools and the PLA network.

Finally, Genai Excellence Academy is uniquely located adjacent to a 100 foot radio station tower that has a bandwidth to reach 150,000 homes. Owned by founding members of the Genai Excellence Academy team, radio ads will be pushed through this platform often to reach the right audience base. The radio programming is also streamed through the school app and online, therefore, reaching even more members of the community who may not be in proximity to the radio tower or who may not tune in to their radio programming.

9. A completed "Experienced Operators Proposal Overview" which may be found [here](#), including a completed Tab 1 of the Enrollment Plan Excel Spreadsheet, found [here](#);

Strong student enrollment is a vital part of PLAs' ability to serve students and families. We developed and execute a structured, research backed process to ensure strong enrollment which will be implemented at Genai Excellence Academy. Our process includes using and tracking data to inform enrollment needs, using data to measure effective strategies and utilizing a team approach to maintain strong enrollment throughout the year. Key members of the school, including school leaders and operations staff, make up the enrollment team and each team member have key metrics that they are responsible for to ensure strong enrollment.

All PLA schools are also assigned a full time student enrollment coordinator whose duty is to ensure our schools are at full capacity by day one of school and remain at full capacity throughout the year. The goals of the student enrollment coordinator includes:

- 1- To ensure all seats are filled on the first day of school across all of our regions
- 2- To execute a calendar of events/activities that engages families throughout the year

- 3- To monitor and respond to attrition data
- 4- To execute a strong backfill plan if students are to transition mid-year.

Student enrollment coordinators are recruited from within the community and are oftentimes individuals with deep knowledge of the school and surrounding community that they are assigned. As a result, their knowledge of the community coupled with PLAs tools and resources This strategy in addition to the many strong programs already underway provides us strong assurance that Genai Excellence Academy will meet the proposed enrollment goals.

Please see attached for the completed worksheets of the enrollment plan for Genai Excellence Academy.

10. A description of any planned changes from the approved school model(s) in the organizer’s original Charter Application; and

Not applicable; the basis for this application is on the PLA model and our model hasn't changed.

11. A detailed start-up plan for opening the new school, including specific planning tasks by month, and the individual or individuals responsible for each task.

Having launched multiple schools, PLA has fine-tuned its start-up plan, processes, and implementation. The following chart identifies key planning tasks. This timeline is tentative and subject to change if necessary.

Table 5: Start-Up Plan for Opening Genai Excellence Academy											
Personnel: Planning Task	2021										
	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug					
Governance and Management											
CEO & Development: Charter activation application and approval											
Operations: Register for corporation and school numbers, as well as access to IDOE and U.S. ED online portals											
Legal: Finalize agreement with authorizer											
Operations & Compliance: Ensure Board of Directors is fully staffed and submit list of board members to ICSB, including resumes & contact information											
Legal & Compliance: Complete state and federal filing requirements—registering as state vendor, ensuring good standing for IN Secretary of State, etc.											
HR: Provide written notice that principal has been hired to ICSB along with a copy of the head of school’s resume											
HR: Provide ICSB with updated organizational chart including names of specific individuals occupying key leadership roles at the school											
HR: Conduct expanded background check results for any new Board members; keep documentation on file and submit to ICSB											
Operations & Compliance: Ensure board member names are posted and up to date on the school’s website, per Indiana statute											
Legal & Compliance: Submit to ICSB a copy of ratified board by-laws (if ICSB does not have ratified copy already or if changes have been made)											
Operations, Compliance: Submit to ICSB minutes from one Board meeting within the 60 days preceding the pre-opening site visit											
Staffing											
Director of Recruitment: Recruit and hire key staff, including Principal and School Secretary											
HR: Conduct expanded background check for school leadership; submit to ICSB and keep documentation on file											
Principal & Secretary: Start date for key staff											
Director of Recruitment: Recruit all staff, including hiring or contracting school nurse as required by Indiana administrative code											

Personnel: Planning Task	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug
Families, Students, and Community Engagement						
PLA COT! : Community outreach and marketing (please see question 6 in this document for a full description)						
Legal : Submit student enrollment policy to ICSB, including enrollment deadlines, capacity by grade level, limitations per state law, and lottery process						
Legal : Submit written policies/procedures to ICSB for services to SPED students, student discipline, grievances, FERPA, and state Public Access laws						
Legal : Update Student and Family Handbook with above policies (including suspension/expulsion, school health records, and Board Meeting policies)						
PLA COT : Student recruitment and enrollment						
Legal & Director of SPED : Ensure Staff Policies & Procedures Manual (SPPM) is aligned with IDEA/Article 7 in serving SPED students						
Legal & Director of SPED : Ensure the school's health record procedures are included in the SPPM						
Legal : Ensure required staff procedures consistent with FERPA for storage/handling of student files are included in the SPPM; submit to ICSB						
Principal & Secretary : Implement electronic system for maintaining student Records						
Principal & Secretary : Request and process student records, including immunization records/exemptions & records for students with special needs						
Principal & Secretary : Secure student academic, attendance, discipline, test records, and (separately) health records in locked cabinets						
PLA COT & all school staff : Host parent and community events						
Legal & Compliance : Provide written assurances to ICSB regarding student records and electronic data system						
PLA COT : Ensure that master school year calendar and daily class schedule is available in both English and Spanish and distributed to all families						
PLA COT : Ensure that Student and Family Handbook is available in both English and Spanish and distributed to all families						
Compliance : Submit to ICSB any documents pertaining to enrollment lotteries held and keep on file						
Compliance : Submit to ICSB enrollment stats, including number of enrolled students, number of students on waiting list, and student rosters by grade level						

Personnel: Planning Task	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug
Operations						
Operations & Secretary: Coordinate services with supplemental services providers/partners						
Legal & Operations: Create specific written plan for preparing and responding to emergencies; post copies in the school and submit to ICSB						
Secretary: Ensure that Department of Public Works has installed school zone and speed limit signs						
Legal, Operations & Secretary: Finalize food vendor and transportation services contracts per IDOE requirements; submit to ICSB						
HR, Compliance, & Secretary: Obtain copies of expanded background checks for employees of supplemental service providers; submit to ICSB						
Operations & Secretary: Coordinate appropriate state and local health department inspections and licenses; ensure compliance and submit to ICSB						
SPED Director: Submit to ICSB agreement with transportation provider regarding homeless students and students with transportation accommodations						
Legal & Compliance: Provide ICSB with written assurance that updated school administration contact information has been provided to IDOE staff						
Legal: Submit written plan to ICSB for medication administration and provision of required health services (student hearing and vision)						
Operations & Compliance: Submit to ICSB evidence that health services are available (e.g., school nurse on staff or contract, contract with health care clinic)						
Finance						
CFO: Create budget for school						
CFO & Compliance: Submit to ICSB documented fiscal management policies and accounting system with internal controls; keep on file						
CFO: Establish Genai Excellence Academy bank account						
CFO, HR, & Compliance: Provide to ICSB evidence of employment of Accountant						
CFO, Board Chair, & Compliance: Provide ICSB with a copy of the initial statement adopted by the Board of Directors						
CFO & Legal: Provide written assurance to ICSB that Genai Excellence Academy has contracted a Certified Public Accounting firm to complete Independent Accountant's Report						
CFO & Compliance: Provide ICSB with a copy of deduction policy and proof of contract with payroll company						
CFO: Develop and review cashflow framework for the school						
Finance and Development: Confirm all funding sources that Genai Excellence Academy is now eligible for as a charter school						
Pre-Opening Site Visit and Final Items						
Legal & Compliance: Submit a letter of assurance to ICSB, signed by the Board Chair and School Leader, stating that all Prior Actions are complete						
CEO & Principal: Host pre-opening site visit						
Principal & Compliance: Obtain Prior Action Completion Letter from ICSB to verify that school meets all criteria specified in the Prior Action Checklist						
Anticipated Opening Day: August 16, 2021						
Scholars & all Staff: School opening						

1. PLA COT = PLA Community Outreach Team, PLAFC = PLA Facilities Committee

Once the required information has been submitted, a public hearing will be held to allow for comments from community members about the proposed school. ICSB hosts public hearings within the school corporation in which the proposed charter school will be located (or, if the specific location has not been identified, within the county in which the proposed charter school will be located). The purpose of the public hearing is for ICSB to receive comments from community members about the potential impact of the proposed charter school upon the community.

In addition to, or in lieu of, attending public hearings, community members may submit public comments via email to the following address: charter-applications@icsb.in.gov. Please note that all emails are subject to Indiana's public access laws including the Access to Public Records Act, which may be found at IC § 5-14-3. Those submitting a public comment are asked to provide their name and the name of the proposed charter school along with their comment.