



EDUCATION ONE
AT TRINE UNIVERSITY

Charter School Application

*Providing high-quality educational opportunities
for students in the state of Indiana*

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Application Introduction

A charter school is a public school operating under a contract, or charter, between the school's organizer and a charter school authorizer. Charter schools are established to provide innovative and quality choice options to serve the needs of the community.

Education One has developed an Application Process Protocol for all schools seeking authorization. The application process has seven major components. However, applicants must meet certain criteria in order to qualify for advancement into the next phase of the process: The process includes: (1) Letter of Intent; (2) Initial Proposal; (3) Application Invitation; (4) Application Review; (5) Public Hearing; (6) Proposed School Board Meeting; and (7) Acceptance or Denial of Application. Education One follows an open application cycle. However, recommended timelines for submission of documents have been outlined to support quality school start up.

The application questions are organized to solicit information efficiently and to aid quality review and decision making by the Education One Application Review Team. Education One staff reserves the right to reject applications that do not adhere to the application specifications. Throughout the process, Education One staff will communicate important information to the charter school applicant's authorized representative(s).

Education One is governed by its own board of directors separate from Trine University. The Executive Director makes a recommendation to the Education One Board of Directors regarding the acceptance or rejection of an application. The Education One Board of Directors meet and vote to accept or reject the application, based on the recommendation.

Applicants who should use this application are those who are applying to open a new charter school. Existing charter schools applying to replicate their school(s) should complete the application as well as items marked for replication.

Education One utilized resources found from the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) to create this comprehensive charter school application. Information regarding NACSA and its resources can be found at www.qualitycharters.org.

Application Process Overview

Applicant Submits Letter of Intent:

Recommended Timeline for Submission: 15-18 Months Prior to Start of School

Interested candidates must submit a [Letter of Intent](#) to the Executive Director of Education One describing their desire to establish a school in conjunction with Education One. This Letter of Intent must also describe basic tenets of the proposed school structure, such as location, opening date, age range of students, and curriculum and management structures.

Applicant Submits Initial Proposal:

Recommended Timeline for Submission: 15-18 Months Prior to Start of School

Following the submission of a Letter of Intent, an applicant will submit an [Initial Proposal](#), describing the structure of the proposed school. The Initial Proposal must include a Vision and Mission statement for the school, a justification of the school's expected effectiveness at enhancing the educational achievement of its students, and an in-depth description of the curriculum and management structures of the school. Specifically, the school's educational model must be stated, its curricular framework must be established in which specific educational objectives for each subject taught at the school are stated, and assessment procedures should be explained. Additional pages may be submitted with information regarding the applicant's ideas of innovation in education, if applicable.

Review/Feedback of Initial Proposal by Executive Director (Q & A):

Members of the Education One staff will review all Initial Proposals, utilizing a rubric to score each section. Additional questions may be asked as needed. As a courtesy to the applicant, the Executive Director will provide verbal feedback to the applicant based on the review of the Initial Proposal. Selected applications will then be invited to submit an Application. Application submission is by invitation only.

Applicant Submits Full Application:

Recommended Timeline for Submission: 12-15 Months Prior to Start of School

Following an invitation to apply, applicants submit a full application to Education One. All completed applications are reviewed using a rubric by the Application Review Team consisting of Education One staff members, Education One's Finance/Facilities Consultant, and independent consultants with expertise in the proposed school's educational model. Legal counsel will also review applications, when necessary, at the request of Education One's Executive Director.

Application Specification and Submission Instructions

- The application must be typed and single-spaced utilizing the template provided by Education One. Utilize the provided text boxes to answer questions. If a particular question does not apply, respond with a "Not Applicable." Questions without text boxes indicate that the response will be incorporated into an Application Attachment.
- The application narrative should not exceed 75 pages. For replication schools, the narrative should not exceed 100 pages. Attachments do not count toward the overall page limit.
- For Application Attachments that require a specified template, ensure all pages of the document are completed.

After an initial review of the application, the applicant will receive written feedback from the Application Review Team. The applicant will have time to review the feedback and make any changes to the application deemed necessary. Revised applications will be resubmitted for review to the Application Review Team. The same rubric will be utilized to rescore the

application as needed. Applicants must meet certain criteria in order to qualify for advancement into the next phase of the process.

Participation in Capacity Interview:

Applicants who qualify will meet with the Application Review Team for an Application Capacity Interview. The interview may include members of the Applicant Team, including but not limited to the proposed school's Governing Board, school leadership team, and proposed staff members. The interview will gauge the applicant's capacity to execute the components outlined in the submitted application, in regards to academics, organization, and finances. The Application Review Team will debrief after the interview. If further questions exist, or additional clarification is needed, an applicant may be invited to a second interview with the Application Review Team.

School Board Meeting

Recommended Timeline: 9-12 Months Prior to Start of School

For applicants who qualify, a member of the Application Review team will attend a board meeting for the proposed school, in order to monitor and measure the board's capacity to govern.

Public Hearing

Recommended Timeline: 9-12 Months Prior to Start of School

Prior to recommending approval of an application, a public hearing will be scheduled. During the Public Hearing, applicants will present their proposal to the community in a public forum. Opportunities for members of the public to speak in opposition or in favor of the proposed school will be given. If members of the public are not able to attend the Public Hearing, but would like to submit comments regarding the proposed school, they may do so via an online public form provided by Education One.

Education One Board Meeting

Recommended Timeline: At Least 9 Months Prior to Start of School

The Executive Director will make a recommendation to the Education One Board regarding the acceptance or rejection of an application. The Education One Board of Directors will meet and vote to accept or reject the application, based on the recommendation. Applicants will be notified of the Board's decision within 24 hours of the vote.

Notice of Disclosure

All information submitted as part of the application (including financial information) is subject to the Indiana Access to Public Records Act (IC § 5-14-3) and subject to disclosure to the public there-under, including disclosure to the media. **In the event that it is the applicant's position that certain information submitted as part of the application falls within an exception to disclosure under the Public Records Act, the applicant must obtain an advisory opinion from the State of Indiana's Public Access Counselor prior to submitting any application materials.** If the Public Access Counselor's opinion supports the applicant's position, then any such information contained in the application that is considered non-disclosable must be clearly identified in the application as confidential. The application must further be accompanied by (a) a written statement specifying the particular exception or exceptions to disclosure under the Public Records Act applicable to the information sought to be exempted from disclosure, and (b) the written opinion from the Public Access Counselor that supports the applicant's position that the information is exempt from disclosure under the Public Records Act.

The applicant acknowledges that if the foregoing procedure is not followed, and an application is submitted, all information shall be subject to disclosure to the public unless Education One determines that it must withhold from disclosure certain information in the application pursuant to the Public Records Act. Each applicant, by the submission of an application, acknowledges its understanding that all application materials are subject to disclosure under the Public Records Act and may be subject to review and copying by the public. Each applicant and its representatives, employees and agents acknowledges and agrees that Education One Board members and staff, Trine University, the Indiana Department of Education, and any official, agent, employee or representative of the State of Indiana shall not be held liable or legally responsible in any way for any such disclosure pursuant to the Public Records Act, and such parties hereby waive any rights to redress or claims of action pursuant to any such disclosure.

Application Attachments

Education One utilizes Google Drive to organize each applicant’s application and the required attachments, found in the table below. Each applicant group will have access to a Google Drive Folder that will include all the necessary templates to complete their application. A folder, titled “Application Attachments,” will be used to save attachments in the following manner:

- Each applicable attachment for the school should be saved as one PDF and uploaded to the Application Attachments folder.
- Each attachment should be saved as the school name + attachment number (i.e., Attachment 1, Attachment 2, etc.).
- Link each attachment to the table below, following these steps:
 - Right click on the attachment PDF saved in the Application Attachments folder.
 - Click “Share.”
 - Click the drop down arrow next to “Restricted” and choose “Anyone with the link.”
 - On the right, make sure “Viewer” is chosen.
 - Click the blue “Copy Link” button.
 - Paste the link into the table.
 - Add a space after the link to activate for viewers to click and be directed to the attachment.

Application Attachment Table		
Attachment	Description	Link
Attachment 1	<p style="text-align: center;">Planned Curriculum</p> <p><i>Provide a sample course scope and sequence for one subject for one grade level for each division (elementary, middle, high) the school would serve.</i></p>	Attachment 1
Attachment 2	<p style="text-align: center;">Proposed School Calendar</p> <p><i>Provide the proposed school calendar for the first year of operation, including the number of days/hours of instruction.</i></p>	Attachment 2
Attachment 3	<p style="text-align: center;">Enrollment Policy</p> <p><i>Provide the school’s proposed enrollment policy.</i></p>	Attachment 3
Attachment 4	<p style="text-align: center;">Discipline Policy</p> <p><i>Provide the school’s proposed discipline policy.</i></p>	Attachment 4
Attachment 5	<p style="text-align: center;">Non-Profit Status Proof/Board Policies</p> <p><i>Submit Articles of Incorporation, proof of non-profit status and tax exempt status (or copies of filings), and any governing documents already adopted.</i></p>	Attachment 5
Attachment 6	<p style="text-align: center;">Signed Statement of Assurances</p> <p><i>Submit one completed and signed Statement of Assurances on behalf of the board. Use the template provided by Education One.</i></p>	Attachment 6
Attachment 7	<p style="text-align: center;">Organizational Charts for Governing, Managing & Staffing</p> <p><i>Submit an organization chart that shows school governance, management, and staffing structure for Year 1 and at full build-out.</i></p>	Attachment 7
Attachment 8	<p style="text-align: center;">School’s Governing Board</p> <p><i>List the members of the school’s proposed leadership team and governing board. Include full resumes that contain contact information for each individual listed.</i></p>	Attachment 8
Attachment 9	<p style="text-align: center;">Board Member Notice of Disclosure</p> <p><i>Submit completed and signed information sheets for each board member. Use the template provided by Education One.</i></p>	Attachment 9
Attachment 10	<p style="text-align: center;">Board Code of Ethics & Conflict of Interest</p> <p><i>Provide the board’s proposed Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest policy.</i></p>	Attachment 10

Attachment 11	Term Sheet for Contract <i>Provide the term sheet, draft proposed management contract detailing limits and evidence that the service provider is authorized to do business in Indiana.</i>	N/A
Attachment 12	Complete Staffing Chart for School <i>Provide a complete staffing chart with Year 1 positions, administrative, instructional, and non-instructional personnel, the number of classroom teachers, paraprofessionals, and speciality teachers, and operational/support staff.</i>	Attachment 12
Attachment 13	Principal/School Leader Information <i>Provide the resume for the proposed principal/school leader.</i>	Attachment 13
Attachment 14	Principal/School Leader Posting Information <i>Provide the job description or qualifications for this position with a discussion of the timeline, criteria, and recruiting/selection process for hiring.</i>	N/A
Attachment 15	Personnel Policy/Employee Manual <i>Provide a personnel policy or an employee manual if developed.</i>	Attachment 15
Attachment 16	Superintendent/Leadership Evaluation Tool <i>Provide superintendent and/or leadership evaluation tools that has been developed.</i>	Attachment 16
Attachment 17	Teacher/Support Staff Evaluation Tool <i>Provide teacher and/or support staff evaluation tools that has been developed.</i>	Attachment 17
Attachment 18	Evidence of Community Support <i>Provide evidence of support from community partners (i.e., letters of intent/commitment, memoranda of understanding, and/or contracts).</i>	Attachment 18
Attachment 19	Proof of Secured Facility <i>Provide proof of commitment for the facility.</i>	Attachment 19
Attachment 20	Facility Description <i>Provide supporting documents that detail the facility (10 page limit).</i>	Attachment 20
Attachment 21	Start-up Plan/Timeline <i>Provide a detailed start-up plan for the school, specifying tasks, timelines, and responsible individuals.</i>	Attachment 21
Attachment 22	Insurance/Levels of Coverage <i>Provide a list of the types of insurance coverage the school will secure, including a description of the level of coverage.</i>	Attachment 22
Attachment 23	Completed Budget and Staffing Workbook <i>Use the workbook provided by Education One.</i>	Attachment 23
Attachment 24	Budget Narrative <i>Provide a detailed description of the assumptions and revenue estimates, including but not limited to the basis for revenue projections, staffing levels, and costs.</i>	Attachment 24
Attachment 25	Historical Performance Workbook <i>Use the workbook provided by Education One.</i>	Attachment 25
Attachment 26	3 Years of Audited Financials for IN Schools <i>Provide the last three years of audited financial statements for the school(s) and the most recent internal financial statements.</i>	Attachment 26
Attachment 27	3 Years of Audited Financials for Whole Organization <i>Provide the last three years of audited financial statements for the organization as a whole and the most recent internal financial statements</i>	Attachment 27
Attachment 28	Litigations <i>Provide a summary of the demand, any response to the demand, and the results of the arbitration or litigation.</i>	Attachment 28
Attachment 29	Implementation Schedule <i>Provide an implementation schedule that explains the strategy for executing each charter that is approved. Use the template provided by Education One.</i>	Attachment 29

Application Cover Sheet

Name of Entity Applying:	Options Schools, Inc. (OSI)
Primary Contact Person:	Dr. Mike Gustin
Mailing Address:	18077 River Rd. Ste 106, Noblesville, IN 46062
Phone Number:	317-773-8659
Email Address:	mgustin@optionsined.org

Applicant Team

Provide the full name, current job title and employer, and the position to be held with the proposed school for all persons on the applicant team, adding lines as needed.

Full Name	Current Job Title and Employer	Position with Proposed School
Dr. Mike Gustin	President of OSI	President of OSI
Jacob Brandau	Vice President of OSI	Vice President of OSI
Michael Dunagan	Chief Operations Officer of OSI	Chief Operations Officer of OSI
Karen Oliver	Chief Academic Officer of OSI	Chief Academic Officer of OSI
Jack Colwell	Chief Financial Officer of OSI	Chief Financial Officer of OSI
Gretchen Taylor	Instructional Coach of OSI	Instructional Coach of OSI

Has this applicant team had any charter school applications under consideration by any other authorizer(s) in the United States, within the last five years?	Yes	No		
		X		
If Yes, Complete the Table Below, Adding Lines As Needed				
State	Authorizer	Proposed School Name	Application Due Date	Decision Date

Describe the applicant team's individual and collective qualifications for implementing the Academic, Operation, and Financial plans successfully.

Dr. Mike Gustin, President & CEO of Options Schools, Inc. - has 31 years of experience in public education, including nineteen years in the Indiana charter movement as a teacher, coach, school administrator, and central office administrator. He has also earned four college degrees in Education and Educational Leadership, including a B.S. Degree from Indiana University in Education and an M.A., Ed.S, and Ed. D. in Educational Leadership from Ball State University. Dr. Gustin currently holds or has held licenses in social studies (world history, U.S. History, government, and sociology), school administration, and central office administration.

Jacob Brandau, Vice President of Options Schools, Inc. - has 18 years of experience in public education, all at Options Schools, as a math teacher, school administrator, Chief Financial Officer, and Vice President. He has earned two degrees in Education and Educational Leadership, including a B.S. Degree in Secondary Education and an M.A. in Educational Leadership from Ball State University. Michael currently holds licenses in mathematics and school administration.

Michael Dunagan, Chief Operations Officer of Options Schools, Inc. - has 19 years of experience in public education, all in the Indiana charter movement, as a teacher, instructional coach, school administrator, and central office administrator. He has earned two degrees in Education and Educational Leadership, including a B.S. Degree in Secondary Education and an M.A. in Educational Leadership from Ball State University. Michael currently holds licenses in social studies (world civilization, U.S. History, and government), and school administration.

Karen Oliver, Chief Academic Officer of Options Schools, Inc. - has 31 years of experience in public education, including three years in the charter movement, as a teacher, instructional coach, and central office administrator. She earned three degrees in Education, Education Leadership, and Curriculum and Instruction, including a B.S. Degree in Secondary Education, an M.A. in Educational Leadership, and an M.A. in Curriculum and Instruction. Karen is a doctoral candidate at Ball State University and holds licenses in English, journalism, U.S. History, computer science, and school administration.

Jack Colwell, Chief Financial Officer of Options Schools, Inc. - has 30 years of experience in public and private Accounting, Finance, Lending, and Management, with four years at Options Schools, Inc. as Corporate Treasurer and CFO. From Ball State University he earned a B.S. Degree with a departmental major in Family and Consumer Science, Property Management option. From the Miller College of Business at Ball State University he earned a B.S. departmental major in Accounting and an M.B.A. in Finance. Jack holds other industry certifications, including a Lean Six Sigma Green Belt.

Gretchen Taylor, Instructional Coach of Options Schools, Inc. - has 19 years of experience in public education, 18 of those in the classroom at Options Schools, Inc. as an English teacher and instructional coach. She has earned a B.A. Degree in English and Secondary Education from Hope College. Gretchen is currently pursuing an M.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction at the American College of Education and holds a license in English.

Proposed School Information

Provide the proposed school opening information. Please indicate the city/town and, if known, the potential address or neighborhood of the location (Geographic Community). Virtual operators should indicate the relevant geographies intended to serve.

Proposed School Name	Opening Year	New Start, Phase-In/Takeover, or Replication	Geographic Community	Opening Grades	Grade Levels at Full Enrollment
Simon Youth Academy @ Options Noblesville	Existing	Existing	Noblesville, IN	6-12	6-12

Options Westfield	Existing	Existing	Westfield, IN	6-12	6-12
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Options Indiana	Existing	Existing	State of Indiana	6-12	6-12
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Model or Focus of Proposed School:	Each of the three schools serves at-risk students in danger of not graduating high school. Options Schools, Inc alternative model focuses on small class sizes, individually tailored plans, building strong relationships, and providing extensive wrap-around services to help students overcome their barriers to success.
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Does the school intend to contract with a third party education service provider (ESP), or charter management organization (CMO) to manage the educational program and operations of the school but not hold the charter directly?	Yes	No
		x

If Yes, Identify the ESP/CMO		
ESP/CMO Name	For Profit Operator	Not For Profit Operator

Enrollment Summary

Grade Level and Enrollment Projections							
Proposed Schools		Year 1: 2025-26	Year 2: 2026-27	Year 3: 2027-28	Year 4: 2028-29	Year 5: 2029-30	At Capacity
Simon Youth Academy @ Options Noblesville	Grade Levels Served	6-12	6-12	6-12	6-12	6-12	6-12
	Total Enrollment	201	208	220	232	254	320
Options Westfield	Grade Levels Served	6-12	6-12	6-12	6-12	6-12	6-12
	Total Enrollment	284	290	295	300	305	320
Options Indiana	Grade Levels Served	6-12	6-12	6-12	6-12	6-12	6-12
	Total Enrollment	715	725	750	775	791	NA
Totals		1200	1223	1270	1307	1350	NA

Describe the rationale for the number of students and grade levels served in year one and the basis for the growth plan illustrated above.

The grade levels for year one are based on the extent of the alternative education law, which only allows 6-12. Options Schools, Inc. (OSI) will continue to serve students in grades 6-12 in the future. Simon Youth Academy @ Options Noblesville's (Noblesville) enrollment combines the Noblesville site with 130 students and the two ABA sites (Fishers and

Kokomo) with 66 students. The Noblesville site will grow to 142 students, and the ABA sites will have a maximum of 72 students. OSI currently has a partnership in Muncie for a third ABA site, which, based on the trends of the previous two sites, would grow from 6 to 36 students over four years. OSI is also projecting by the end of the five years to have a new building constructed either near the current Noblesville site or farther south into the Fishers area, which will allow the school to increase from grades 9-12 to grades 6-12 at that location. The change in grades served is reflected in a 60-student increase for the fifth year. Options Westfield has 204 students in-person and 80 virtual students in the middle school at the Options Westfield site. Options Westfield has a projected capacity of 230 in-person students. Options Indiana's enrollment is projected to continue with 5-10% year-over-year increases, which have been occurring for five years.

Mission and Vision

State the mission and vision of the proposed school. Explain how it will promote a positive academic environment and reinforce student intellectual and social development.

Replication Schools: State the mission and vision of the proposed school. Explain how it will promote a positive academic environment and reinforce student intellectual and social development. If the school is a part of a network or has an education service provider (ESP) or charter management organization (CMO), explain how creation of the proposed school fits within the mission.

Mission: The Options Schools provide a caring community, quality education, and guidance to those students who seek an alternative to traditional schooling.

Vision: To improve Indiana's K-12 annual graduation rate by enrolling alternative education students as identified in IC 20-10.1-4.6-1.6.

*Options Schools, Inc. (OSI) exists under one charter agreement, a single school corporation (9325), and operates three separate state school numbers (2524, 2551, and 9329). The school operates independently without the assistance of an ESP or CMO. The OSI approach to promoting a positive academic environment and reinforcing student intellectual and social development is to provide a culture and climate built on the OSI motto, *Belong. Believe. Achieve.* By developing strong relationships, trust, and support for students, staff provide a supportive and safe environment for ALL. Staff and students co-created high, teachable expectations through the leadership of Social Emotional Counselors and Principals. The counselors and leadership studied Positive Behavior Intervention Supports, Character Development, and Restorative Practices and molded the concepts to support staff and students in developing an OSI-aligned expectation system. Parallel to the social-emotional support, staff developed a tailored curriculum based on student needs that promotes engagement, identity, and agency.*

OSI engages in two key contractual partnerships to further expand the positive academic environment and reinforce student intellectual and social development. The first contractual partnership is with the Simon Youth Foundation (SYF) at the Simon Youth Academy @ Options Noblesville (2551). SYF offers staff and students additional field experiences, scholarship opportunities, access to internships, etc., to broaden the scope of the professional and student school experience. The partnership allows the leadership at SYF and OSI to gauge if additional partnership opportunities are

mutually beneficial. Future sites will likely include brick-and-mortar sites in larger urban cities around Indiana. The second contractual partnership is with the Behavioral Analysis Center for Autism. OSI has three locations in Fishers, Indiana, Kokomo, Indiana, and Engaging Minds in Muncie, Indiana, to provide educational services to students who are identified as moderately or severely Autistic and are being serviced by these three Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) clinics. Future sites are likely to include additional partnerships with ABA clinics in Indiana.

Section I: Addressing Educational Needs Through Innovation

Education One is particularly interested in applicants that propose school models that address equity challenges within a community through the implementation of dramatically different school designs, instructional strategies, use of technology, staffing models, governance arrangements, family and community engagement strategies, and/or other innovative approaches.

Educational Need and Anticipated Student Population

Meets Standard Expectation

- Explanation that an educational need within the proposed community exists.
- Sound explanation of evidence from which the projection of anticipated special populations was derived.
- Provide quantitative data to support all claims, including links to all sources.

1. What needs exist in the proposed community? Provide a rationale and quantitative evidence to summarize the educational needs of students within the proposed community that addresses any equity challenges that may exist. Please link sources for all quantitative evidence provided.

Options Schools, Inc.'s (OSI) mission is to enroll students across Indiana who are identified in the Indiana Code as alternative students and are likely to not graduate from high school. The OSI mission addresses a serious equity challenge regarding the right of all students to have access to a high school diploma. The data provided clearly shows a need for programs like OSI to address students in Indiana who are identified as needing alternative education.

According to the Federal Department of Labor, there is a direct correlation between levels of education and career earnings and the unemployment rate ([Table 1](#)). According to the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE), Indiana's five-year (2019-2023) rolling graduation rate of 87.45% has performed only slightly better than the national five-year average of about 86.4% (IDOE, 2024). Therefore, an average of 13.6% of students enrolled in public education in Indiana will NOT graduate or "drop out." When this dropout rate is applied to the average number of Indiana students enrolled in public schools in grades six through twelve, which is 595,000, approximately 80,000 students are not on track to graduate annually; it is essential to note that the Indiana General Assembly does not identify students as "alternative" until sixth grade.

OSI started in 2002 as one of Indiana's first 11 approved charters to help address Indiana's dropout crisis. Beginning with 65 students in a small brick-and-mortar setting in Carmel, Indiana, OSI now serves approximately 1,250 students in all 92 counties in Indiana. By the way, this represents 1.5% of the approximately 80,000 who are not likely to graduate. To label

Indiana's dropout problem as a crisis is not hyperbole; it is an appropriate label that more legislators and educators should address.

References:

Indiana Department of Education (IDOE). (2024, May 14). Data Center & Reports. IDOE.
<https://www.in.gov/doe/it/data-center-and-reports/>

2. Provide a quantitative breakdown and rationale of the percentage of special populations the school anticipates serving. Identify any equity challenges that may exist. Special populations include the following:
 - Special Education
 - English Learners
 - Below Grade Level Performance
 - Gifted and Talented

Please link sources for all quantitative evidence provided.

<u>Special Populations</u>			
Student Population	Noblesville	Westfield	Options Indiana
Special Education			
Student Total	61%	40%	23%
Specific Learning Disability (SLD)	17	19	59
Other Health Impairment (OHI)	7	18	45
Emotional Disability (ED)	21	18	39
Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)	73	15	8
Intellectual Disability (ID)	2	1	7
Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)	1	0	1
Note: In addition, 73 students across all locations receive speech/language services as a secondary service.			
English Language Learner (ELL)			
ELL Student Total	<1%	<1%	2.7%
Below Grade Level			
Credit-deficient	66%	66%	84%
Juniors or Seniors	31%	26%	43%

1+ Risk Factors	98%	94%	98%
4+ Risk Factors	49%	61%	50%
Mobility (3+ Prior Schools)	63%	67%	76%
Mobility (5+ schools)	12%	11%	32%
<i>Note: Regarding mobility, OI has 24% of the enrolled students with a 19% chance of dropping out, and 76% have between 26% and 30% chance of dropping out of school (Gaspar et al, 2012).</i>			
Gifted and Talented			
College Core	7	0	0
Certification	5	1	14
Advanced Placement	5	4	0
Dual Credit	790	236	115
CTE Capstone	10	1	1
<i>Note: Certification numbers are based on seniors only. The Advanced Learning Center is located at the Noblesville campus which causes some students to transfer to Noblesville to finish programming.</i>			

Special Education

Students attending Options Schools, Inc (OSI) will be identified for special needs in the following ways:

- Parents or legal guardians will be asked to submit the most recent IEP and educational and psychological evaluation at the time of enrollment.
- Records requested from the previous school include a request for IEP and psych evaluation.
- Requests for IEP/evaluation records are made using the Indiana IEP Program (IIEP).

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)

Options with ABA enroll students found eligible under Indiana's special education law, Article 7, in one or more of the 13 areas of disability (ISBOE, 2019). To receive special education or related services, it is a requirement that the disability has an adverse effect on a student's educational or functional performance. One hundred percent of the students enrolled at Options with ABA have met the criteria in Article 7 to receive special education services in one or more of the 13 areas of disability (ISBOE, 2019). Ninety-five percent of students attending Options with ABA are eligible under the disability of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). In addition to ASD, many students have secondary eligibility under the disabilities of Speech or Language Impairment, Other Health Impairment, or Specific Learning Disability. The top four risk factors upon enrollment for students at Options with ABA include below-grade level performance in math and ELA, history of being bullied, mental/emotional health challenges, and chronic behavior resulting in school discipline.

The most common challenges for students with ASD are difficulty transitioning, delayed processing times, poor social awareness, sensory overload, lack of/inappropriate coping skills, and intrinsic motivation. As a result of these deficits,

students have an increased likelihood of displaying maladaptive behaviors such as verbal or physical aggression, destruction of property, self-injurious behavior, elopement, and refusal to follow directions. In 2021, a Needs Assessment was conducted by the Indiana Resource Center for Autism (IRCA) at the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community (IIDC) to determine Indiana's current state of services and support for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and their families (IIDC, 2021). In that survey, 26% of families ranked behavior management as the second most needed service. Families that enroll in Options with ABA may elect to simultaneously enroll their child in Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) therapy, which supports increasing helpful behaviors and decreasing behaviors that are harmful or affect learning.

English Learners (ELL)

OSI recently experienced an increase in ELL enrollments. With little funding, services for students have been challenging to address. Providing adequate staffing for students' needs and addressing all service hours has been difficult. As OSI numbers grow, OSI has certified EL teachers in different roles and a full-time EL teacher who will begin during the 2024-2025 school year. This year, OSI's partnership with Wabash Valley Education Center (WVEC) greatly improved services, strategies, and professional learning.

Below Grade Level Performance

Below-grade-level performers are the heart of the OSI mission. OSI currently tracks 24 student factors that negatively impact students from graduating with their cohort. The 24 factors are broken down into three categories: (1) Indiana has defined six criteria for students to be eligible for alternative programming, (2) seventeen risk factors developed internally at OSI (four academic & 13 social-emotional), and (3) student mobility. Below are the targeted factors that most negatively impact student graduation with their cohort: credit attainment, out-of-cohort, multiple academic or social-emotional risk factors, student mobility, and drop-outs.

Indiana defines students who fail to comply academically as missing core credits while matriculating between 9th and 12th grade (credit deficient) and as earning an arbitrary number of credits based on current grade level (out-of-cohort) (Indiana Department of Education, n.d.). Indiana defines student mobility as the number of times a student moves from one school corporation to another (Indiana Department of Education, 2022).

Gifted and Talented

At this time, OSI has not pursued a gifted and talented certification. Instead, OSI offers students multiple dual credit and advanced placement courses during the school year. Students may earn an Indiana College Core or an associate's degree from IVY Tech by attending the Noblesville campus.

1. 6% (8) of graduates earned Indiana College Core
2. 18% (29) of graduates earned a certification from college and career partners
3. 1% (9) of juniors and seniors enrolled in advanced placement courses
4. 13% (91) of juniors and seniors enrolled in dual credit courses
5. 1006 dual credits earned, 23 certifications, and 12 CTE Capstones completed

Equity Challenges

With their unique at-risk student population, OSI faces potential equity challenges. These challenges can be categorized into four main areas:

1. **Individualized Learning:** At-risk students often have unique learning needs, including those related to special education, autism spectrum disorder, and other social, emotional, and academic challenges. OSI must ensure that each student receives an education that is tailored to their individual needs. Individualized learning can be challenging, as it requires a significant investment in resources, staff training, and individualized educational plans.
2. **Social and Emotional Development:** Many at-risk students struggle with social interactions, communication, and emotional regulation. OSI must provide a supportive environment that fosters social and emotional development. Social and Emotional Development can include social skills training, peer mentoring, and opportunities for students to practice communication and social skills in a safe and supportive environment.
3. **Access to Resources and Opportunities:** At-risk students may require additional resources and support to access the same educational opportunities as their peers. OSI must ensure all students have equal access to resources, technology, and extracurricular activities. Access to resources and opportunities can include providing assistive technology, modifying classroom materials and activities, and offering specialized programs and services to meet the unique needs of at-risk students.
4. **Staff Training and Support:** OSI must invest in ongoing staff training and professional development to ensure that all educators and support staff have the knowledge, skills, and resources to support at-risk students effectively. Staff training and support can include training in evidence-based instructional strategies, behavior management techniques, and social-emotional learning approaches. Additionally, OSI must provide ongoing support and resources to staff members to help them manage the unique challenges and demands of working with at-risk students.

References:

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Indiana State Board of Education (ISBOE), Indiana Department of Education, & Office of Special Education. (2019). *SPECIAL EDUCATION RULES*. In TITLE 511 ARTICLE 7. <https://www.in.gov/doe/files/art-7-english-may-2019-update-index.pdf>

Innovative Approach to Education

Meets Standard Expectation

- Evidence that the school model is innovative.
- Evidence that the school model is fundamentally different than traditional options that exist in the proposed district or community.
- Evidence that the school model meets the needs of the proposed community.
- Provide quantitative data to support all claims, including links to all sources.

1. How is the proposed school model innovative? Summarize the innovation(s) embodied in the proposed school design.

Options Schools, Inc.'s (OSI) innovative approach is grounded in the motto, "Belong. Believe. Achieve." The first component of the motto is Belong. The most crucial component focuses on establishing a sense of "Belonging" for students. For example, staff begin by developing relationships, validating life situations, and creating a supportive community that forms the foundation of a successful OSI program. Unlike traditional public schools, which often adopt a program like International Baccalaureate or Trauma-Informed Schools, OSI staff studied and learned from the various programs combined with student interaction, then molded and developed an OSI design of mental health, academic, and wellness supports.

Students arrive at OSI with chronic, cognitive, and situational experiences that have been detrimental to their development. Regardless of the student's knowledge, they require increased support to meet their academic, medical, and social-emotional needs. Using Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs as a guide, OSI understands the importance of addressing students' physical and emotional needs as a priority in academics. OSI learned that the student population is enrolled because their "Deficiency Needs" have not been met (McLeod, 2024).

Depending on the student's needs, OSI staff provide interventions with unique partners. For example, students with high anxiety and depression are exposed to Options Schools Equine Therapy partner, Agape, and Canine Therapy partner The Chris Center, as well as specific curriculums provided by OSI Social Emotional Counselors, advisors, or Hamilton County Health Department providers.

Providing support to fill in the gaps of their "Deficiency Needs" first allows students to feel safe and have a sense of belonging so OSI staff can move toward the motto, Believe and Achieve (McLeod, 2024). Only after addressing these other needs can OSI address the students' "Growth Needs" (McLeod, 2024).

Although OSI believes that the foundation of OSI's innovation is developing a students' sense of Belonging, it is only the beginning of the organization's innovation. The second component of OSI's motto is Believe. OSI believes all students can learn and should be given every opportunity to be successful. One example of how OSI practices this belief is that they enroll expelled students and believe no student should be denied an education. To accommodate these exceptional students, OSI develops a student behavior or safety plan and enrolls a student in a specific educational setting suited to their needs. OSI offers a variety of settings for students to learn. For example, OSI offers traditional in-person days, in-person evenings, hybrid (virtual and in-person), entirely virtual, and homebound. OSI allows students to move between academic delivery types to ensure no disruption to a student's progress.

The third component of the OSI motto is Achieve. An example of innovation in achievement is the Options with ABA program. Options with ABA include co-locating the academic programs next to the students' clinical care. Students often spent time on buses or being transported by parents from clinical care to the traditional school. The decrease in time and distance between the student's clinical care and academic program lessens the distribution in the student's day and increases the instructional time and focus. The model removes barriers to student's ability to achieve.

References:

2. How is the proposed school model fundamentally different? Provide an explanation of how the proposed model differs from traditional school models, specifically those found in the district or community in which the charter school will be located.

The mission of OSI is most effective when it complements the traditional school model in the community. When the staff of OSI and the staff of conventional community schools collaborate, it can help struggling students transition more smoothly and quickly into the OSI program. It's important to note that comparing the traditional school and OSI models does not mean that one is superior to the other. Instead, it recognizes that one model may better suit a particular student's needs in a given situation.

Due to the number of students served in their communities, traditional school models adhere largely to processes and bureaucracies that require appropriate family and student engagement to navigate the system effectively. Furthermore, the student experience can be negatively impacted by strict or zero-tolerance discipline policies, negative peer interaction (bullying), pacing of curriculum, excess testing requirements, etc. As stated earlier in this application, according to the Indiana Department of Education, Indiana's five-year (2019-2023) rolling graduation rate is 87.45% (IDOE, 2024). The graduation rate implies that not all students can successfully navigate the various processes and bureaucracies encountered in their traditional school model, even with family support.

Options Schools is a 100% alternative program recognized by the Indiana Department of Education that specializes in at-risk students. As a registered alternative program, OSI is required to write Individualized Service Plans for every student. OSI's approach to alternative students is to keep its schools small. School sizes are capped at 225 for in-person and 250 for virtual. Keeping the communities small allows teachers to build trusting and supportive relationships with students. Through these relationships, students are reminded that they belong, have someone at school who believes in them, and that they can achieve their goals. This model intentionally addresses many of the school-level challenges parents and students experience in traditional school models by individualizing the school experience, simplifying processes that can be overwhelming, eliminating unnecessary bureaucracies that come with large school institutions, and developing items such as the student discipline policy and curriculum with at-risk students in mind.

In Hamilton County, Indiana, there are six traditional schools: Carmel-Clay, Westfield, Hamilton Southeastern, Noblesville, Hamilton Heights, and Sheridan. The Indiana Department of Education website, INview, showed these corporations' graduation rates between 90%-98%. Hamilton County is also the origin of OSI. Currently, OSI has two thriving brick-and-mortar locations and a robust virtual presence in the county. During its 22 years of operating an alternative program in the county, OSI has continued to build stronger and more positive relationships with the six traditional schools in the county. As a result, and despite their high graduation rates, OSI has thrived as the alternative school of choice for thousands of Hamilton and surrounding counties' families and students.

References:

3. How will this specific school model meet the needs of students within the proposed community? Provide any available evidentiary basis for the efficacy of the model or for the ideas underlying the model and how it meets the needs of the anticipated student population. Please link sources for all quantitative evidence provided.

Options Schools, Inc. community is primarily in Hamilton and surrounding Indiana counties, but with their virtual program, students enroll from all 92 counties in Indiana. Considering the data from the IDOE about at-risk students across the state, which averages approximately 595,000 students, OSI serves approximately 1,250 students in all 92 counties in Indiana. OSI enrollment represents less than .02% of the 85,000 single cohort and <.001% of the 595,000 overall high school cohort in Indiana and the United States, respectively. OSI currently serves a growing percentage of the community of students waiting to earn their diplomas.

*OSI's motto provides students with the identity, power, and agency necessary to complete their diploma. To begin the process of belonging, each student completes an Individual Service Plan (ISP), which includes the 40 Developmental Assets and student risk factors. (See Figure 1) While those aspects are identified, OSI staff takes pride in giving each student a clean slate and not judging them on their past actions or experiences. The motto, *Belong, Believe, Achieve*, develops a relationship between a personalized, supportive approach and success in academic achievement.*

Figure 1
At-Risk Indicators

▼ Current Risk Factors

(Check all that apply)

1. Offender/Juvenile Justice/Probation <input type="checkbox"/>	2. Homeless or Run Away <input type="checkbox"/>	3. Poor school attendance <input type="checkbox"/>
4. Mental/Emotional health <input type="checkbox"/>	5. Physical health <input type="checkbox"/>	6. Substance Abuse <input type="checkbox"/>
7. Non Parent Guardian <input type="checkbox"/>	8. History of being bullied <input type="checkbox"/>	9. Below Grade Level Performance ELA <input type="checkbox"/>
10. Below Grade Level Performance MATH <input type="checkbox"/>	11. DNP GQE <input type="checkbox"/>	12. Not passing core courses needed for core 40 <input type="checkbox"/>
13. Chronic Behavior resulting in school discipline <input type="checkbox"/>	14. Expelled from previous School <input type="checkbox"/>	15. Adjudicated Parent <input type="checkbox"/>
16. Domestic violence in family <input type="checkbox"/>	17. Victim of abuse/neglect <input type="checkbox"/>	18. Other <input style="width: 150px;" type="text"/>

Section II: Educational Program Design and Capacity

Education One is responsible for ensuring applications capture the impact a proposed school will have on meeting the needs of the anticipated student population, in order to ensure the academic success of the school in serving its target populations and closing achievement gaps.

Curriculum and Instructional Design

Meets Standard Expectation

- Framework for a rigorous, quality instructional design that reflects the needs of the school's target population and will ensure all students meet or exceed expectations of the Indiana Academic Standards (IAS).
- Comprehensive, quality curriculum overview that includes a sample course scope and sequence for each subject for one grade for each division (elementary, middle, high school) the school would serve, and demonstrated alignment of course outcomes with applicable standards. Sound curricular choices, by subject, including reason evidence the curriculum will be appropriate and effective for the targeted students.
- Sound instructional strategies and explanation of why they are well suited for the targeted student population, including effective methods and systems for providing differentiated instruction to meet the needs of all students.
- Evidence that the proposed educational program has a sound base in research, theory, and/or experience, and has been or is likely to be rigorous, engaging, and effective for anticipated student population.

1. Describe the basic learning environment (e.g., classroom-based, independent study), including class size and structure.

Options Schools, Inc.'s (OSI) unique program design provides multiple modes of instruction for students based on their needs. OSI offers in-person, evening, and virtual options. In brick-and-mortar schools, the classroom environment provides flexible seating, varied lighting, and available areas for student reset and regulation opportunities. In all Options Schools' programs, except Options with ABA, the preferred class size is 15 students to one staff member. In Options with ABA, the class size is six students to one staff member.

In Options with ABA, instructional delivery is provided with an intentional focus on visual and auditory learners, physical action-learning through movement, personal connection with the content, and philosophy-friendly with increased processing time and built-in transitions. Educators and clinicians collaborate to provide the least restrictive environment for all students who have struggled in traditional settings. For example, students experience adjustable seating, reduction of visual stimuli within the classrooms, sensory breaks, and quiet spaces with low lighting.

The virtual program allows students to complete coursework asynchronously or with scheduled instruction in individual and group settings. Finally, some students find success in an evening school setting that works around the student's work schedule or family commitments.

Focused on serving alternative education students, OSI is dedicated to training team members to recognize the effects of trauma and build resiliency in students. OSI regularly updates instructional practices and curricula informed by research-based practices, including but not limited to post-trauma resiliency (AEN), mental health support (NAMI), and Universal Design for Learning (UDL).

2. Summarize curricular choices by grade and subject, and the rationale for each, to ensure the curriculum is rigorous,

engaging, and effective.

All OSI courses are based on the Indiana state standards, specifically focusing on the essential standards identified at the beginning of the 2023-2024 school year. By basing the class curriculum on the Indiana state standards, teachers clearly understand what students are expected to learn at each grade level, ensuring that the content covered is comprehensive and age-appropriate. This also ensures that students are adequately prepared for standardized tests, as these assessments are typically based on the content outlined in the standards.

Teachers are encouraged to utilize the resources provided by Edmentum as a foundational guide for their class curriculum. Still, they are strongly encouraged to rely on their expert knowledge of their content and seek out additional resources that align with the state standards to meet the needs of their students. Teachers can request specific required materials to enhance their lessons and support their students effectively. By offering teachers the flexibility of choice, innovation, and creativity, teachers customize their class design and delivery to create a well-rounded and engaging learning experience for their students.

As OSI's enrollment and the variety of student programs grew, the need for a uniform curricular approach became a priority. By adding a Director of Curriculum and Instruction in 2019, teachers collaborated across schools and programs to identify priority standards (before the DOE identification) and develop curriculum mapping, pacing guides, and a crosswalk between Essential Standards and previous standards. In 2023, the addition of a full-time Instructional Coach provided a district-wide teacher-leader who engaged teachers in professional development on rigor, relevance, technology, and the incorporation of emerging educational tools (such as Artificial Intelligence) as well as providing individual support and coaching.

OSI believes that "teachers are most effective when empowered to innovate, create, and inspire" (Options Schools, 2023). This provides teachers the autonomy and support needed to excel in their roles. By recognizing teachers as experts in their content areas, OSI empowers educators to have control of their classrooms' direction and to tailor their instruction to meet the unique needs of their students. This allows teachers to evaluate the students in each class and decide on the best teaching methods and materials to meet their needs. When teachers are encouraged to innovate and think creatively, they inspire those same thought processes in their students, which increases student engagement.

To support each student's academic success, OSI teachers intentionally form relationships and engage students in the curriculum by using relevant strategies such as recruiting interest, persistence, and self-regulation. Helping students understand the value of learning is a continuous battle with students' previous experiences in traditional classrooms. By valuing each student as an individual who had their own educational experiences before coming to OSI, students begin to feel a sense of safety and belonging so they can think critically and reinvest in their learning.

All of the students at OSI are alternative education students according to the Indiana Department of Education definition (Department of Education, 2023). In addition, OSI students come to us with several risk factors, with 66 percent of brick-and-mortar students and 84 percent of online students enrolling as credit deficient. By comparison, at Indiana alternative education, only 29 percent of students graduate with their four-year cohort. Therefore, OSI students show the effectiveness of an OSI education because of the motivation, perseverance, and resilience they demonstrate to remain in school and reach graduation. This success is exemplified in the Senior Institute project each student completes before

graduation. The Senior Institute (SI) project serves as a culminating experience for students, enabling students to showcase their talents and creativity while making a positive difference in their communities. SI highlights the students' ability to become productive members of society after graduation.

References:

Department of Education (DOE). (2023, December 15). *Alternative Education*. DOE.

https://www.in.gov/doe/grants/alternative-education/#Alternative_Education_Programs

Options Schools. (2023). *Options Schools Staff handbook*.

<https://optionsschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Staff-Handbook-2023-2024.pdf>

3. Summarize curricular choices for special populations, by subject, and the rationale for each, to ensure the curriculum is rigorous, engaging, and effective. Special populations include the following:
 - o Special Education
 - o English Learners
 - o Below Grade Level Performance
 - o Gifted and Talented

Special Education

It is Options Schools, Inc.'s (OSI) commitment to all students who attend to ensure that no student will be denied an education because of family background, income, race, religion, gender, health, or disabilities. OSI supports all learners through rigorous instruction, high expectations, and necessary and appropriate interventions. OSI encourages innovation and creativity to be used to create a learning environment that is appropriate and rigorous for every single student enrolled. OSI staff meet the students where they are, adapt learning plans to individual situations, and build strong relationships with students and families. OSI applies the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Teachers present information in multiple ways, including text, audio, and hands-on formats. OSI teachers prepare a learning environment where students have what they need to meet learning goals flexibly. OSI teachers provide small group instruction, daily individualized blended learning opportunities, and built-in reteach and remediation blocks that provide teachers with the structure to address the academic and social needs of students with special needs. As a public high school, OSI complies with all rules and regulations prescribed by the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEIA 04), Article 7 (511 IAC 7-17 through 7-31), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

In addition to the customized learning mechanisms already built into the OSI Individualized Service Plans (ISP), individual teachers and staff monitor all students with regular progress checks during staff meetings. However, for students who have been identified with special needs, OSI has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) that specifies goals, level of placement, related services, and the least restrictive environment. OSI also follows the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) framework to address deficits and monitor progress toward plan goals for six weeks.

OSI's goal is always to provide students with disabilities with services in the general education setting with the general population of students to the maximum extent possible. Students with disabilities are only removed from the general education environment when the required special education and/or related services dictate provision in a more restrictive environment.

Transition IEP Services

Students turning age 14 during the Annual Case Review (ACR) year will begin the process of the transition to IEP. Students attending OSI (brick-and-mortar and virtual) have their transition plan reviewed at least yearly at the student's ACR. Options Indiana (virtual) provides assessments throughout the school year virtually and/or when they meet face to face. The transition IEP is an ongoing process of collecting data on the student's strengths, needs, preferences, and interests relating to the demands of current and future working, educational, living, personal, and social environments.

The OSI special education team works closely with the Indiana Resource Center and the IDOE to write quality transition plans that meet the individual needs of the student. OSI provides all students with exploration videos in education/training, independent living, and employment. OSI students use Indiana Career Explorer to explore jobs in demand, assess skills, and develop a plan to get the education and training they will need to begin planning for their future. OSI partners with The Arc for pre-employment transition services (pre-ETS). OSI makes Vocational Rehabilitation Service referrals as determined necessary.

Assistive Technology

OSI students are 1:1 technology. Each computer is set up for text-to-speech, large screen, and voice recognition. OSI partners with Hamilton Boone Madison Cooperative (HBM) special services cooperative. HBM provides OSI access to a blind, low-vision teacher, a deaf, hard-of-hearing teacher, and a physical therapist to meet the individual needs of students who may require alternative devices. OSI uses the PATINs library as a resource to provide assistive technology to meet the individual student's unique needs.

English Learners (ELL)

OSI translates documents, enrollment materials, and academic materials. In addition, OSI provides translation services to students and families as needed. ELL students will have the required ELL Individualized Learning Plan (ILP), similar to an IEP. Teachers and support staff use the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework to build flexibility and choices to meet the individual student's needs. OSI is committed to providing a variety of teaching methods to remove barriers to learning and give all students the opportunities to succeed. ELL students receive many opportunities to listen, speak, read, and write.

Below Grade Level Performance

As previously stated, the majority of OSI students arrive credit deficient and with at least one risk factor impacting their ability to graduate on time. Therefore, OSI students often work on a curriculum below their expected grade level to recover credits and graduate with their Indiana Department of Education assigned cohort.

Teachers use differentiated instructional strategies tailored to individual student needs within the classroom. Strategies include scaffolding support, providing additional practice opportunities, and incorporating formative assessments to track student learning. The small class and school setting allows teachers flexibility in pacing and content to address the needs of the students in each class. Teachers select content and curriculum resources based on Indiana's essential standards for their subject area. In addition, students work in a combination of whole-class, small group, or individually using technology for personalized learning to enhance student engagement and comprehension. The teachers create a supportive and inclusive learning environment for all students that encourages a growth mindset and celebrates student progress to empower students to reach their full academic potential.

OSI has structured the schedule and curriculum to provide opportunities for credit recovery, reteaching, and remediation. Utilizing Edmentum Courseware and EdOptions Academy, OSI can provide students with additional opportunities to recover credits or complete coursework in addition to the teacher-led courses. Whenever students take classes using Edmentum Courseware or EdOptions Academy, the staff at OSI provides them with the same individualized support and attention they receive in the classroom setting, including adjusting content to better align with the Indiana Academic Standards and to scaffold for student support. Beyond the opportunities provided during the school day, OSI also offers free after-school tutoring with teaching staff that all students may attend as needed.

Gifted and Talented

OSI's Advanced Learning Center (ALC) provides all students with advanced learning opportunities. Each year, students take NWEA twice a year and the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) during 6th and 9th-grade years. Using specific identifiers of passed grades, CogAT, and NWEA, students enroll in appropriate math and English courses. Based on the identifiers, OSI also supports placement in Advanced Placement (AP) and IVY Tech courses.

Ivy Tech Community College has 45 locations in Indiana: 19 full-service campuses plus 24 satellite locations where students can take classes and receive select student services. Each location offers a unique set of programs and services, with programs that provide a path to high-paying, high-demand jobs and transfer admission to specific Indiana 4-year schools.

4. Provide an overview of the planned curriculum, including, as **Attachment 1**, a sample course scope and sequence for each subject for one grade for each division (elementary, middle, high school) the school would serve.
5. If the curriculum has not already been selected, provide a description of how it will be chosen and/or developed between approval of the application and the opening of the school, including who will be responsible and when key stages will be completed.

N/A

6. Describe the primary instructional strategies that the school will expect teachers to use and why, including the methods and systems teachers will have for providing differentiated instruction to meet the needs of all students.

After much research, OSI transitioned to Universal Design for Learning (UDL). UDL system, focused on student ownership and intrinsic motivation for learning, will allow students to engage contextually with content to improve differentiated instruction. While teachers follow the IDOE essential standards, teachers prepare for students in a way that provides the opportunity for mastery with a focus on growth and creating expert learners. Growth and expert learners support the value OSI places on the Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets because students learn to take risks, as OSI can provide a safe learning environment where the process is predictable and full of encouragement. The process is consistent across curriculums (Search Institute, 2024).

UDL is a process with three principles, or instructional methods, to guide the teacher's planning to support the student's success. These include Engagement, Representation, and Action/Expression (Nelson, 2014). OSI adopted UDL because its focus is developing intrinsic motivation that supports the development of lifelong learners, providing students with entry points into subjects. Hence, a student believes they are expert learners.

The advisor/advisee program assists students in achieving their educational, personal, and social/emotional goals. Staff members serve as advisors to a group of students and meet formally and informally to discuss issues of concern. Student to advisor ratio is 15:1. The advisor's function is to identify what each student needs to graduate. In addition, advisors:

- *Are responsible for creating an Individual Service Plan (ISP) for each advisee*
- *Have an essential awareness of their advisees' backgrounds (i.e., academic and social/emotional strengths and weaknesses);*
- *Know their advisees' families well and maintain regular contact with them;*
- *Have a working knowledge of graduation requirements and know how to access information about their advisees' graduation status;*
- *Serve as a liaison for their advisees;*
- *Participate in parent conferences and Case Conferences for their special needs students.*

References:

Nelson, L. L. (2014). Design and deliver : planning and teaching using universal design for learning.

7. **Replication Schools:** Explain the organization's approach to replicating and implementing the school model, including program and instructional design among multiple schools.

The Options Schools, Inc.'s (OSI) mission to serve students seeking an alternative to the traditional school model often drives the leadership toward replicating and implementing smaller and more highly specialized programs. Currently, OSI fulfills the operational mission of school model replication and implementation in three ways. The first model that OSI seeks to replicate is the Options with ABA sites, which include students with moderate to severe autism. The second model that OSI seeks to replicate is the brick-and-mortar. These sites are replications of our current brick-and-mortar sites using internal resources or in conjunction with our Simon Youth Foundation partner. The third model of replication is an outcome of growth within our Options Indiana virtual model. OSI has set a maximum enrollment cap per virtual region. When this enrollment cap is achieved, the OSI leadership works to replicate the virtual model by adding another region.

Options with ABA are highly specialized programs within the OSI model that focus on students with moderate to severe autism. ABA programs at OSI are replicated by targeting one ABA clinic in each Indiana county as a partner. Typically, the ABA partner's facility houses the program in years one and two of a new partnership. In that space, OSI serves approximately one to six students. After that, OSI identifies a site geographically adjacent to the ABA clinic site to eliminate the need to transport students. OSI will serve approximately 35 to 50 students in a complete program. Currently, OSI has two full sites in Fishers, Indiana, and Kokomo, Indiana, and a single site in year one of operation in Muncie, Indiana, which provides high-quality education in conjunction with applied behavioral analysis (ABA) therapy in one location. Per the student's Individualized Education Plan, students attending the OSI programs are involved in academic programming for three hours daily (either morning or afternoon).

OSI provides alternative education solutions to every single learner. OSI has partnered with [The Behavioral Analysis Center for Autism](#) (BACA) and [The Indiana Behavior Analysis Academy](#) (IBAA) to meet the needs of students on the autism spectrum through Options with ABA. OSI uses ABA concepts in education but is not a therapy provider.

Options with ABA's core teaching and learning model involve individualized and flexible instruction. Teachers approach learning through the context of solving real-world problems or challenges along with integrated content. In this program, additional emphasis is placed on visual and auditory learners, physical action-learning through movement, and built-in transitions. Through collaboration, educators and clinicians provide the least restrictive environment for all students.

Simon Youth Foundation (SYF) is an Indianapolis-based non-profit organization that supports efforts in the United States to improve the national academic dropout rate and increase college accessibility by partnering with established public school systems. SYF is a subsidiary of the Simon Property Group and was founded by Deb Simon. In August 2022, SYF partnered with Options Schools Noblesville to create the Simon Youth Academy @ Options Noblesville. The partnership goal encourages a positive working relationship for the long-term goal of using the Simon Property Group's facility infrastructure in Indiana to build new SYF and OSI academies across the state. Although no specific site has been identified yet, several potential sites across Indiana include West Lafayette, Fort Wayne, South Bend, and Evansville.

Impressed by OSI's continued success over 22 years with alternative education students, SYF joined OSI to expand and replicate its brick-and-mortar schools. OSI's programming naturally follows the basic guidelines of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). With the unique autonomy given to teachers, OSI teachers continually adapt the curriculum to maintain relevance to students and rigor by remaining consistent with Indiana Academic Standards. Teachers determine the best resources for students, focusing on engagement, representation, and expression/action. With the student's needs considered first, OSI teachers use research-based strategies to recruit interest, promote persistence, and build on self-regulation. With smaller class sizes, teachers provide personalized instruction and resources for students while improving comprehension and executive functions to develop expert learners. Expert learners are purposeful, motivated, resourceful, knowledgeable, strategic, and goal-oriented.

Options Indiana is the current OSI virtual program. This program started as a hybrid (brick-and-mortar and virtual) offering over a decade ago. As the development of a state-aligned virtual curriculum and reduced cost per student for hardware made a 100% virtual program feasible, OSI developed a stand-alone virtual school model. The growth potential is very high because this program recruits students from all 92 Indiana counties. After just three years of operation, the student count required the OSI Executive Team to expand the student enrollment of Options Indiana. By expanding enrollment, OSI created "regions" around the state of no more than 350 students per region. OSI made two high school regions: Indiana North and Indiana South. They both reside under the Options Indiana school number 9329. In the future, OSI will continue to monitor student populations' growth (recruitment) and reduction (transfers, graduation, etc.). When the student population of any region exceeds 350, and there is no foreseeable reduction in that student number, a new area will be created.

Pupil Performance Standards

Meets Standard Expectation

- Thoughtful identification of and plan for development and adoption of any additional academic standards beyond state and authorizer requirements that the school would adopt or develop, including an explanation and evidence of how those standards would exceed the state standards and are relevant to the school's model.
- Clear, rigorous plan for student promotion and communication with families.
- Clear, rigorous plan for student retention and communication with families.

1. If you plan to adopt or develop additional academic standards beyond the state and/or authorizer standards, explain these additional standards, including the content areas and grade levels in which they will be implemented. Describe the adoption or development process that has taken place or will take place. Select one grade level and subject area as an example, and explain how these additional standards exceed the state and authorizer standards.

Senior Institute (SI) Project

Options Schools, Inc. (OSI) students complete Senior Institute (SI) to help form connections and impact a community. This project is in addition to the Indiana requirements for graduation and has been a part of the OSI requirements as a culminating experience since the school was founded. For a student to qualify for the Senior Institute, they must have met the following criteria:

1. *accumulated more than 35 credits before the last semester before graduation;*
2. *been a full-time student at an OSI the previous semester and*

3. *be on track to graduate at the end of the term.*
4. *Completion of additional capstone courses, including speech and adult roles and responsibilities.*

SI is a comprehensive project that must fulfill four (4) requirements:

- *Skills and knowledge previously learned;*
- *Be of interest and value to the student while benefiting the student;*
- *Demonstrate new learning;*
- *Make a tangible contribution to a community.*

Students choose an SI project based on their interests and the community they want to impact. The work on the SI project takes place during advising and outside of school. The staff advisor is a mentor and facilitator, providing varying degrees of structure and guidance depending on their students' needs. A panel of educators and other professionals watch the first and last exhibitions. Students present their project proposals at the first exhibition and their final products at the last exhibition. They are accountable to their advising teacher to show progress toward completing their projects. Through ongoing communication between the advisor and students, project monitoring is completed.

2. How will the school know a student is successful? Explain the standards for promoting students from one grade to the next. Discuss how and when promotion will be communicated to parents and students.

Successful Options Schools, Inc. (OSI) graduates will have four essential qualities. First, they are resilient. OSI graduates believe in themselves, adapting and thriving when faced with challenges and setbacks. They demonstrate perseverance, determination, and a positive mindset. Second, they are self-advocates. OSI graduates are self-directed, taking ownership of their goals and seeking the necessary support to reach them. Third, OSI graduates are future-focused, with plans post-high school that allow them to achieve their individual aspirations. Lastly, OSI graduates are innovators who challenge the status quo and create solutions to complex problems. They understand the importance of collaboration and interdisciplinary thinking, drawing inspiration from diverse perspectives.

Statement of Board Policy (S5)

The Board delegates sole authority to OSI teachers and administrators to make determinations of academic grades and promotion or retention at a grade level in the children's best interests, ideally with parental consultation. The Board and/or President shall not hear "appeals" or complaints regarding a student's grades or promotion/retention. Students with an IEP will graduate high school and exit special education services in consultation with the student's case conference committee.

A student will not be retained or promoted at a grade level for any purpose related to the student's participation in extracurricular programs, including athletic programs.

Promotion of Students

Middle School (Grades 6-8)

Students in grades six through eight shall advance one grade level in one school year unless retention or accelerated promotion is in the student's best interest.

High School (Grades 9-12)

Advancement through the High School curriculum shall be based upon the student's progress in earning credits necessary for "graduation" as defined by Indiana Code in the student's "expected graduation year" as defined by Indiana

Code and as defined by the OSI School Board.

Guidelines & Forms

The President/CEO is authorized to promulgate guidelines and suggested notices to assist teachers, principals, and parents/guardians in implementing this Policy.

3. If a student does not meet the promotion criteria stated above, how will the school address this? Discuss how and when retention will be communicated to parents and students.

Middle School (Grades 6-8) Retention Policy:

- An administrator, teacher, or the parent/guardian of a student may propose that the student be retained to repeat a grade or advance through a grade at an accelerated rate. Such a proposal shall be submitted to the Principal of the school the student attends during the third quarter of the school year, before the proposed effective date of the action, or before enrollment. Decisions related to acceleration, promotion, and retention submitted after the third quarter of the school year or once enrollment has been finalized may be considered based on individual circumstances.
 - The Principal of the school the student is enrolling in or currently attends shall evaluate the proposal based upon consideration of the following factors:
 1. academic achievement measured by grades and test scores
 2. attendance
 3. ability to reason and comprehend the curriculum
 4. emotional maturity
 5. social adjustment
 6. chronological age
 7. physical development
 8. child's wishes
 9. input from other professional staff
 - Physical maturity at the time of eligibility for athletic team participation shall not be considered. No student may be retained in a grade level to improve the student's ability to participate in extracurricular programs. Disabilities or English proficiency shall not solely be used to determine retention. A student receiving special education or related services may be promoted or retained based on the determination of the case conference committee.
- A. A Principal receiving a request shall evaluate the proposal based on the factors listed in Section 3 above and present a recommended decision to the OSI Executive Team for review. Following a decision from the Executive Team, the Principal shall notify the parent/guardian and teacher(s) of the student in writing of the decision on the proposal during the fourth quarter or before the student's first day of school. No decision with respect to a proposal shall be set aside because this notice was not given in writing during the fourth quarter. Still, a parent/guardian shall be permitted to follow through with the process outlined in Sections 5-6 after receiving a written notice given late. The Principal may determine that summer school or remediation opportunities are required for promotion.
- B. Upon receipt of the written notice in Section 4 above, the parent/guardian may:
- Agree to the proposed action by affirmative response or no response within ten [10] calendar days of receipt of the written notice or
 - Ask the Principal of the student's school to reconsider the proposed action based on additional information or a different weighting of the information already considered.

- C. *The decision of the Executive Team may not be appealed per the Board Policy.*
- D. *The Principal may bring a new recommendation to be considered by the Executive Team based on new information or a different understanding.*

High School (Grades 9-12) Retention Policy:

- A. *If a student fails to earn credits that enable the student to progress toward graduation in the student's "expected graduation year" as defined by Indiana Code, the student shall be considered to be retained as defined by Indiana Code.*
- B. *It is important to note that Indiana high schools are only allowed to officially retain students in grade nine for failing to achieve the necessary credits toward graduation.*
- C. *Students who do not meet the requirements for graduation by the end of their fourth year of high school are retained in grade 12 until graduation requirements are met.*
- D. *Upon receipt of the written notice received for falling out of the cohort, the parent/guardian may:*
 - *Agree to the proposed action by affirmative response or no response within ten [10] calendar days of receipt of the written notice or*
 - *Ask the Principal of the student's school to reconsider the proposed action based upon additional information or a different weighting of the information already considered.*
- E. *The decision of the Executive Team may not be appealed per the Board Policy.*
- F. *The Principal may bring a new recommendation to be considered by the Executive Team based on new information or a different understanding.*

High School Graduation Requirements (High Schools Only)

Meets Standard Expectation

- Sound plan for meeting state and authorizer graduation requirements (including credits, GPA calculation, transcripts, electives) and compelling explanation of any additional requirements beyond the state's and authorizer's requirements.
- Clear, persuasive explanation of how the school's graduation requirements will ensure student readiness for college and other post-secondary opportunities (trade school, military service, or entering the workforce).
- Effective systems and structures for students at risk of dropping out or not meeting graduation requirements.

High schools will be expected to meet the state and authorizer graduation standards.

1. Describe how the school will meet state and/or authorizer requirements. Explain how students will earn credit hours, how grade-point averages will be calculated, what information will be on transcripts, and what elective courses will be offered. If graduation requirements for the school will exceed state and authorizer standards, explain the additional requirements.

Options Schools, Inc. students will earn credits by mastering the Indiana Academic Standards for each Indiana Department of Education-approved course. Mastery will result in a percentage grade with a corresponding letter grade, which impacts the GPA earned.

Options Schools Standard Grading Scale			
Grade	% Range	Earns Credit	Grade Points
A Superior +	97-100	Yes	4.000
A Superior	92-96	Yes	4.000
A- Superior -	90-91	Yes	3.667

B+ Good +	87-89	Yes	3.333
B Good	82-86	Yes	3.000
B- Good -	80-81	Yes	2.667
C+ Average +	77-79	Yes	2.333
C Average	72-76	Yes	2.000
C- Average -	70-71	Yes	1.667
D+ Poor+	67-69	Yes	1.333
D Poor	62-66	Yes	1.000
D- Poor-	60-61	Yes	0.667
F Failure	0-59	No	0.000

**Options Schools
Honors Courses Grading Scale**

Grade	% Range	Earns Credit	Grade Points	Receives Added Value	Added Value for Honors Courses	Total GPA Point Value
A Superior +	97-100	Yes	4.333	Yes	0.096	4.429
A Superior	92-96	Yes	4.0	Yes	0.096	4.096
A- Superior -	90-91	Yes	3.667	Yes	0.096	3.763
B+ Good +	87-89	Yes	3.333	Yes	0.096	3.429
B Good	82-86	Yes	3.0	Yes	0.096	3.096
B- Good -	80-81	Yes	2.667	Yes	0.096	2.763
C+ Average +	77-79	Yes	2.333	Yes	0.096	2.429
C Average	72-76	Yes	2.0	Yes	0.096	2.096
C- Average -	70-71	Yes	1.667	Yes	0.096	1.763
D+ Poor+	67-69	Yes	1.333	No	0.000	1.333
D Poor	62-66	Yes	1.000	No	0.000	1.000
D- Poor-	60-61	Yes	0.667	No	0.000	0.667
F Failure	0-59	No	0	No	0.000	0.000

**Options Schools
AP, IB, DC Courses Grading Scale**

Grade	% Range	Earns Credit	Grade Points	Receives Added Value	Added Value for Honors Courses	Total GPA Point Value
A Superior +	97-100	Yes	4.333	Yes	0.143	4.476
A Superior	92-96	Yes	4.0	Yes	0.143	4.143
A- Superior -	90-91	Yes	3.667	Yes	0.143	3.81
B+ Good +	87-89	Yes	3.333	Yes	0.143	3.476
B Good	82-86	Yes	3.0	Yes	0.143	3.143
B- Good -	80-81	Yes	2.667	Yes	0.143	2.81
C+ Average +	77-79	Yes	2.333	Yes	0.143	2.476
C Average	72-76	Yes	2.0	Yes	0.143	2.143
C- Average -	70-71	Yes	1.667	Yes	0.143	1.81
D+ Poor+	67-69	Yes	1.333	No	0.000	1.333
D Poor	62-66	Yes	1.0	No	0.000	1.000
D- Poor-	60-61	Yes	0.667	No	0.000	0.667
F Failure	0-59	No	0	No	0.000	0.000

Transcripts will have student identification information, total credits awarded, total credits attempted, cumulative GPA, and credits earned and attempted by school year. When a student earns their diploma, the type of diploma is also included on the transcript.

Elective courses vary depending on student demand and interest and include fine arts, electives, and directed elective offerings. Examples of possible elective courses include foreign languages, art, physical education, digital media, personal financial responsibility, and CTE courses in business, computer science, human and social services, and culinary arts.

2. Explain how the graduation requirements will ensure student readiness for college and/or careers.

Options Schools, Inc. (OSI) strives to ensure that all students who graduate from OSI programs are prepared for post-secondary life, whether post-secondary training or schooling, enlistment, or entering the workforce. The OSI programs work to offer coursework that will meet the enrollment requirements for the Indiana Core 40 diploma and the Core 40 Honors diploma. All freshmen and sophomores will complete entry CTE courses, including preparing for college and careers. The courses aim to introduce students to several post-secondary options and help them identify their goals for life after high school. During the junior and senior years, students can take dual credit courses working towards the Indiana College Core (ICC) through Ivy Tech courses on and off the OSI campuses. Students also have the opportunity to take courses through several career partnerships with KLR Pharmacy College, The Pursuit Institute, J. Everett Light Career Center, and Ivy Tech campuses across Indiana.

OSI has been able to increase the college and career opportunities for students over the last three years. OSI students have increased college credits and certifications earned from 578 college credits, two certifications earned in 2022 to 1006 credits, and 13 certifications earned in 2023. More OSI students have taken advantage of the opportunities to take courses and earn college credits at partnerships like KLR Pharmacy College, The Pursuit Institute, J. Everett Light Career Center, Ivy Tech, and local career centers across Indiana.

In addition to academics, through support from staff and encouragement from advisors, OSI encourages students to continue to develop the 40 Developmental Assets throughout their middle and high school education. Successful OSI graduates will have the essential qualities of resiliency, self-advocacy, and innovation to remain future-focused and achieve their aspirations.

3. Explain what systems and structures the school will implement for students at risk of dropping out and/or not meeting the proposed graduation requirements.

Options Schools, Inc. has 94 to 98 percent of enrolled students enter with at least one risk factor for graduating on time, and 50 to 60 percent of students have four or more risk factors. OSI has a variety of systems in place to support students and prevent dropouts. As an alternative school, some students enrolling with OSI are expected to not graduate in the traditional four-year window. OSI allows students to remain enrolled and enroll after their fourth year of high school and continue supporting those students until they meet graduation requirements. With 66%-84% of our students being credit deficient, the school schedule is designed to allow students to earn 15+ credits, with a mix of first-time attempts and credit recovery with at least a 60% mastery, in a school year. In addition, summer school is offered to students to earn additional credits. The schedule allows students who are credit deficient the opportunity to catch up and graduate with their Indiana Department of Education assigned cohort.

Each student at OSI is provided with an individualized service plan with academic, behavioral, and social-emotional goals designed to support students toward graduation. Students check in regularly with their advisor to monitor progress on those goals and their progress on their overall grades and credit attainment. Each campus offers a counselor who can support students academically and emotionally. Strong relationships are vital to supporting OSI students. The advisor and counselor are just a few of the adults who work to forge strong relationships with students. Occasionally, staff must leverage those relationships to help students meet their goals when a student faces a particularly difficult challenge.

OSI has shown a history of finding success with students who struggle the most. The Indiana's Alternative Education Campuses (IAEC) average graduation rate for 2021-22 was 29% (National Charter School Institute). Options Indiana's most recent four-year graduation rate was 28.8%. So, as a virtual school, Options Indiana's graduation rate is on par with the state's alternative graduation rate for brick-and-mortar and virtual campuses combined. Furthermore, the National Alternative Education Campuses (NAEC) average was 50%. Options Noblesville and Options Westfield campuses' most recent 4-year graduation rates were both 56%. The graduation rates mean that the OSI brick-and-mortar campuses are outperforming the national average for graduation of all alternative campuses. Options Indiana increased its graduation rate from 23% three years ago to nearly 29% last year. The 5-year graduation rate has increased the graduation rate by five and eight percentage points for each of the prior graduation cohorts. It should also be noted that Options Indiana is

capturing additional graduates in the 5th- and 6th-year cohorts, increasing the graduation rate by as much as 17 percentage points. OSI believes that with continued academic and support measures, Options Indiana can eventually approach the national combined average graduation rate of 50%.

Performance Management

Meets Standard Expectation

- Quality interim assessments that are aligned with the school's curriculum, performance goals, and state standards.
- Effective plan and system for measuring and evaluating academic progress – of individual students, student cohorts, and the school as a whole – throughout the school year.
- Comprehensive, effective plan and system for collecting and analyzing student academic achievement data, using the data to refine and improve instruction, providing training and support for school personnel, and reporting the data to the school community. This should include qualified personnel who will be responsible for managing and interpreting the data for teachers and leading or coordinating data-driven professional development.
- Thoughtful, appropriate corrective actions the school and network will take if either falls short of goals at any level.

1. In addition to all mandatory state assessments, identify the primary interim assessments the school will use to assess student learning needs and progress throughout the year. Explain how these interim assessments align with the school's curriculum, performance goals, and state standards.

Options Schools, Inc. (OSI) uses a variety of assessments, each for a particular reason. (See a list of interim assessments below.) NWEA measures growth and current skill levels and identifies gaps in student skills. Classroom assessments include those that are teacher-created as well as Edmentum Courseware assessments. In addition, OSI uses a variety of assessments to support the ELL and Special Education population. All assessments inform teacher instruction and differentiation to support each student's unique needs, aiming to master Indiana State Standards and earn credits toward graduation.

All course curriculum is directly aligned to the Indiana State Standards, prioritizing the Essential Standards. Therefore, all classroom assessments align with the specific standards being taught and assessed in the unit. Formal and informal formative assessments are used to identify skills and concepts that students have not yet mastered to inform additional instruction.

NWEA has worked to align its assessments with the Indiana State Standards, and OSI uses NWEA to measure growth and proficiency in language, literacy, and math. Students review their previous scores with their advisor prior to taking the assessment so they are aware of their projected growth goals. Advisors then review NWEA scores with their advising students, looking at growth over time. NWEA is given twice a year in grades 9-12 in all OSI programs as well as in grades 6-8 in the brick-and-mortar schools. During the 2024-2025 school year, the virtual middle school will pilot the Through Test offered by the IDOE.

During the 2024-2025 school year, staff will explore other methods of formative and interim assessments that will be given quarterly to students. The focus of these assessments will be on the essential standards identified by the IDOE.

Enrollment Assessments

- Parent/Student Interview/Questionnaire
- NWEA Screening Tests (determine grade level if necessary)
- WIDA Screener

Student Growth Assessments

- *Individualized Service Plans for each student, updated quarterly*
- *NWEA testing, completed in the fall and spring*

Student Proficiency Assessments

- *PSAT, Grades 10 and 11*
- *Knowledge Assessment College-ready assessments in math and language arts (for acceptance in Ivy Tech dual credit classes)*
- *CogAT Grades 6 and 9 for High Ability assessment*

Classroom Assessments

- *Teacher-generated rubrics*
- *Traditional content-based assessments (T-F, multiple-choice, short answer responses, essays, etc.)*
- *Edmentum Courseware assessments*

English as a New Language

- *WIDA*

Special Education Assessments

- *Speech and Hearing Assessments*
- *WRAT 4*
- *Occupational Therapy Assessment*
- *WISC-V*
- *KTEA-3*
- *ASRS - Parent and Teacher Forms*
- *Social Responsiveness Scale for Autism*

2. Explain how the school will measure and evaluate academic progress – of individual students, student cohorts, special populations, and the school as a whole – throughout the school year.

The small school and class size at OSI allow for individual attention to all students, so every student's academic progress is closely monitored. Every OSI student has an Individual Service Plan (ISP). Within the plan, students work with their advisors to develop a positive personal identity statement and identify their risk factors and which of the 40 Developmental Assets they possess. They also write goals for academics, behavior, and social-emotional growth. At the beginning of the year and every quarter throughout the school year, teachers review ISPs with their advising students. Staff, as a whole, review students' ISPs who are identified as struggling and are recommended by their advising teacher. Through this process, students and staff collaborate to pivot and adjust to provide the best opportunity for students to achieve their goals.

Principals run weekly grade reports for staff to identify students earning a D or lower in any of their classes. The list of students is shared with advisors to check in with students during the week and develop plans for how students will improve their grades in courses in which they struggle. In addition to providing the accommodations identified in students' IEPs and ILPs, special education teachers and EL staff use the weekly grade report to identify students who may need additional support. Academic counselors perform regular credit audits for each student to ensure that they are on track or working toward the goal of graduation.

In addition to focusing on each student, principals at the school level collect information on student cohorts, special populations, and the school through the quarterly report. The report allows the principal to measure progress for each group in the school toward school improvement goals.

3. Outside of the classroom teacher, identify who will be responsible for collecting and analyzing student academic achievement data, using the data to drive school wide expectations/next steps, and reporting the data to the school community.

Principals collect and analyze student academic achievement data each quarter to measure progress toward school improvement goals and make any necessary adjustments. Then, achievement data is reported to the Chief Operating Officer (COO) and the Chief Academic Officer (CAO) through a quarterly report. In addition, the quarterly reports communicate the progress of students, cohorts, and graduation progress. The report is then shared in Executive Team meetings and with the school board. NWEA scores, grades, and ISP goal progress are reviewed and used for data-driven conversations among the administration.

4. Describe the corrective actions the school will take if student academic achievement falls short of expectations and goals at the school-wide, classroom, or individual student level.

At the school-wide level, principals are ultimately responsible for the success of their programs. The CAO and the COO work in collaboration with and provide annual evaluations to program leaders. If they or their program fail to meet expectations, this could result in adjustments or changes to the school improvement plan, prescribed professional development with support from the Instructional Coach, and additional support for the program leader, possibly including an individual improvement plan.

At the classroom level, principals evaluate teachers yearly on classroom instruction and management as well as student achievement data. As part of the evaluation process, teachers meet with principals regularly to discuss overall student progress in their classes and any support needed at the building level. Principals monitor grades regularly, via the weekly grade report, to identify students, classes, or teachers who may need intervention. Intervention at the teacher level could include teacher improvement plans, curriculum review, or additional resources being provided.

If an individual student does not meet the academic goal included in their ISP, the goal is reviewed and adjusted to add additional support in order to help the student meet that goal for the next quarter. If students are unable to earn a passing grade and receive credit for the class, students may retake the class with additional assistance from teachers or be required to take summer school. Ultimately, if a student fails to meet the academic expectations to earn credits it could prevent or delay their graduation.

School Calendar and Schedule

Meets Standard Expectation

- Provide the school's proposed calendar that includes number of days of instruction, following the minimum state requirements.
- Provide an explanation of the proposed calendar, including operational start/end date/times, first student day, instructional time by grade band, and information on how the proposed schedule is optimal for student success.

1. As **Attachment 2**, provide the school's proposed calendar for the first year of operation, including total number of days of instruction. Instructional calendar guidance from the Indiana Department of Education can be found [here](#).
2. Provide a narrative based on Attachment 2, explaining:
 - o The date when the school is expected to begin school operations;
 - o The date when students will attend the school;
 - o How the calendar reflects the needs of the educational program and/or anticipated student population;
 - o The number of hours/minutes per day and week that the school will devote to academic instruction for grades K-6 and grades 7-12, if applicable;
 - o School start and dismissal times; and
 - o How the school's daily and weekly schedule will be optimal for student learning.

Options Schools, Inc. (OSI) will begin operations for the 2025-2026 school year on July 1, 2025. Administrative leaders will begin the year in July. Teaching staff will start on August 1, 2025. Students will begin their 180 days of instruction on August 4, 2025. OSI uses a balanced calendar, with quarters starting near each break.

The OSI calendar is organized into four quarters. Each quarter is similar to a traditional semester, with students completing an entire course within that 45-school-day window. Classes are 87 minutes long and meet daily. The quarter schedule allows students to focus on four subjects at a time and will enable students to earn 15+ credits in a single school year. Based on 2023-2024 enrollment data, 66% of students in brick and mortar and 84% in the virtual program enroll credit deficient; quarters optimize students' ability to earn credits. Since OSI moved to the quarter system, the average credits earned by students have increased by almost five in brick-and-mortar programs and three in virtual programs. The quarter system allows credit-deficient students to move closer to graduation and, in some cases, graduate sooner or move on to earn dual credit.

The school day is broken into four academic periods for students in grades 9-12 but five academic periods for students in grades 6-8. While working with students in middle grades over the last several years, OSI noticed that middle school students struggled with the longer class times. The addition of a fifth period shortened the class periods while allowing all four core subjects to meet daily and ensuring a space for electives. In addition to these traditional academic periods, each student has an advisory period to build relationships with staff and students.

Students attend classes Monday through Friday with a modified schedule on Wednesdays. On Wednesdays, brick-and-mortar students attend class in person from 8:30 am until noon. At noon, they leave campus and resume remote learning at 12:30 pm until 3:00 pm. Teachers give in-person instruction in the morning and then assign students a remote learning assignment to complete in the afternoon remote learning session. This afternoon time is used for staff professional development and training.

The school day comprises six hours of instruction for grades 6-12.

Student hours:

Brick and Mortar:

8:30 am - 3:00 pm

3:15 pm-6:15 pm Evening School Support

Doors open at 7:45 for students for breakfast.

Options Indiana

8:00 am - 2:30 pm

After-hours support available by appointment

ABA Schools

8:30 am -11:30 am, 1:30 pm - 4:30 pm

School Culture

Meets Standard Expectation

- Coherent plan for establishing and maintaining an inclusive school culture for students, teachers, administrators, and parents from the first day of school, and for enculturating students and families who enter the school mid-year.

1. Explain how the school will create an inclusive culture for the anticipated student population, taking into account student subgroups such as socioeconomic status, gender, race, ethnicity, English Learners, Gifted and Talented, Special Education, etc. Describe the plan for enculturating students and families who enter the school mid-year.

Options Schools, Inc. (OSI) believes every student should have access to an equitable, inclusive, and supportive learning environment where they are valued as individuals. As one former OSI student said, "At OSI, everyone belongs because everyone is different." OSI believes in providing a supportive school environment and learning experiences that support high academic expectations of rigor and relevance that align with the mission and vision.

Belong.Believe.Achieve. TOGETHER

(BBA Together)

OSI expectations are based on the motto, Belong. Believe. Achieve. and focus on ensuring all students are valued and supported in the schools. These expectations were developed by the staff at the brick-and-mortar schools with student input and implemented during the second semester of the 2022-2023 school year.

Advising

In order to help students belong at OSI, each student is assigned to a teacher who is their advisor for the school year. As advisors, teachers:



- *form relationships with advising students*
- *address concerns about grades, attendance, etc.*
- *serve as the primary point of contact for advising students' parents*
- *create individualized service plan goals each quarter*
- *advocate for those students*

The advising teacher for seniors is also responsible for guiding students as they complete their Senior Institute projects, an OSI graduation requirement.

Socioeconomic Status

To support students from varying socioeconomic backgrounds, OSI ensures all students have equal access to resources and opportunities. It is essential for students' basic needs to be met to focus on their academics, so OSI provides free breakfast and lunch to all students attending brick-and-mortar programs during the school year. In addition, the Options in Education Foundation (OIEF) runs a food and clothing pantry that provides students and their families access to free food, clothing, and toiletries. To meet students' academic needs, OSI provides each student a Chromebook and all necessary supplies for the school year, including hot spots, so virtual students without internet access can access their online classes. OSI offers free extracurricular clubs, activities, and tutoring after school at the brick-and-mortar locations. In addition, OSI offers financial assistance for special events such as prom and graduation. These initiatives allow all students to feel a sense of belonging to the school community.

Gender

Options Schools, Inc. provides a welcoming and inclusive space for all students, with many choosing to attend because of the school's gender-affirming environment. Staff and students acknowledge and validate students' gender identities by intentionally using each student's preferred name and pronouns. Additionally, the buildings have unisex, single-use restrooms to ensure that students feel safe and comfortable no matter their gender identification.

Race and Ethnicity

OSI provides a safe, supportive school environment where students can authentically express themselves and their racial and cultural identities. OSI incorporates multicultural perspectives and materials in the curriculum to expose students to various cultural backgrounds, traditions, and experiences. By providing opportunities for students to learn from others' unique perspectives and experiences, they can challenge stereotypes, address implicit biases, and share their experiences. Additionally, the school environment offers flexibility for students who observe cultural and religious holidays that do not coincide with the school calendar to observe and celebrate those days.

English Language Learners

The number of English Language Learners (ELL) more than doubled from the 2022-2023 school year to the 2023-2024 school year and continues to grow. In order to address their cultural and academic needs, OSI has hired an ELL Specialist. The responsibility of this specialist is to provide onboarding, best practices for teachers, and ongoing monitoring for students by:

- *incorporating cultural education for staff about the student's country of origin and culture*
- *learning about the student's background story, including but not limited to personal and family experience before arriving in the United States*

- *Educating staff about potential linguistic challenges as students learn English*
- *providing staff with tools and best practices based on the student's personal culture, education culture, English speaking ability, academic aptitude, and individual/family goals*
- *Incorporating a comprehensive, supported shelter-in-place immersion classroom approach that seeks to expose ELL students to mainstream instruction while incorporating practices and techniques that are culturally familiar to their respective experiences.*
- *Consciously creating a school culture that allows students to network with both other ELL and native-speaking students, rapidly create contacts with staff, makes a conscious point of celebrating the mosaic of cultures brought by the ELL community, and otherwise providing them with the tools and support necessary for academic and personal/family success.*

Gifted and Talented

OSI offers multiple dual credit and advanced courses for students to take during the school year. Students may earn an Indiana College Core or an associate's degree from IVY Tech by attending the Noblesville campus. Students are placed into advanced placement and dual credit courses beginning with 7th grade. A student's overall performance on standardized and adaptive tests, GPA, and current or previous course success determines the student's placement. Suppose students reach a point where they have effectively taken all the advanced offerings. In that case, OSI provides the funding for students to pursue other educational options at partnering schools, such as IVY Tech, via dual enrollment.

Special Education

Special Education staff at OSI support all students in the classroom, ensuring that students in need of special education support services are included in the classroom environment. By providing services in an inclusion setting, staff are able to help students develop the skills necessary to actively participate in school and the community if given the same opportunities as their peers. Special Education staff provides additional small group and/or individual instruction to remediate and support students as needed.

Mid-Year Enrollments

OSI has many students enrolled during the school year as they transfer from other schools. During the enrollment process, the student and their family have a meeting with the principal of the school they will be attending, which includes a chance for the student to tour the school and talk with staff. Then, the student will meet with the academic counselor to make a schedule. OSI uses a quarterly schedule, providing several entry points into classes for students when transferring from another school. Furthermore, if students enroll with little time left in a quarter, OSI offers alternative schedules, such as hybrid and evening school, to provide flexibility for their needs. This may result in a lighter course load and/or extra one-to-one or small-group instruction time for students to complete their classes.

Regardless of when students enroll, they will be given an advisor to support their needs better. The advisor will make sure to contact the student's family to introduce himself as the primary point of contact for the school and answer any questions they may have. The advisor will also meet with the student to create their academic, behavioral, and social-emotional goals for their individualized service plan. All students are also encouraged to interact with their advising groups and join in activities such as clubs and outings when offered.

Supplemental Programming

Meets Standard Expectation

- Well-designed plans and funding for extracurricular and co-curricular activities, programs, and services that will meet anticipated student needs and provide enrichment experiences.
- Thoughtful, well-supported description of programs or strategies to address student mental, emotional, and social development and health, and any other student-focused activities and programs that are integral to the schools educational and student-development plans.
- Sound plan for implementation of remote learning, such as eLearning and/or extended learning.

1. Describe the extra- or co-curricular activities or programming the school will offer, how often they will occur, and how they will be funded.

Options Schools, Inc. has historically engaged in limited activities outside of the regular school day. Our mission is to identify students with cognitive, chronic, and situational challenges in pursuing their high school diploma, resolve or mitigate those challenges, and help them remain in their graduation academic cohort. The only activities OSI pursues revolve around inclusivity, building positive relationships, and maintaining a positive school climate rather than competition and exclusivity. The one major exception to this philosophy is the recently added partnerships under our NCAA Certified Program.

Clubs

Clubs at Options Schools, Inc. (OSI) are driven by student interest and allow students to connect with peers and staff outside the traditional classroom lessons and environment. Students have the opportunity to form clubs based on their interests. Any student interested in starting a club needs to find other students with the same interest(s) and a staff member willing to sponsor the club. In some instances, staff members have started an afterschool activity based on a need expressed by students. The clubs offered change based on the interests of students and staff at each school location. Currently, clubs meet once a week at the brick-and-mortar campuses throughout the school year. There is no student fee for clubs, and any costs are included in the school's operational budget. Some clubs hosted this past school year were Table Top Games Club, Dungeon and Dragons Club, Art Club, Photography Club, Video Game Club, and Golf Club.

Extracurricular Activities

Options Schools, Inc. (OSI) has several extracurricular activities throughout the school year. All current OSI students are invited to attend the Prom, which usually occurs on the first Friday of May from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. The Options in Education Foundation funds the Prom. In addition, there are a variety of extracurricular activities that occur in the evening throughout the school year at the brick-and-mortar campuses that are open to all current students and their families, such as Middle School Winter Carnival, middle school Halloween dance, trivia nights, escape rooms, and the Annual Summer Celebration. The schools also host a variety of holidays and special events during the school day. The Fall Fest, Spring Picnic, Thanksgiving Meal, and Valentine's party are all events that take place during the school day to celebrate with students and staff.

After-School Tutoring

OSI brick-and-mortar campuses offer free after-school tutoring for students who need more assistance in course material or graduation qualifying exams. After-school tutoring is offered Monday through Thursday, 3:15 p.m.- 5:15 p.m. Students may sign up to receive additional academic tutoring during the evening program at their campus.

After-school tutoring is not an after-school supervision program for students waiting for transportation. After-school tutoring offers students needing additional support for a particular subject the chance to work with teachers from that subject. Subject content offered varies from day to day to ensure all core subjects are covered during the week. Tutoring sessions must be preapproved and requested using the form on the school website.

Evening Program

Established during the 2019-20 school year, the evening program at OSI is designed for students desiring the one-on-one attention of small class sizes, individualized learning plans, and direct instruction from teachers who also need an alternative class schedule. This program provides the solution to a problem for students who are interested in obtaining their high school diploma but need something beyond the traditional approach to education or are facing one of the following circumstances:

- *Social/Emotional issues/diagnosis*
- *Transportation issues*
- *Expects or has children*
- *Work-related issues*
- *Expulsion from the school building with an Alternative Education Plan*

Students who would traditionally have been expelled from school for behaviors like bullying, drugs, fighting, and chronic absenteeism can continue to attend school during the evening program due to its smaller size and more significant support measures. Prior dropouts are also a target audience for this program since they often need to maintain employment during traditional school hours or manage childcare duties.

The evening program is held from 3:15 PM until 6:15 PM. In-person attendance is required Monday through Thursday, with virtual attendance on Friday. Students over the age of 18 can also participate in the evening program.

Students who participate in the evening programs at the brick-and-mortar campuses can work in small groups or individually with teachers to support students as they work through Edmentum and/or Schoology curriculum. This allows students to move at their own pace within the nine-week quarter to complete classes. Students enrolled in the program may complete courses, work, or participate in specialty programs outside the evening program hours. The evening program provides yet another opportunity for students to stay engaged at school.

NCAA Certified Program

In 2021, OSI received NCAA certification. Through various organizations across Indiana, OSI supports athletes with their education. For example, Olympic Divers who attend RIP Fest in Cicero, IN. can enroll in OSI virtual school to continue progress toward graduation while training for competitions. OSI is growing in this arena as more student-athletes seek flexible education programs that will recognize their training schedules. In the past three years, OSI graduated six divers, and one hockey player was accepted at Division I colleges nationwide.

2. Describe the programs and/or strategies to address student mental, emotional, and social health and development.

Advising

Each student at OSI has a teacher as an advisor, with whom they interact daily during their advising period. Advising helps staff form a relationship with each student and recognize and address changes in student attendance or behavior or a decline in their academic performance. By creating a supportive environment and building trusting relationships with students, advisors can better understand students' needs and provide appropriate support. Each advisor helps the

student with their individualized service plan (ISP) by assisting them in writing and working towards an academic, behavioral, social, and emotional goal.

Belong.Believe.Achieve. TOGETHER (BBA Together)

The *Belong.Believe.Achieve. TOGETHER (BBA Together)* expectations are posted throughout the in-person programs based on the motto and created with staff and student input. Having consistent, positive expectations for students and staff throughout the school creates a positive environment. When everyone in the school upholds the exact expectations, students experience predictability and stability, reducing anxiety and stress. In addition, this consistency in expectations helps students feel supported and empowered and promotes fairness and equity for all students.

Social Emotional Counselors

Recognizing the growing need for social-emotional support for Option Schools’ students, OSI hired a dedicated social-emotional counselor for each brick-and-mortar school during the 2023-2024 school year with plans to expand that to virtual schools in the future. These counselors are available throughout the school day to meet with students and provide support and referrals as needed.

PowerSchool Log Categories

Starting as a pilot in September of the 2023-2024 school year, the social-emotional counselors and safety specialists began classifying their student logs in PowerSchool into specific categories for mental health. OSI has already started an intentional data system to understand students' actual needs and mental health. Over seven months, Options Noblesville and Westfield logged 185 students (42%) experiencing anywhere from one mental health incident to as many as 34 during the school year. When social-emotional counselors classify a log as a suicide assessment, it is because they have completed the Columbia Assessment for a student.

Resiliency Group

The social-emotional counselor at each brick-and-mortar campus runs a resiliency group with students from their school. Using the *Mind Matters* curriculum, the group meets once a week for twelve weeks. The curriculum is based on current research and neuroscience and helps students focus on controlling their responses to stressful situations and developing positive relationships.

Presentations from Community Organizations

Throughout the school year, the social-emotional counselors arrange speakers to present various topics to the students at their school. Speakers and presentations during the 2023-2024 school year have included the following topics and speakers:

Presentation Topic	Community Organization
Bullying Prevention	Hamilton County Health Department
Teen Dating Violence and Friendships	Hamilton County Health Department

Mental Health Awareness	National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)
Signs of Suicide	Indiana Center for Prevention of Youth Abuse and Suicide
Recognizing Anxiety	Hamilton Boone Madison Cooperative
Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)	Hamilton County Systems of Care
Resiliency	Hamilton County Systems of Care

Partnership Programs

The Chris Center

Options Westfield partnered with The Chris Center during the 2022-2023 school year to enhance OSI mental health support for students. Specifically, OSI has been involved with The PAWS Therapy Dog Program and the Alpaca Farm Experience and is piloting the art therapy program at the Westfield and Noblesville campuses.

The PAWS Therapy Dog Program “supports student wellness by providing middle and high school students an opportunity to interact with registered therapy dogs during school or extracurricular activities” (PAWS Therapy Dog Program | the Chris Center Inc, n.d.). Small groups of students can interact with different therapy dogs brought to the school at least once a week. During the 2023-2024 school year, the partnership with The PAWS Therapy Dog Program was also extended to Options Noblesville.

The resiliency group at Options Westfield and Noblesville participates in The Alpaca Farm Experience as the culminating event, fulfilling the nature experience section of the Mind Matters curriculum. During this activity, students “observe and interact with alpacas, developing mindfulness, stress reduction, self-esteem, empathy, social connections, and personal growth in a unique and positive atmosphere” (The Alpaca Adventure Program | the Chris Center Inc., n.d.).

During the spring of the 2023-2024 school year, the Options Westfield and Noblesville campuses were chosen to pilot the art therapy program that The Chris Center is developing. Once a week, a licensed art therapist comes to each campus and leads a small group of students through art therapy projects. This program will continue at both schools during the 2024-2025 school year.

Agape Equine Therapy

Agape Equine Therapy partners with OSI to support small group instruction for students’ mental and physical wellness by teaching horsemanship. Through a unique curriculum that addresses mindfulness, “Agape has a proven history of serving such groups as Prevail, Bridges of Hope, Grit into Grace, and more, which are organizations who work with individuals recovering from addiction, working through trauma responses, grief, and mental health challenges” (Agape Therapeutic Riding Resources, 2023).

With the Agape partnership, OSI can provide small-group support for students needing extra self-regulation, advocacy, and confidence guidance. Social-emotional counselors from each brick-and-mortar school identify students based on daily interactions, teacher and parent communication, and assessment-specific techniques.

Isha Warriors

During the 2023-2024 school year, OSI partnered with Isha Warriors to provide students with in-person and virtual yoga classes. These classes are led by Alli Louthain, who specializes in teaching yoga to youth and teens, focusing on supporting their mental and emotional health (Yoga for Teens, n.d.). OSI offers Yoga for Teens classes to students at all of the schools.

Upcoming Partnership Programs

Bongo Boy Music School

During the 2024-2025 school year, OSI is partnering with Bongo Boy Music School to provide free rhythmic wellness drumming during the school day. Drumming that focuses on rhythm and movement provides the following benefits:

- Helps reduce stress and anxiety
- Safe avenue to communicate emotions and encourage self-expression
- Promotes community and cooperation
- Connects body, mind, and spirit
- Enhances appreciation and awareness of diversity
- Brings joy and laughter to participants
- Provides a creative and experiential workshop (Wellness, n.d.)

OSI will offer drumming to students at the in-person locations.

Teach One to Lead One

During the 2024-2025 school year, OSI is partnering with Teach One to Lead One at both brick-and-mortar schools. Teach One to Lead One is “a community mentoring program that offers hope to all students, including those at risk, to live out their purpose and potential” and helps students improve attendance, attitude, and academics (Teach One to Lead One, 2024).

References:

Agape Therapeutic Riding Resources. (2023, August 22). Home - Agape. Agape. <https://agaperiding.org/>

PAWS Therapy Dog Program | The Chris Center Inc. (n.d.). The Chris Center Inc.

<https://www.chriscenterpaws.com/pawstherapy>

Teach One to Lead One. (2024, February 23). About - Teach one to lead one. <https://t111.org/about/>

The Alpaca Adventure Program | The Chris Center Inc. (n.d.). The Chris Center Inc.

<https://www.chriscenterpaws.com/alpacaadventureprogram>

Wellness. (n.d.). <http://www.bongoboymusic.com/Wellness>

Yoga for Teens. (n.d.). Isha Warriors. <https://ishawarriors.com/>

Remote Learning (Not Applicable for Virtual Model Schools)

Meets Standard Expectation

- Sound plan of how the school will incorporate remote learning days in their school calendar or use for inclement weather, including the resources and programs needed for implementation.
- Provide expectations for teachers and students on remote learning days.
- Description of how the school will provide continued services, track compensatory hours, and create IEP/ILPs with specific language regarding remote learning days.

1. Describe how the school will incorporate remote learning into the regular school calendar or in place of inclement

weather days that would cause a school cancellation. Include the types of resources and/or programs the school will utilize to ensure continuity of instruction. Further guidance can be found [here](#).

If, in the event of inclement weather and in the interest of student and staff safety, it is determined that the school cannot occur in person, Options Schools, Inc (OSI) will host a remote learning day using the following steps:

- *The BrightArrow system will send communication to all staff and students about the decision for a remote learning day.*
- *The local news stations will also be contacted to post a remote learning day.*
- *Staff will post student assignments on their class Schoology pages by 9:00 am.*
- *Students will receive an email from the school leader with expectations for the school day.*
- *Teachers will post assignments on the Schoology page for each of their classes.*
- *Students will be able to use Google Suite to complete assignments for their classes and submit them before the next in-person school day.*
- *Students have their school-issued Chromebooks that can be used to access their work.*
- *In the rare instance that a student has no internet access, T-Mobile hotspot devices are issued for connectivity.*
- *Teachers and students can communicate through email and Google Meet.*

OSI has eight remote learning days for the school year. Six of the remote learning days are reserved for teachers' professional development. One day is reserved for SAT testing so that testing students can report to the school building and concentrate on testing without interruption. Another remote learning day is reserved so all staff can attend the Senior Institute final presentations as part of the OSI graduation requirements.

2. Outline the expectations for teachers on a remote learning day, including planning of activities, lesson delivery, communication with students and families, office hours, etc.

OSI teacher contract days remain the same on a remote learning day: 7:45 AM - 3:15 PM. Teachers are required to post remote learning assignments by 9:00 AM of the remote learning day on the Schoology page for each class. Teachers should plan lessons and activities for as long as a regular class period. Unless the teachers are in a professional development session, teachers are available by email during regular school hours and respond within 90 minutes of receiving an email.

Additionally, teachers are expected to meet with students in Google Meets as needed for additional support during regular school hours. Communication from teacher to student is via Google Chats to answer questions or provide clarification. Front office staff will send out a daily attendance form for all students to complete. If the form still needs to be completed by 11:00 AM, the front office team will contact families to ensure students have begun their remote learning for the day.

3. Outline the expectations for students on a remote learning day, including possible daily schedules, time spent on tasks based on grade level, etc.

On remote learning days, Options Indiana (virtual) students, representing over 60% of the OSI population, continue as usual. Then, in the in-person programs, students are directed to follow their regular day schedule as closely as possible. Participation is possible because each enrolled student at OSI is given a computer and access to the internet, if

necessary. Following a similar structure as an in-person day provides the routines necessary for lunchtime and break times. Using OSI technology, including Edmentum and Schoology, makes asynchronous and synchronous instruction possible. Teachers assign work through technology and monitor progress throughout the day. Students may communicate with teachers and request support sessions when needed. OSI technology staff provide necessary support for staff and students throughout the day.

4. Describe how the school will provide continued services, track compensatory hours should they be needed, and create IEPs and ILPs with specific language surrounding remote learning days.

Options Schools, Inc. (OSI) will implement a multi-faceted approach to ensure continued services for students. First, it will leverage technology to provide remote learning opportunities, ensuring that students can access educational materials, virtual classrooms, and support from teachers and specialists. It may include video conferencing for live instruction, online assignments, and digital resources tailored to Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and Individualized Learning Plans (ILPs). Second, OSI will maintain detailed records of student participation in remote learning activities and services to track compensatory hours. The record includes documenting the duration and content of each session, as well as any additional support provided to address individual learning needs.

By systematically tracking these hours, OSI can accurately determine if compensatory services are warranted and ensure that students receive the appropriate support to address missed instructional time. When creating special populations' plans, OSI will incorporate specific language surrounding remote learning days to address the unique challenges and opportunities presented by this mode of instruction. Different modes of instruction may involve outlining goals and objectives for remote learning skills, such as technology proficiency, self-directed learning, and virtual communication with teachers and peers. The plans will also include strategies and accommodations to support students in accessing and engaging with remote learning content effectively, considering their strengths, needs, and preferences.

Special Populations

Meets Standard Expectation

- Demonstrated understanding of – and capacity to fulfill – state and federal obligations and requirements pertaining to students with disabilities, students identified as intellectually gifted, students who are performing below grade level or at risk of academic failure or dropping out and a detailed plan for providing services to such students, and English Learners (ELs), including appropriate discipline procedures for students with disabilities.
- Plans describe qualified staffing special populations

1. Explain the methods used to identify the following special populations of students:
 - Special Education
 - English Learners
 - Below Grade Level Performance
 - Gifted and Talented

Special Education

Students attending Options Schools, Inc (OSI) will be identified for special needs in the following ways:

- *Parents or legal guardians will be asked to submit the most recent IEP and educational and psychological evaluation at the time of enrollment.*
- *Records requested from the previous school include a request for IEP and psych evaluation.*
- *Requests for IEP/evaluation records are made using the Indiana IEP Program (IIEP).*

OSI has a process in place identifying students who may be eligible to receive special education services.

- 1. Screening and Referral: Teachers, parents, or other school staff may refer students for evaluation if they notice learning or behavioral challenges. Screening tools like questionnaires or checklists can help identify students who may need further assessment. Once that request is received, the special education team has 50 instructional days to complete the initial testing.*
- 2. Written Notice and Procedural Safeguards: Written notice to evaluate or refuse evaluation is provided to the parent/guardian to sign. A copy of procedural safeguards is provided to the parents/guardians.*
- 3. Observation and Data Collection: Teachers and specialists observe students in various settings to gather information about their academic performance, behavior, and social interactions. Data collection may include academic assessments, behavior logs, and developmental history.*
- 4. Formal Evaluation: A comprehensive evaluation is conducted by a multidisciplinary team, which may include psychologists, special education teachers, speech-language pathologists, and other professionals. This evaluation assesses the student's cognitive abilities, academic skills, social-emotional development, and any other relevant areas.*
- 5. Parent and Teacher Input: Input from parents and teachers is crucial in understanding the student's strengths, weaknesses, and educational history. This information helps in developing a comprehensive picture of the student's needs.*
- 6. Review of Existing Data: The evaluation team reviews existing data, such as previous assessments, medical records, and academic progress reports, to gain insights into the student's educational history and any previous interventions.*
- 7. Legal Requirements and Criteria: Eligibility for special education services is determined based on criteria outlined in federal and state laws (e.g., Article 7, IDEA). These criteria ensure that students receive services based on their specific educational needs.*
- 8. Individualized Education Program (IEP): Once a student is identified as eligible for special education, an IEP is developed. This legally binding document outlines the student's educational goals, required services, accommodations, and modifications.*

English Language Learners

OSI has a 3% ELL population. OSI provides support to ELL students and families. The enrollment packet includes a Home Language Survey, which must be completed at registration for students enrolling in an Indiana public school for the first time. Historical information about the student is requested from the previous school attended. OSI will administer the World Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) and ACCESS screening assessment to identify ELL students and their required level of support correctly. OSI has a licensed ELL staff member who supports students who require such services.

Below Grade Level Performance

At OSI, the target student populations are those who qualify in Indiana code for alternative programming- performers below grade level are one major category. There are state and locally-developed academic, social-emotional, disciplinary, and situational student identifiers for alternative education. In almost every circumstance, students have more than one qualifier, and below-grade-level performance is one of them. Indiana defines alternative programs, qualifications for alternative students, and placement criteria for alternative students as follows:

Definition of an Alternative Program: (IC 20-30-8)

- All alternative programs are unique but contain some common characteristics.
- Student-to-teacher ratio of 15:1 or less;
- Operate for a minimum of three continuous hours per day;
 - [Instructional time requirements](#) for students still apply;
- Clearly stated mission and discipline code;
- Caring faculty that has chosen to work in the alternative program
- Continual staff development;
- High expectations for student achievement;
- Learning program tailored to the student's needs and learning styles;
 - Each student must have an Individualized Service Plan (ISP) that guides the student toward academic and behavioral goals;
- Community involvement and support.

[Link: https://www.in.gov/doi/grants/alternative-education/#Alternative_Education_Programs](https://www.in.gov/doi/grants/alternative-education/#Alternative_Education_Programs)

Qualifications for Alternative Students (IC 20-30-8-9):

- Be enrolled in or be eligible to be admitted to grades 6 through 12;
- Meet at least one (1) of the criteria described in section 10 of this chapter;
- Have a written individual service plan prepared under section 11 of this chapter, and
- Be likely to benefit:
 - academically;
 - behaviorally; or
 - both academically and behaviorally;
 - From participation in an alternative education program, as jointly determined by the student's teacher or teachers and principal or principal's designee, and in consultation with the student's parent or guardian.
 - (b) The governing body of the school corporation shall review the determinations made by the school corporation to place and retain students in an alternative education program to ensure that the students in the alternative education program meet the criteria for the program.

Placement Criteria for Alternative Students (IC 20-30-8-10):

- Intends to withdraw or has withdrawn before graduation,
- Has failed to comply academically and would benefit from instruction offered differently from the traditional school,
- Is a parent or expectant parent,
- Is employed and employment is necessary for the support of the student or the student's immediate family or
- Is a disruptive student.

[Link: https://www.in.gov/doi/files/Alternative-Education-FAQ.pdf](https://www.in.gov/doi/files/Alternative-Education-FAQ.pdf)

Indiana state codified definition of students are failing to comply academically (credit deficient or out-of-cohort) or are below grade level performers (IC 20-26-13-10(b):

- b. Student's transcript indicating the number of credits earned at the time of withdrawal to homeschool. To be considered "on track" to graduate, the student must have completed and earned credits based on the following schedule:
- At least ten (10) credits must be earned by a student who mobilized after the completion of the freshman year (9th grade).
 - At least twenty (20) credits must be earned by a student who mobilized after the completion of the sophomore year (10th grade).
 - At least thirty (30) credits must be earned by a student who mobilized after the completion of the junior year (11th grade).

- iv. At least thirty (30) credits must be earned by a student who mobilized after the completion of the first semester of the senior year (12th grade).
- v. At least thirty-five (35) credits must be earned by a student who mobilized during the second semester of the senior year (12th grade).

Link: <https://www.in.gov/sboe/files/Excessive-Homeschool-Audit-Process1.pdf>

In addition to the state-defined criteria for alternative programs and students, OSI has established more in-depth criteria to identify alternative students and their equity challenges:

1. Options Schools also tracks 17 common risk factors among the enrollees- four academic and thirteen life factors. The four academic risk factors that OSI tracks are:
 - A. Below grade level performance in math
 - B. Below grade level performance in LA
 - C. Did not pass core 40 courses needed for Core 40 diploma
 - D. Did not pass or have not taken the graduation requirement of the SAT
2. The thirteen common risk factors that OSI tracks are:
 - A. Involvement in the juvenile justice system/probation
 - B. Substance abuse
 - C. Homelessness or run-away
 - D. Non-parent guardian
 - E. poor school attendance
 - F. mental/emotional health challenges
 - G. physical health challenges
 - H. history of being bullied
 - I. being expelled from a previous school
 - J. chronic behavior resulting in school discipline
 - K. adjudicated parent
 - L. domestic violence in the family
 - M. being a victim of abuse/neglect.

Gifted and Talented

Students are placed into advanced placement and dual credit courses beginning as early as 7th grade. Placement is based on student performance on standardized and adaptive tests, GPA, and current or previous course success. If students reach a point where they have effectively taken all the advanced offerings, OSI provides the funding for students to pursue other educational options at partnering schools, such as IVY Tech, via dual enrollment.

2. Summarize the plans to have adequate, qualified staffing for the anticipated special populations listed above.

Special Education

Options Schools, Inc. (OSI) has several team members with special education teaching licenses. These staff members will serve as the Teacher of Record, oversee the students who need special services, and ensure that those services are provided to each student effectively and efficiently. OSI (Brick and Mortar and Virtual) will ensure that the parents of enrolled students with IEPs are appropriately involved.

Options Schools, Inc. will:

- Provide a qualified special education coordinator to oversee Case Conference Committee (CCC) meetings.
- Provide parents with a written notice of CC using IIEP.

- Provide parents with the Indiana Department of Education Notice of Procedural Safeguards and Parent Rights in Special Education.
- Hold a CCC meeting; Options Indiana will use the school's Google Meet account for CCC meetings.
- Provide quarterly progress monitoring reports to parents or legal guardians.
- Hold an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meeting at least annually.
- Provide parent or legal guardian with a proposed finalized IEP.
- In writing, a parent or legal guardian must approve the emailing of IEPs to their email address.

Hamilton Boone Madison Cooperative (HBM)

OSI partners with Hamilton Boone Madison Special Services Cooperative (HBM). The partnership provides students with licensed professionals to serve and meet each student's individual needs per their IEP. Services provided by HBM include:

- School psychologist
- Blind Low Vision TOR
- Deaf Hard of Hearing TOR
- Occupational Therapist
- Behavior Specialist
- Physical Therapist

Options Indiana and ABA at Kokomo students receive Speech-Language and Occupational Therapy using TinyEye virtual therapy. TinyEye provides real-time therapy for all OSI Speech and Language students.

English Language Learners

OSI employs a full-time EL Certified teacher who coordinates all EL services and requirements. As the coordinator, the teacher collaborates, trains, and manages teachers, the enrollment team, and principals in collecting documentation and details of service minutes. In addition, Options Indiana has a designated EL Certified teacher who provides supplemental support as needed guided by the coordinator.

Below Grade Level Performers

The OSI mission is to serve students and families who have encountered one of six challenges codified by the Indiana State Legislature. Below grade level performers are one of those six. Regardless of what other challenges the family and student are facing, below grade level performance is typical of OSI students. Because of this, OSI recruits, trains, and retains approximately 130 alternative education teachers and leaders to specifically address below grade level performers.

Gifted and Talented

OSI offers dual credit courses through highly qualified teachers who are certified in the subject. In addition, OSI partners with third-party entities, including IVY Tech, The Pursuit Institute, and J. Everett Light Career Center.

Student Recruitment and Enrollment

Meets Standard Expectation

- Enrollment Policy complies with state law and ensures that the school is open to all eligible students.
- New-Start Models: Sound and thoughtful diverse student recruitment and marketing plan, timeline, and Enrollment Policy that will provide equal access to all interested students and families, including those in poverty, academically low-achieving students, students with disabilities, and other youth at risk of academic failure.
- Phase-In or Takeover Models: Plans for engagement of students, families and the community that are realistic and likely to foster student

1. **New Schools:** Explain the plan for diverse student recruitment and marketing that will provide equal access to interested students and families. Specifically describe the plan for outreach to families in poverty; families with language barriers; students with disabilities; and other youth at risk of academic failure.

Not applicable.

Takeover Schools: Explain the plan for student and parent investment in the school turnaround, especially how the school plans to ensure parents and students do not opt out of the new school. Describe how this plan will successfully transition and retain students who currently attend or are zoned to attend the school being replaced. Provide a detailed description of the plan to gain parent and community support.

Not applicable.

Options Schools, Inc. (OSI) has a Communication and Marketing Department that distributes information about the mission, educational philosophy, and enrollment. The website, www.optionsschools.org, also has extensive resources for all families that are inquiring and may have a strong interest in attending OSI. With the growing ELL population, OSI has invested in a part-time translator to help with non-English speaking families. The website is also available in Spanish.

2. Provide, as **Attachment 3**, the school's Enrollment Policy, which should include the following:
 - Tentative dates for application period; and enrollment deadlines and procedures, including explanation of how the school will receive and process Intent to Enroll forms;
 - A timeline and plan for student recruitment/engagement and enrollment;
 - Policies and procedures for student waiting lists, withdrawals, re-enrollment, and transfers;
 - Explanation of the purpose of any pre-admission activities for students or parents; and
 - Evidence of compliance with any applicable desegregation order.

Student Discipline

Meets Standard Expectation

- A detailed narrative of the school's approach to student discipline.
- Student discipline policy that provides for appropriate and effective strategies to support a safe, orderly school climate and fulfillment of educational goals, promoting a strong school culture while respecting student rights. Legally sound policies for student discipline, suspension and expulsion, as well as appeals, including proper processes for students with disabilities.

1. Describe, in detail, the school's approach to student discipline.

Empowering Discipline

The key to working effectively with Options Schools, Inc. (OSI) students is establishing a positive, supportive relationship so teachers have the influence they need to teach students new skills, behaviors, and attitudes. The teacher's job is not to control the students but to offer choices and guidance to help them positively meet their needs. The goals of empowering discipline are to:

- *help the student become more self-aware*
- *help the student gain self-control*

- *help the student see different points of view*
- *help the student learn to express emotions assertively*
- *help the student see the connection between their choices and possible consequences*
- *help the student discover solutions and work out compromises*

Behavioral Intervention Strategies

Steps to take with disruptive or non-compliant students (non-emergency situations):

- *Handle through classroom management techniques (remind the student of the classroom expectations)*
- *Pull out of the general population by the teacher for a 1-1 talk (coverage by an administrator or available teacher may be necessary)*
- *Confer with other teacher(s), administrator(s), social worker/counselor, or the student's advisor for suggestions on how best to impact the student*
- *Hold a meeting with the student and other relevant personnel (e.g., teacher, advisor, counselor, administrator)*
- *Contact the family through phone call or e-mail to inform them of the situation and request their help, or set up a meeting*
- *Bring student issue(s) to school leadership team meeting for further action steps (if behavior(s) is a problem in multiple classes)*
- *E.g., additional services*
- *Parent meeting*
- *In-school/out of school suspension*

Steps to take with disruptive or non-compliant students (when removal from the classroom is necessary):

- *Call an administrator and let them know they are sending a student to the office or need an administrator's assistance removing a student from your room.*
- *The reason for the removal may be discussed over the phone, or the teacher may write a short email and send it to both administrators. (A longer incident report may be necessary later, depending upon the situation and the level of discipline needed.)*
- *An administrator will "unpack" the incident with the student and determine if disciplinary action needs to be taken or if the student may return to their next-period class. (The teacher may or may not be present at this meeting.)*
- *The administrator will contact the sending teacher via phone or e-mail and let them know the outcome of the meeting.*
- *At some point, the teacher and student must meet to resolve the issue that caused the student's removal from class (preferably before the student attends the class again.)*

Disciplinary Actions

1. *Lunch Detentions - May be assigned by a teacher or other staff member for the following behaviors:*

- *Tardiness*
- *Repeated minor classroom disruptions, e.g. talking, leaving the classroom without permission, talking, or texting on a cell phone, and the cell phone should be confiscated and sent to an administrator. (If the student refuses to give up the phone, call an administrator immediately.)*
- *Disrespectful behavior toward peer or staff member*
- *Other behaviors that are not severe enough to warrant an in-school suspension.*

The staff member who assigned the lunch detention must inform students why it was assigned. Then, the staff member sends an email explaining why the lunch detention was assigned to the main office and copied to an administrator.

2. *In-School Suspensions - Students may be assigned an in-school suspension for engaging in the following behaviors:*

- *Directing profanity at a peer or staff member*
- *Failure to serve a lunch detention*
- *Refusing to follow a teacher's directive*
- *Repeated violations of behavior(s) that led to the assignment of a lunch detention*
- *Other behaviors that are not severe enough to receive an out-of-school suspension.*

3. *Out-of-school suspensions—Students may be assigned an out-of-school suspension for engaging in behaviors outlined in the Student/Parent Handbook.*

The assigning teacher must document the violations in the student's log in PowerSchool, and a call must be made to the home to report the suspension to the parent/guardian. A formal letter must follow the call.

While a teacher or other staff member may recommend that a student receive an ISS, an administrator may only assign an OSS.

4. *Expulsion – Only the building administrator may recommend expulsion to the President of OSI.*

- *The recommendation will be made after a thorough investigation has been completed and it has been determined that the student has committed a major infraction of one or more school rules outlined in the Parent/Student Handbook.*
- *The President of OSI must be contacted as soon as the investigation has been completed.*
- *All recommendations for expulsion must be fully documented, the appropriate paperwork completed, and sent to the parent/guardian via registered mail.*
- *If a student is suspended for ten days pending an expulsion ruling but returns to school before serving all ten days, he/she MUST report to the Administrative Assistant before returning to classes so that she may document the return date in PowerSchool.*

2. Provide as **Attachment 4** the school's proposed discipline policy. The proposed policy must comply with any applicable state laws and authorizer policies. The description of the school's approach and the proposed policy should address each of the following:

- Practices the school will use to promote good discipline, including both penalties for infractions and incentives for positive behavior;
- A list and definitions of the offenses for which students in the school must (where non-discretionary) and may (where discretionary) be suspended or expelled, respectively;
- An explanation of how the school will take into account the rights of students with disabilities in disciplinary actions and proceedings; and
- Procedures for due process when a student is suspended or expelled as a result of a code of conduct violation, including a description of the appeal process that the school will employ for students facing expulsion and a plan for providing services to students who are expelled or out of school for more than ten days.

GOVERNANCE

Legal Status and Governing Documents

Meets Standard Expectation

- Proposed school's legal status and structure are in compliance with state law.
- Governing bylaws, policies, and procedures are comprehensive and sound.

1. Describe the proposed school's legal status, including non-profit status and federal tax-exempt status.

Options Schools, Inc. (OSI) is a 501c3 non-profit with federal tax-exempt status. OSI has a DBA with the State as Options Charter Schools. There is also an educational foundation that is governed by The OSI School Board called Options in Education Foundation, Inc. (OIEF) which is also a 501c3 non-profit with federal tax-exempt status. OIEF also has two real estate holding single-member LLCs (OCS Westfield, LLC and OCS Noblesville, LLC).

OSI started in 2001 as the Central Indiana Options in Education, Inc. (CIOE). The first year of operations for CIOE was the 2002-2003 school year with the Carmel-Clay School Board as the authorizer. Prior to the 2003-2004 school year, OSI moved authorizers from Carmel-Clay to Ball State University. In 2006, OSI was approved for a second charter in Noblesville, so a decision was made to rename the schools with the location of the school as part of the school name. For this reason, the name was changed from the Central Indiana Options in Education to Options Charter Schools- Carmel and Options Charter Schools-Noblesville. In 2020 the Indiana State Legislature gave Indiana charter schools the option to consolidate its operations under a single corporation charter with multiple schools. Prior to this, all Indiana charter schools could only have one charter (corporation) and one school number. In 2020 the OSI board that controlled both Options Charter Schools- Carmel and Options Charter Schools- Noblesville decided to consolidate all operations under the Options Charter Schools- Carmel charter. In 2021 Options Charter Schools- Carmel changed its name to Options Schools, Inc. to encompass all of the organization's operations.

2. Submit Articles of Incorporation, proof of non-profit status and tax exempt status (or copies of your filings for the preceding items), and any governing documents already adopted, such as board policies, as **Attachment 5**.
3. Submit, as **Attachment 6**, the completed and signed Statement of Assurances.

Organization Charts

Meets Standard Expectation

- The organization charts should clearly delineate the roles and responsibilities of – and lines of authority and reporting among – the governing board, staff, any related bodies (such as advisory boards or parent/teacher councils), and any external organizations that will play a role in managing the school.
- The organization charts should also document clear lines of authority and reporting within the school(s).

1. Submit, as **Attachment 7**, organization charts that show the school governance, network management, leadership, and staffing structure in: a) Year 1; and b) at full build-out.

Governing Board

Meets Standard Expectation

- Effective governance structure for network and school governance, whether each school will have an independent board or there will be one or more boards overseeing multiple schools. Well-planned board(s) size, powers, duties, and current and desired composition that will foster school/network success.
- Clear division of duties if there will be multiple boards serving multiple schools.
- Clear, appropriate plans for the board(s) to evaluate the success of the school.
- Proposed board members who demonstrate: (a) will, capacity, and commitment to govern the school(/network effectively; and (b) shared vision, purposes, and expectations for the school/network
- Evidence that the proposed governing board members will contribute the wide range of knowledge, skills, and commitment needed to oversee a successful charter school including educational, financial, legal, business, and community engagement expertise.
- Sound, timely plan for creating or transitioning to the school governing board (*if applicable*).
- Sound plan for transforming existing board to assume its new duties or forming a new board (*if applicant is an existing not-for-profit organization other than a charter school governing board*).
- Other effective governance procedures, including planned frequency of meetings and standing committees.
- Appropriate proposed Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest policy/procedures that will minimize real or perceived conflicts.
- Sound plan and timeline for board recruitment, expansion, orientation of new members, and ongoing training for members. Plan should include a thoughtful identification of desired experience and capacities.
- If there will be a network-level board, plan for clear identification and plan for addressing board development needs relative to growth.

1. As **Attachment 8**, list the members of the school's proposed governing board, network and/or independent, with the following information:
 - Summary of members' interests in and qualifications for serving on the school's board; and
 - Full resumes (including contact information).
2. Describe the governance structure and size, including any proposed committees, and the plan for satisfying all applicable statutory and authorizer requirements.

The Options Schools, Inc. (OSI) Board of Directors adopted Dr. John Carver's Policy Governance model for board leadership. Dr. Carver earned his Ph.D in Psychology from Emory University in Atlanta in 1968, has served in several leadership roles in manufacturing and non-profit, including CEO, has testified in front of several state legislatures and the U.S. Congress, and has written several books, monographs, and articles on board governance. The premise of Policy Governance is that the Board writes End Statements outlining policy initiatives: Organizational Values, Organizational Growth, Community Relations, Student Achievement, and Fiscal Management. In addition, the OSI Policy Governance document includes three Policy Types: Executive Limitations, Governance Process, and Board-President Linkage. To support Policy Governance and ensure the OSI Board meets all applicable statutory and authorizer requirements, the Board engages with the OSI attorney, Jessica L. Billingsley from Church Church Hittle and Antrim, to write board policy addendums. To ensure the President of OSI and their team are following the expectations of the Board communicated in Policy Governance, the President is required to give reports at the monthly board meetings to the OSI Board. As part of the Policy Governance philosophy, all committees are developed on an "AdHoc" or temporary basis. Committees are assigned specific tasks, and once those are completed, the committee is disbanded. Currently, OSI has two AdHoc

committees. The first is a Policy Governance Committee. This committee has been formed to review the Policy Governance document and bring recommendations for change to the OSI Board of Directors. The second is a Facility Committee. This committee has been formed to research the possibility of relocating the current Simon Youth Academy @ Options Noblesville to a new facility to support programming better. To ensure the committees are following the Board's expectations communicated during the AdHoc Committee's development, the Committee Chairman is required to give reports at monthly board meetings to the OSI Board. OSI Board Policy is to maintain a board of five to fifteen members. The ideal size of the OSI Board would be between nine and eleven members. When it is determined that an ad hoc committee is needed, the member size depends upon the task assigned. For example, the Facility Committee has seven members due to the task assigned, whereas the Policy Governance Committee has three members. The ideal size of the committee varies between three and seven members.

3. Explain how the governance structure and composition will help ensure that the school will be an educational and operational success, including how often the board will meet.

The Options Schools, Inc. (OSI) Board of Directors meets monthly except in June and December. These months are reserved for emergency issues only. The Board meets on the third Tuesday of each month with a starting time of 6:15 PM. With few exceptions, all meetings are held simultaneously in person and on Zoom. The philosophy of policy governance is to write end statements. They are comprehensive policy goals and policy types, which are the boundaries established by the President in their pursuit of those goals. Another philosophy of policy governance is that the OSI Board of Directors supervises the OSI President, who makes all board expectations and policies operational, and hires and supervises all OSI staff. The responsibility of the Board is to write the mission, vision, and policies for OSI. It is also the responsibility of the Board to establish reporting criteria from the OSI President based on the mission, vision, and policies that include financial, organizational, and academic data. The President and their team are responsible for executing the mission and vision of the Board, adhering to their policies, and reporting back to the Board on a monthly, quarterly, semi-annual, or annual basis. The OSI executive and leadership teams comply with this process when writing administrative policies, staff and student handbooks, and developing methods for operations. There is a well-developed, sustainable system of checks and balances within the OSI employee group and between the employee group and the OSI Board of Directors. This entire process helps ensure the school is an educational and operational success.

4. Identify how the board will define and evaluate the academic and operational success of the school.

The Options Schools, Inc. (OSI) Board of Directors uses many resources to inform them better, both internal and external, of the organization to define academic and operational success. The list of OSI Board resources used to define school success includes, but is not limited to, the Indiana State Code, Indiana Department of Education Policy, Indiana State Board of Education Policy, Indiana State Board of Accounts Policy, and the Education One Contract. The OSI Board then defines academic and operational success to the Options President using Policy Governance, Addendums to Policy Governance, and Board consensus at monthly board meetings. The OSI Board uses the expertise of relevant board members, the board consultant, Gordy Heminger, executive team members, and the school attorney, Jessica Billingsley, to ensure alignment of the external stakeholders' expectations to the OSI Policy Governance, board policy addendums, and operational documents.

Regarding the definition of student academic and operational success, in the Options Policy Governance document, the OSI board has directed the Options President accordingly:

Policy 1:1A: Organizational Values (Monitored Semiannually in November and May)

End Statements:

- 1. An environment will be created where the Vision of Options Charter Schools is exemplified, and the Core Values are demonstrated.*

Policy 1:1B: Organizational Growth (Monitored Semiannually in November and May)

End Statements

- 1. Options Charter Schools will experience positive growth.*
- 2. Options Charter Schools will benefit from the advantage that sustained, positive growth has on an organization.*

Policy 1:1C: Student Achievement (Monitored Semiannually in November and May)

End Statements:

- 1. Students will graduate and be prepared for the next phase of their life.*
- 2. Options Charter Schools will be able to demonstrate academic success.*

To evaluate the academic and operational success of the school, the OSI President offers monthly, quarterly, and annual feedback to the Board during monthly board meetings. Each month, the Board will hear reports on various topics, including treasurer reports with vouchers, school academic progress, and information, committee reports, Policy Governance reports per the calendar in the Policy Governance document, board minutes, the chairman's report, and an executive team report. The executive team report includes information about advocacy, authorizer, student enrollment, student academic performance, testing, longitudinal data, school operations report, a 30-day calendar of events, grants, etc. On a quarterly basis, the Board will receive updates to the Longitudinal Data Report, which includes an exhaustive review of student academic performance. At least once annually, the Board will hear reports or take action on board issues (candidates, resignations, etc.), board calendars, strategic plans, board professional development, board conflict of interest, annual school budgets, school calendars, contracts (leaders, staff, and facilities), authorizer issues requiring action, etc. Defining expectations requires alignment of all external and internal stakeholders and a constant feedback loop, in the form of monthly board reports, that allows the OSI Board of Directors to assess the success of the operational plan against their expectations.

- 5. Explain the procedure by which board members have been and will be selected. Describe strategies to ensure there will be active and effective representation of key stakeholders within the proposed community being served, including parents.*

The Options Schools, Inc. (OSI) Board Candidates are selected for the vetting process using two methods. The first selection method is by nominating a sitting board member. The second method is selection by the third-party consultant at Talbott Talent, Leah York. The OSI Board has engaged Talbott Talent better to develop board candidate talent identification and vetting processes. As part of the talent identification process, a review of the current board members and members who have recently left is completed to assist in identifying any talent deficiencies. This scope of talent includes discipline-area expertise (business, finance, school leadership, etc.) and board-specific expertise (prior board membership and board leadership experience). Once OSI Board Candidates are identified, the vetting process begins.

The entire process of vetting to selection includes six steps: (1) the team at Talbott reviews the candidate and their qualifications and makes recommendations to the OSI Board, (2) the OSI Board Chair, OSI President, and Consultant, Gordy Heminger, meet the board candidate and review their qualifications, (3) the candidate attends an OSI Board meeting to gauge their level of interest, (4) the candidate engages in a school background check, (5) the candidate attends an orientation session with Mr. Heminger, (6) the candidate attends a second board meeting where the Board will vote to admit the candidate as a member. At any time during this process, the candidate can withdraw, or the Board can choose to stop the candidate's recruitment. During the vetting process, clear expectations regarding the participation of OSI Board Members are communicated to the candidate. OSI endeavors to attract board members with various skills, experiences, and characteristics to represent the students appropriately. This includes recruiting board members who have had similar school experiences to those who attend OSI, former OSI students who have successfully moved into adult life, and parents of former students. At OSI, a diversity of perspectives is appreciated.

6. **Replication Schools:** If there will be both a network-level board and boards at each school, describe the organizational relationship between the boards, the legal status of each board, and the scope of authority of each. If each school will have an independent governing board but no network-level board, explain how the network will be governed and how decisions that affect the network as a whole will be made.

As stated earlier, Options Schools, Inc (OSI) exists under one charter agreement, a single school corporation (9325), and operates three separate state school numbers (2524, 2551, and 9329). The school operates independently without the assistance of an ESP or CMO. The OSI Board of Directors oversees all school operations. The Board also supervises the Options in Education Foundation (OIEF), a separate 501c3. The mission of OIEF is to support the operations of OSI.

7. **Replication Schools:** Explain how the interests of individual schools will be balanced with network interests and how key stakeholders will be represented.

Options Schools, Inc. is concerned about the well-being of every staff member, student, and family associated with the organization. When considering how the interests of individual schools will be balanced with the network (OSI central office), it is essential to remember that OSI is not a typical network organization. Most networks either hold multiple charters within Indiana or hold charters in multiple states. They are comprised of a parent board and multiple school boards competing against one another for resources or outcomes. OSI is comprised of a single charter and three school numbers. Our governance model empowers a single OSI Board of Directors to consider any issue, consult Policy Governance regarding the mission, treatment of staff, and treatment of students, and ensure that a decision provides balance for all stakeholders.

One example of how this process works is the OSI budget development. The budget development process begins annually in late February or early March, with the Vice President and CFO soliciting individual school and department budget requests and combining those with facility, staffing, and central office budget requests into one rough draft budget. The five executive team members then review the initial rough draft budget, prioritizing requests. Eventually, a cut line is established regarding which items are included and which items enter a holding pattern until additional funding is located or until next year's budget development cycle. During the initial rough draft budget review, school leaders and department directors are invited to join the executive team to share critical information or further advocate for requested funding.

Once the executive team finalizes a rough draft budget, it is presented to the OSI Board of Directors. The presentation occurs annually at the board meeting in April. The Vice President and CFO communicate to the Board regarding the process, any extenuating circumstances or critical information, and provide a thorough review of the rough draft budget. At the April meeting, the Board has the opportunity to comment or ask questions regarding any part of the process or rough draft budget. The issue is then tabled until the May OSI Board Meeting. During the monthly OSI Board meetings between April and May, the OSI Board has time to thoroughly review any aspect of the budget development process and the rough draft budget. They are invited to ask for any supporting documentation or to set up a meeting with the OSI President, Vice President, or CFO for comment or clarification. At the May meeting of the Board, there is a second opportunity for the OSI Board to comment or ask questions. The budget development process concludes at the May Board Meeting when the OSI Board votes to approve the annual budget.

Trying to balance the financial interests of key stakeholders is accomplished during a timely and painstaking process that takes more than three months to finalize. There is constant communication between the school and departmental leaders and the executive team and between the executive team and the OSI Board. The process outlined above is a time-tested process that has always resulted in the interests of individual schools and departments finding balance with the interests of the central office.

8. As **Attachment 9**, provide a completed and signed Board Member Notice of Disclosure for each proposed board member.
9. Describe the board's ethical standards and procedures for identifying and addressing conflicts of interest. Identify any existing relationships that could pose actual or perceived conflicts if the application is approved; discuss specific steps that the board will take to avoid any actual conflicts and to mitigate perceived conflicts.

The Options School, Inc. (OSI) Board has a code of conduct in Policy Governance (3.5). Members must avoid conflict of interest with respect to their fiduciary responsibility.

- A. *There will be no self-dealing or business by a member and the organization except when openness and appropriate competition are ensured.*
- B. *When the board is to decide upon an issue, about which a member has an unavoidable conflict of interest, that member shall absent himself without comment from not only the vote but also from the deliberation.*
- C. *Board members will not use their board position to obtain employment in the organization for themselves, family members, or close associates. Should a board member apply for employment, he must first resign from the board.*
- D. *Members will annually disclose their involvement with other organizations, vendors, or any other associations that might produce a conflict.*

OSI is required to disclose any OSI board conflicts of interest in their annual fiscal audits. In the FY23 audit there were no board members with any actual or perceived conflicts.

10. Provide, as **Attachment 10**, the board's proposed Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest policy.
11. If the current applicant team does not include an initial governing board, explain how and when the transition to the formal governing board will take place.

Options Schools, Inc. (OSI) has an existing governing board.

12. If this application is being submitted by an existing non-profit organization respond to the following:

- Will the existing non-profit board govern the new school, or has the school formed a new non-profit corporation governed by a separate board?

Options Schools, Inc. (OSI) existing board will govern Options Schools in this application.

- If the non-profit's current board will govern the school, what steps have been taken to transform its board membership, mission, and bylaws to assume its new duties? Describe the plan and timeline for completing the transition and orienting the board to its new duties.

Options Schools, Inc. (OSI) is an existing charter school corporation with existing governance and bylaws that will continue to be pursued and managed with the intent of cultivating the mission of OSI.

- If a new board has been formed, describe what, if anything, its ongoing relationship to the existing non-profit board will be.

No new board has been formed.

13. Describe plans for increasing the capacity of the governing board. The plan for training and development should include:

- Timetable;
- Specific topics to be addressed; and
- Requirements for participation.

If there will be a network-level board, identify any board development requirements relative to the organization's proposed growth and governance needs.

The Options Schools, Inc. (OSI) Board of Directors has a two-part plan for increasing the capacity of the Governing Board. The first part addresses deficiencies through improved board recruitment, vetting, and orientation. Currently, the recruitment, vetting, and orientation process is conducted in-house. For 22 years, that process offered the OSI Board good results. However, as the organization grows, the complexity of demands and the expanding geography of student enrollment motivated the Board to seek assistance from a third-party professional. The Board has contracted with Leah York at Talbott Talent to improve the quality of candidates. Now, the OSI Board can recruit candidates by better identifying discipline area expertise, prior board and board leadership experience, and candidates whose beliefs align with the school's vision and mission. In addition to improving the identification and vetting of Board candidates, the Board plans to improve the orientation process for successful candidates.

Similarly, OSI intends to increase the professional development offered to the OSI Board of Directors. Currently, the OSI Board engages in professional development activities annually. The OSI Chairman, Travis Carmean, consultant Gordy Heminger, and the President, Mike Gustin, work together to develop an agenda for professional development that the Board will attend annually in January. In January 2024, the Board's professional development agenda included: Critical Principles of Policy Governance.

1. Board Roles versus President Roles

2. *Policy Manual Review*
 - a. *Page 1 – Mission/Core Values*
 - i. *Consistent with Mission/Overview (April 2023)?*
 - b. *Page 4 – End Statements*
 - i. *Consistent/Aligned with Strategic Plan (2023)?*
 - c. *Page 5 – Executive Limitations*
 - i. *Add/Remove/Change/Bylaw Conflicts*
 - d. *Page 11 – Governance Process*
 - i. *Add/Remove/Change/Bylaw Conflicts*
 - e. *Page 19 – Board-President Linkage*
 - i. *Add/Remove/Change/Bylaw Conflicts*
 - f. *Page 23 – Agenda*
 - i. *Changes?*
 - g. *Page 24 – Board Member Directory*
 - i. *Accurate?*

The OSI Board is consistently reminded that all critical documents are in a Google folder labeled "Board Candidate/Member Resource Binder." The following is the table of contents for that folder:

1. *Table of Contents (This document)*
2. *Board & Executive Team Contact*
3. *Board Meeting Schedule*
4. *Policy Governance*
5. *Addendums to PG (In Google Drive, this item is a folder and is, therefore, at the top)*
6. *Bylaws*
7. *FAQ's*
8. *Strategic Plan*
9. *Organizational Chart*
10. *Organizations Structure (by Charter # & School #)*
11. *Minutes (prior year) (Provided by Shannon)*
12. *Sample of Board Voucher*
13. *Sample of Board Treasurer Report*
14. *Conflict of Interest*

The relative experience of the Board is reducing due to experienced board members coming to the end of their maximum allotted three three-year terms (terming out). Therefore, the OSI Chairman, consultant, and President are considering a plan to increase the number of professional development sessions from annual to semi-annual or quarterly. These internal professional development sessions are voluntary and augmented by authorizer-sponsored board training. The members of the OSI Board are provided links to the session(s) if they choose to attend. OSI does not track Board attendance at these events.

Advisory Bodies

Meets Standard Expectation

- Clear roles, duties, and composition of any advisory bodies/councils, and effective relationship to the school governing board and leadership.

1. Describe any advisory bodies or councils to be formed, including the roles and duties of that body.

No advisory bodies.

2. Describe the planned composition of the advisory body; the strategy for achieving that composition; the role of parents, students, and teachers (if applicable); and the reporting structure as it relates to the school's governing body and leadership.

No advisory bodies.

Grievance Process

Meets Standard Expectation

- Fair, accessible grievance process for parents and students.

1. Explain the process that the school will follow should a parent or student have an objection to a governing board policy or decision, administrative procedure, or practice at the school.

In the event of an objection to any policies, procedures, or practices, the concerned party should follow the Grievance Procedure below:

Complaints may be reported to a staff member, the Principal (Steve Bowers at Options Westfield 317-815-2098, Adam Barr at Options Noblesville 317-773-8659, Jessica Sunderman at Options Indiana North, Linda Cunningham at Options Indiana South), Chief Operations Officer (Michael Dunagan at Central Office 317-773-8659). Written complaints may also be filed at the Options Schools, Inc. (OSI) office at 18077 River Rd Suite 106, Noblesville, IN 46062, Noblesville 46062 (317-773-8659) or with the Chairman of the OSI Boards, Travis Carmean who may be reached through the OSI Office at 317-773-8659.

School Management Contracts

Meets Standard Expectation

- Compensation is clearly articulated and includes a detailed description of the management fee, as well as all pass-through expenses.
- Clear process for choosing the identified ESP/CMO with evidence of ESP/CMO success.
- Effective relationship between the school governing board and the ESP/CMO to support the mission, vision, and educational programming of the proposed school with assurance that organizers are structurally independent of ESP/CMO.
- Includes a term sheet and draft of proposed contract detailing roles and responsibilities of the school governing board, the school staff, and the service provider; scope of services and resources to be provided by the service provider; performance evaluation measures and timelines; detailed explanation of compensation to be paid to the provider; financial controls and oversight; methods of contract oversight and enforcement; investment disclosure; assurance of entitlement to data; and conditions for renewal and termination of the contract.

If the applicant does not intend to contract with an ESP or CMO, mark "Not Applicable" and move to the next section.

1. Describe the ESP/CMO founding year and current geographic footprint.

N/A

2. Explain how and why the ESP/CMO was selected and the due diligence conducted (including a list of other entities assessed during the diligence process, if any). Provide evidence of the ESP/CMO's success in serving student populations similar to the targeted populations, including demonstrated academic achievement as well as successful management of nonacademic school functions, if applicable.

N/A

3. Provide, as **Attachment 11**, the following:
 - Term sheet setting forth a proposed duration of the contract that aligns with the charter term; roles and responsibilities of the school governing board, the school staff, and the service provider; scope of services and resources to be provided by the service provider; performance evaluation measures and timelines; detailed explanation of compensation to be paid to the provider (both management fees and all pass-through expenses, such as for curriculum licensing or technology); financial controls and oversight; methods of contract oversight and enforcement; investment disclosure; assurance that the school and the authorizer are entitled to any data directly related to the operation or management of the school, such as financial data, enrollment data, demographic data, performance data, and student data, in the possession of the education service provider, but may not include any proprietary, intellectual property, or similarly protected data of the education service provider; and conditions for renewal and termination of the contract;
 - Draft of the proposed management contract detailing all the above limits; and
 - Evidence that the service provider is authorized to do business in Indiana.
4. Summarize the relationship between the school governing board and the ESP/CMO, specifying how the governing board will monitor and evaluate the performance of the provider, the internal controls that will guide the relationship, and how the governing board will ensure fulfillment of performance expectations. Provide assurance that the organizer will be structurally independent of the education service provider and shall set and approve school policies. The assurance must also provide that the terms of the service contract must be reached by the organizer and the education service provider through arms-length negotiations in which the organizer must be represented by legal counsel. The legal counsel may not also represent the education service provider.

N/A

5. Disclose and explain any existing or potential conflicts of interest between the school governing board and proposed provider or any affiliated business entities.

N/A

STAFFING

Staff Structure

Meets Standard Expectation

- Sensible five-year network staffing that will support high-quality replication at the scale proposed, while continuing success at existing schools *(if applicable)*.
- Sensible staffing rollout plan for the school model(s) aligned with the educational program and conducive to school success.
- Effective structure and strategies for managing the administration-staff relationship.
- Evidence that school leadership and management teams have the collective qualifications to implement the school design successfully, including capacities in areas such as school leadership, administration, and governance; curriculum, instruction, and assessment; performance management; and parent and community engagement.
- Evidence of the leader's experience to design, launch, and lead a school that effectively serves the target population, as well as evidence that the proposed leader is well qualified to implement the specific educational program being proposed.
- Appropriate responsibilities and qualifications of the school's leadership/management team (beyond the school leader).
- Sound timeline, criteria, and process for recruiting and hiring leadership team members *(if applicable)*.

1. Provide, as **Attachment 12**, a complete staffing chart for the school. The attachment should include the following:
 - Year 1 positions, as well as at full build out;
 - Administrative, instructional, and non-instructional personnel;
 - The number of classroom teachers, paraprofessionals, and specialty teachers;
 - Teacher-student ratio, as well as the ratio of total adults to students for the school; and
 - Operational and support staff.
2. Explain how the relationship between the school's network leadership (if applicable), senior administrative team, and the rest of the staff will be managed.

Options Schools, Inc. (OSI) Board of Directors manages only the Options President per Policy Governance. Furthermore, in Policy Governance, the Board delegates the power and responsibility to the OSI President to identify, recruit, and hire an OSI staff necessary to fulfill the OSI vision and mission. The OSI President established an Executive Team that is currently comprised of the OSI President, Vice President, Chief Financial Officer, Chief Academic Officer, and Chief Operations Officer to oversee every aspect of the OSI organization. Attachment 7 provides an overview of this structure and how the Executive Team manages the remaining OSI employee group to ensure vision and mission alignment.

Each team member is the direct supervisor of all schools and supports leadership for the organization. Through weekly Executive Team Meetings, team members provide input from their downlines in relationship to existing and ongoing issues. Following the Executive Team Meeting, each leader communicates with their respective downline to give clarity and answers to immediate issues. Monthly, the organization's leadership team meets to address norms, standards, operational updates, deadlines, and potential issues. OSI utilizes virtual and in-person meetings to stay connected with employees who live throughout the state.

3. Provide, as **Attachment 13**, the resume for the proposed school leader. If no candidate has been identified, provide as **Attachment 14** the job description or qualifications, and discuss the timeline, criteria, and recruiting and selection process for hiring the school leader.
4. Provide and discuss specific evidence that the proposed school leader demonstrates the capacity to design, launch,

and manage a high-performing charter school with the anticipated student population.

OSI has a leadership team to support each program. There are six leaders (bios on pages 9 and 10 of this application) in the OSI central office with various school experiences in governance, operations, academic development and implementations, and school finance. President Dr. Mike Gustin leads the central office leadership team (see resume in Attachment 13). To further support each program leader, there is an additional team of central office support personnel with experience and expertise in compliance, marketing, safety, technology, facilities, student enrollment, school registrar, and general administrative support. In addition, several leaders work across programs and schools, helping to integrate staff, student support, and instructional practices throughout OSI. The OSI program leaders are an integrated extension of a team focused on mission success.

Adam Barr has been the leader of Simon Youth Academy @ Options Noblesville for three years, previously led the school at the Hoosier Youth Challenge Academy, and was an assistant principal under Jacob Brandau at Noblesville for two years. Adam Barr has cultivated his leadership skills in the OSI mission. During the last two years of leadership, he has increased credit attainment, attendance, and graduation rates at Options Noblesville.

Linda Cunningham has been with OSI for 18 years and has been a principal for five years. She was instrumental in creating the digital learning model and has continued growing Options Indiana School in enrollment and graduation. Jessica Sunderman worked under Linda Cunningham for two years before taking over the North region of Options Indiana. She has advanced the use of data in analyzing and applying the new curriculum.

Steve Bowers has been with OSI for six years and has been principal at Options Westfield for one year. Steve Bowers worked under Mike Dunagan for four years, cultivating his leadership development with empathy and expectations for staff and students. All leaders are grounded in the OSI mission and have had strong guidance from current OSI administrators.

5. Describe the school leader's ties to and/or knowledge of the target community.

Dr. Mike Gustin began employment at Options Schools, Inc. (OSI) in 2008. Throughout his 16 years of employment, Dr. Gustin worked as the principal at the Options Noblesville location from 2008-2012. In the fall of 2012, Dr. Gustin was promoted to OSI President, where he developed multiple academic and social ties within Hamilton and surrounding counties. Dr. Gustin sits on the Hamilton, Boone, Madison County Special Services Cooperative, and the Hamilton County Superintendent group. Through these memberships and other events, he has built strong and positive relationships with all of the superintendents in Hamilton County and most of the superintendents in surrounding counties. Dr. Gustin has and continues to build a solid and positive relationship within the charter community in Indiana. In that capacity, Dr. Gustin was a member and board member/chair of the Indiana Public Charter School Leaders. He continues to be a member of the Indiana Charter School Network, which provides advocacy for OSI with the members of the State Board of Education and Indiana Legislators. The Indiana Charter School Networks also has a vast network of charter and voucher leaders in the state.

The experience, networking, and memberships have given Dr. Gustin the requisite ties to and knowledge of the target community. OSI is well served because Dr. Gustin can lead from a position of expertise, experience, and connections that benefit the mission and vision of OSI.

6. Describe the key roles of the school's leadership team, beyond the principal/head of school, and required qualifications for implementing the school design successfully.

Options Schools, Inc. (OSI) has a well-developed organizational chart demonstrating that no school, program, leader, or staff member is on an island. We adhere to a team approach. On pages 9-10 of this document are short bios of the executive team members that provide overall organizational leadership and support to each school, program, and leader. Dr. Mike Gustin, President; Jake Branau, Vice President; Jack Colwell, Chief Financial Officer; Karen Oliver, Chief Academic Officer; Mike Dunagan, Chief Operations Officer; and Gretchen Taylor, Lead Teacher Coach, combine their approximately 100 years of experience and talent to lead and support the organization. To provide further assistance, an additional 18 central office leaders and support personnel assist with the needs of the individual schools in areas such as registrar, compliance, safety, enrollment, marketing, facility, and HR/payroll.

In addition to the central office leadership and support team, all OSI schools have a leadership team that meets at least monthly to review school climate, culture, and staff and student support. Depending on the program, the school leadership team could consist of the Principal, Social Emotional Counselor, Academic Counselor, Engagement Specialist, Safety Specialist, and lead teacher.

Specifically, the lead teacher in each school supports their peers and provides essential insights to the building leader about how the staff is doing and what additional support may be needed. OSI schools each have a Senior Institute program as a capstone course. This program has a lead teacher who works with the program leader to execute this vital course of study. Options Westfield and SYA @ Options Noblesville have an evening program with a lead teacher managing the instructors supporting that program. Each of these lead positions involves staff members who are seeking leadership opportunities in the future and may also be in the process of acquiring their administrative license.

Staff Plans, Hiring, Management, and Evaluation

Meets Standard Expectation

- Compensation packages (salary and employment benefits), systems, and strategy that are likely to attract and retain strong staff.
- Recruitment and hiring strategy, criteria, timeline, and procedures that are likely to result in a strong staff that meet ESEA requirements for being "Highly Qualified" and are well suited to the school
- Plan for supporting, developing, and annually evaluating school leadership and teachers that is likely to produce and retain a successful staff.
- Sensible allocation of school vs. network responsibilities for staffing.
- Superintendent, school leader, teacher, and support staff evaluation tools that are likely to be effective.
- Effective planning for unsatisfactory leadership/teacher performance and turnover.

1. Provide, as **Attachment 15**, a personnel policy or an employee manual, if developed.
2. Explain the relationship that will exist between the school and its employees, including whether the employees will be at-will

and whether the school will use employment contracts. If the school(s) will use contracts, explain the nature and purpose of the contracts.

Options Schools, Inc. (OSI) seeks to help its employees feel supported in the school's mission of serving alternative education students. The employees receive an at-will, one-year contract to start every school year. These contracts help provide clear communication about the compensation and parameters of each employee's job. OSI seeks to provide compensation and job security based on the staff evaluation process.

3. Outline the proposed school's salary ranges and employment benefits (retirement and health care) for all employees, as well as any incentives or reward structures that may be part of the compensation system. Explain the school's strategy for retaining high-performing teachers.

Options Schools, Inc. (OSI) utilizes many compensation strategies to provide employee benefits. UnitedHealthcare's is OSI's healthcare provider and has three plan options, with OSI paying 80-85% of the premium. Employees can use The Difference Card to lower their deductible to \$500, \$1000, or \$1500. OSI pays the majority of the dental premium, and employees can choose to purchase a vision plan. OSI has a 1% match for the 403b retirement plan and pays the employer and employee portion of TRF and PERF. OSI offers multipliers and stipends to employees for various leadership roles like technology lead, Google certification, and 504 coordinators. In addition, OSI provides an all-staff bonus in December each year in association with the Teacher Appreciation Grant from the IDOE. If the employee contributes, OSI gives eight days of sick time every year with access to an ill bank.

OSI leadership regularly speaks to employees regarding OSI as a "family first" philosophy. The philosophy refers to two specific components. The first component is that the employee must prioritize the health and well being of themselves and their family. The second component is that the OSI leadership will endeavor to treat all staff as if they were family. This philosophy can be seen in some of the retention strategies discussed here. To continue to retain high-performing teachers, OSI engages in several strategies to reward teachers, such as a 403(b) retirement investment to accompany or supplant the Teacher Retirement Fund (TRF), offering bonuses to teachers with a rating of Highly Effective, offering all staff an annual holiday bonus, and offering all staff access to the OSI sick bank. OSI also continues to build leadership capacity, so high-performing teachers can be promoted as the corporation grows. To gauge the success of the OSI retention efforts, all current staff members who OSI will be employed during the next school year receive an intent to return form before the end of the current school year. (Table Inserted)

Certified Teaching Staff	
Certified	\$40,000 -\$70,000
Non-Certified	\$34,000- \$50,000
School Level Administration	
Director of Curriculum and Instruction	\$75,000-\$90,000
Director of Special Education/Student Services	\$75,000-\$90,000
Building Leader(Licensed)	\$80,000-\$95,000
Building Leader(Non-Licensed)	\$70,000-\$85,000
Assistant School Leaders and Program leaders	\$60,000-\$75,000
Director Level Administration	
Director of Maintenance	\$55,000-\$70,000
Director of Safety	\$55,000-\$70,000
Director of Marketing and Comm.	\$55,000-\$70,000
Director of Technology	\$55,000-\$70,000
Chief Level Administration	
Chief Financial Officer	\$90,000-\$110,000
Chief Operations Officer	\$90,000-\$110,000
Chief Academic Officer	\$90,000-\$110,000
President/Vice President	
President	Set by Board
Vice President	\$100,000-\$150,000

4. Describe the strategy, plans, and timeline for recruiting and hiring the teaching staff, including the school's plan for hiring "Highly Qualified" staff in accordance with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Explain other key selection criteria and any special considerations relevant to the school's design.

The process for recruiting and hiring the teaching staff has developed at Options Schools, Inc. over the past 22 years. Currently, OSI employs approximately 125 staff members to serve approximately 1250 students. In each of our schools and programs, a staff matrix exists where the employment of the current staff and the recruitment and hiring of new staff members adhere to the school or program philosophy. For example, in the ABA programs, OSI adheres to a three to six students-teacher ratio. As the enrollment in that ABA increases, the program leader will notify their superior and the Vice President. This notification initiates the recruitment and hiring process for a new staff member.

The recruitment process for new staff members will include solicitation of applications through the Department of Education's Nimble website, Indeed, and direct recruitment using internal and external stakeholder recommendations. Depending on individual circumstances, OSI will post a position for about two to four weeks. The supervisor of the posted position will convene an interview committee of approximately three staff members to interview approximately five

applicants from the candidate pool. The committee will make a recommendation to the supervisor regarding applicant ranking. The supervisor will work with the Vice President and the Human Resources Department to check references, complete an employee background check, verify licensing, and negotiate the initial contract. The final step of this process is repeated using the ranking list offered to the supervisor by the hiring committee until a candidate is successfully hired. The process starts over if the list is exhausted and no candidate is selected.

During the interview process, candidates are given information about the OSI mission, the specific program that is seeking a qualified candidate, and special considerations of the position. Once a successful candidate is selected, the orientation process will support the candidate in acclimating to the organization and specifically to the needs of the school or program. The OSI orientation program includes but is not limited to time spent with their immediate supervisor, the Director of Technology, the Director of Safety, and the Chief Academic Officer or OSI Lead Teacher Coach. The goal of employee orientation is that the staff members understand and can successfully complete all of their duties and responsibilities on the first day of employment.

OSI infrequently employs an individual who is not highly qualified using I.C. 20-24-6-5, which states that a charter school employs a minimum of 90% of staff as highly qualified. OSI uses this benefit sparingly and never in core subjects or special education. Regardless of their "Highly Qualified" status, OSI does expect a level of honesty and transparency from the candidate during the hiring process. If an applicant misleads the organization, there are consequences. The following is an excerpt from the OSI staff handbook:

Employment Applications

Options Charter Schools relies upon the accuracy of the information contained in the employment application, as well as the accuracy of other data presented throughout the hiring process and employment. Any misrepresentations, falsifications, or material omissions in any of this information or data may result in the exclusion of the individual from further consideration for employment or, if the person has been hired, termination.

5. Outline the school's procedures for hiring and dismissing school personnel, including conducting criminal background checks.

Options Schools, Inc. (OSI) uses the IDOE Nimble platform as well as Indeed to help find strong candidates. The hiring team usually consists of the supervisor and any employees who may work directly with the new hire. An interview is set up for the best three to six candidates. Upon review of the first round of interviews, a second interview may be scheduled with the supervisor to provide details and elaboration on areas of most interest. The hiring team will make a recommendation but the supervisor will have the final say on who is selected. Once the candidate is selected and notified an offer letter is extended. Upon acceptance of the offer letter, the HR specialist will start the new hire process outlined in Attachment 15.

Employment Applications

OSI relies upon the accuracy of the information contained in the employment application, as well as the accuracy of other data presented throughout the hiring process and employment. Any misrepresentations, falsifications, or material omissions in any of this information or data may result in the exclusion of the individual from further consideration for employment or, if the person has been hired, termination.

Background and Reference Checks

To ensure that individuals who join OSI are well qualified and to ensure that OSI maintains a safe and productive work environment, it is the policy to conduct pre-employment background checks on all applicants who accept an offer of employment. Background checks may include verification of any information on the applicant's resume or application form.

All offers of employment are conditional pending receipt of a background check report that is acceptable to OSI. All background checks are conducted in compliance with the Federal Fair Credit Reporting Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and state and federal privacy and anti-discrimination laws. Reports are kept confidential and are only viewed by individuals involved in the hiring process.

If the information obtained in a background check would lead OSI to deny employment, a copy of the report will be provided to the applicant, and the applicant will have the burden of proof if they wish to dispute the report's accuracy.

A Safe Visitor background check is required for anyone who visits the schools, including family members of the students. Background checks through the safe visitor site are good for three years at any school in the district. All other levels will need to be done annually.

Corrective Discipline

Every employee has the duty and the responsibility to be aware of and abide by existing rules and policies. Employees also have a responsibility to perform his/her duties to the best of his/her ability and to the standards as set forth in his/her job description or as otherwise established.

The purpose of this policy is to state the position of Options on administering equitable and consistent discipline for unsatisfactory conduct in the workplace. Options believes the best disciplinary measure is the one that does not have to be enforced and comes from good leadership and fair supervision at all employment levels.

Options strives to ensure fair treatment of all employees and in making certain that disciplinary actions are prompt, uniform, and impartial. The major purpose of any disciplinary action is to correct problems, prevent recurrence, and prepare the employee for satisfactory service in the future.

Types of discipline that may be used include:

- **Verbal Warning:** A supervisor verbally counsels an employee about an issue of concern, and a written record of the discussion is placed in the employee's file for future reference.
- **Written Warning / Letter of Concern:** Written warnings are placed in an employee's personnel file and may include the development of an improvement plan.
- **Suspension:** Suspensions may be with or without pay. Any behavior triggering a suspension from work will also require the staff member to be placed on an improvement plan with specific guidelines for improvement and consequences if the misconduct continues.
- **Demotion / Change of Responsibilities**
- **Termination of employment**

Options reserves the right to determine the appropriate level of discipline for any inappropriate conduct, including oral and written warnings, suspension with or without pay, demotion and termination. Discipline is not required to be administered in any particular order.

Employment Termination

Termination of employment is an inevitable part of personnel activity within any organization. Termination can occur for several reasons, many of which are routine.

- **Resignation:** Although we hope your employment with the Options Schools will be a mutually rewarding experience, we understand that varying circumstances cause employees to voluntarily resign employment.

Resigning employees are encouraged to provide a two-week notice, preferably in writing to facilitate a smooth transition out of the organization. Building principals may hold a resigning teacher to their contract for up to thirty (30) days following a resignation if that teacher is under contract and the resignation was received following August 15 of that school year (IC 20-28-7.5-8).

- **Retirement:** *Employees who wish to retire are required to notify their supervisor and Human Resources in writing at least one (1) month prior to the planned retirement date.*
- **Discharge:** *Employees of the Options Charter Schools are employed on an at-will basis, and Options retains the right to terminate an employee at any time.*
- **Layoff:** *Employees are terminated for non-disciplinary reasons.*

The separating employee must return all school property at the time of separation, including keys, computers, laptops and iPads. Failure to return items may result in deductions from the final paycheck.

6. Explain how the superintendent and/or school leader will be supported and developed. Describe who will be responsible for the evaluation of the superintendent and/or school leader each school year. Provide, in **Attachment 16**, any leadership evaluation tool that has been developed already.

The Options Schools, Inc. (OSI) President is evaluated annually by the school board per Policy Governance guidelines. The three-month process for the evaluation begins in March when the president completes a self-evaluation, the board individually completes an evaluation of the president, and one board member compiles all this individual data into one comprehensive president evaluation. At the April board meeting, the board goes into executive session to discuss the findings of the compiled president evaluation. Between the April and May board meetings, the OSI Board Chair meets with the OSI President to discuss the findings and communicate the board's goals for the following year and any contractual issues. The OSI Board accepts the OSI President's evaluation, goals, and contract edits at the May board meeting.

7. Explain how teachers and/or support staff will be supported and developed. Describe who will be responsible for the evaluation of teachers and/or support staff each school year. Provide, in **Attachment 17**, any teacher evaluation tool(s) that already exist for the school(s).

At Options Schools, Inc. (OSI), the OSI organization chart outlines the supervision of all OSI employees, including teachers and support staff. Each school leader will be responsible for evaluating their staff on a monthly or quarterly basis. Any support staff will be evaluated by their supervisor in the same fashion. The tools for these evaluations are in Attachment 17.

8. Explain how the school intends to handle unsatisfactory leadership and teacher performance, as well as leadership/teacher changes and turnover.

Options Schools, Inc (OSI) implements staff improvement plans for any employee who is receiving multiple twos or below (on a four-point scale) on the evaluation plan. This improvement plan has specific goals that need to be attained. If the goals are attained then the employee returns to normal evaluation. If the employee does not achieve the goals then the supervisor may recommend non-renewal of the contract for the next year. Employees may also be terminated for violations of the staff handbook and repeated letters of concern for specific issues. OSI continues to develop employees

who have leadership aspirations in the advent that a position becomes available due to the growth or termination of a leader.

Professional Development

Meets Standard Expectation

- Sensible allocation of school vs. network responsibilities for professional development, including demonstrated understanding of and preparation for professional development needs that are common to all schools in the network.
- Professional development standards, opportunities, leadership, and calendar/scheduling that effectively support the education program and are likely to maximize success in improving student achievement, including an induction program that will prepare teachers to deliver any unique or particularly challenging aspects of the educational program.

1. Discuss the core components of professional development and how these components will support effective implementation of the educational program.

Options Schools, Inc. (OSI) values professional development to support effective implementation of the educational program by enhancing the skills and knowledge of the staff along with job-embedded support through coaching cycles. During the 2022-2023 school year, Options evaluated the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats facing each school program in a SWOT analysis. In response to the SWOT analysis, three focused goals were prioritized for professional development:

Year 1 - Identify three foundational markers to develop sustainable mental health programs using a tiered approach for all students.

Year 2 Implement ways to operationalize procedures for student mental health intervention and prevention to promote improved student engagement as seen through student attendance and class performance.

Year 3 Implement Universal Design for Learning as the instructional framework.

Ongoing professional development initiatives are prioritized into three categories: explore, implement, and sustain.

Year	Explore	Implement	Sustain
2023-24	Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Mental health interventions	Unified Insights(UI) for leaders only Belong.Believe.Achieve. (BBA) TOGETHER (School expectations) Full-time Instructional Coach with Coaching Cycles	Schoology
2024-25	Teacher Evaluations Common Formative	UDL UI for teachers Mental Health Interventions	Schoology BBA Together

	Assessments (Performance Matters)	(AGAPE, CHRIS Center, Resiliency, Mindful Art, Yoga for Teens)	Coaching cycles
26-27	Advising curriculum New teacher mentor curriculum update	Teacher Evaluations Common Formative Assessment	Schoology BBA Together Coaching cycles UDL UI Mental Health Interventions

In addition to the state-required training and the professional development strategies detailed above, all staff receive training and certification in CPI, QPR, and ALICE procedures. Continuous professional development allows the staff to gain new skills and stay informed of current trends in education and pedagogy. Through its 22 years in operation, OSI has found that introducing and sustaining new initiatives through the explore, implement, and sustain model provides a path to effective educational program implementation.

2. Provide a schedule and explanation of professional development that will take place prior to school opening. Explain what will be covered during this induction period and how teachers will be prepared to deliver any unique or particularly challenging aspects of the curriculum and instructional methods.

Staff new to OSI attend two days of professional development before the start of the school year at the New to Options training, from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. each day. The Chief Academic Officer and the Instructional Coach lead the first day of this onboarding process. It involves an overview of charter schools, alternative education, and OSI Programs. In addition, time is spent discussing the alternative education students OSI serves, why students choose OSI, and OSI advising and Senior Institute programs. Then, the new staff meets with OSI leadership to discuss policy governance and other policies and procedures. The rest of the day is spent familiarizing the staff with the instructional platforms and technology they will use. The second day of New to Options training provides program-specific training by principals and programs.

OSI believes "teachers are most effective when empowered to innovate, create, and inspire" (Options Schools, 2023). In order to support teachers so they can excel in their roles, teachers are encouraged to utilize the resources provided by Edmentum as a foundational guide for their class curriculum. As teachers further develop their content and seek out additional resources that align with state standards, teachers can request specific required materials to enhance their lessons and support their students effectively.

In addition to the support that teachers new to OSI receive from the principal and other staff in each building, teachers also receive support from the Instructional Coach, ELL specialist, and other staff members who work across programs. In response to feedback that teachers needed additional support to navigate their first year at OSI, a mentor program has developed and continued to be formalized during the 22-year history of OSI. Each teacher new to OSI is provided a mentor teacher in their program who can assist them with navigating the daily expectations of teachers and teaching the alternative education students OSI serves. Mentors can provide support on the specifics of PowerSchool, Edmentum, and Schoology that OSI uses, in addition to guidance about forming relationships with students and classroom management.

References:

Options Schools. (2023). Options Schools Staff handbook.

<https://optionsschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Staff-Handbook-2023-2024.pdf>

3. Describe the expected number of days/hours for professional development throughout the school year, and explain how the school's calendar, daily schedule, and staffing structure accommodate this plan. Include time scheduled for common planning or collaboration and how such time will typically be used.

Beginning of the School Year

Before the start of each school year, the new and returning staff from programs spend two full days in professional development from 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM each day. The first day of the school year starts with all staff meeting together, which allows staff to focus on the mission and establish relationships with colleagues from other schools. The second day is spent working within their program to prepare for students' first school day.

Common Planning Time

All teachers have a common planning time for individual and collaborative planning with other school teachers. Teachers at the brick-and-mortar campuses have a common planning time every morning from 7:45 AM to 8:25 AM. Teachers at the ABA and virtual schools also have a common planning time around their students' schedules and needs.

Wednesday Professional Development

Every Wednesday during the school year, OSI has designated release time from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM for staff to develop professionally. During this time, the staff engages in professional development and discussion about the following topics:

- *The understanding of trauma, how it interrupts the learning process, and how to educate children who have experienced trauma*
- *Behavior expectations and interventions*
- *Quarterly discussions with students about their individualized service plans (ISPs)*
- *Technology training*
- *Specialized guest presentations on specific topics such as ELL strategies, resiliency, and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)*

Full-Day Professional Development

Throughout the school year, OSI has six full virtual days built into the school calendar for the staff to spend the entire day on professional development, from 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM. These days, they expand on the weekly professional

development and offer learning and collaboration opportunities between staff members from different programs, which would not happen otherwise.

Instructional Coaching

Instructional coaching supports teachers in implementing and sustaining knowledge transfer from professional learning to the classroom. Research shows that this transfer is increased through coaching by combining teachers' learning, application, and practice with support in a collaborative relationship (Kho et al., 2020). By providing teachers with individualized coaching cycles and support, the instructional coach works with teachers to improve their instruction to impact students' engagement and achievement.

Conference and Continuing Education

The OSI staff also has the opportunity to attend professional development through external conferences. OSI supports staff growth through conferences and/or continuing their education by seeking advanced degrees within their field of expertise or in related areas such as counseling or administration. OSI is proud that many leaders have grown through the ranks of OSI.

References:

Kho, S. H., Khemanuwong, T., & Ismail, S. a. M. M. (2020). Keeping Teachers Afloat with Instructional Coaching: Coaching Structure and Implementation. *The Qualitative Report*. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2020.4343>

PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Meets Standard Expectation

- Effective strategies for informing parents and the community about the school's development.
- Sound pre- and post-opening parent engagement plan, including family-school partnerships, that is welcoming and accessible to all parents.
- Community resources and partnerships that will benefit students and parents and that include a) description of the nature, purposes, terms, and scope of services of any such partnerships; and b) evidence of commitment from identified community partners.

1. Describe the role to date of any parents and community members involved in developing the proposed school. Include any opportunities parents and community members have had to provide feedback on the proposed school.

Options Schools, Inc. (OSI) started in 2002 with approximately 65 students in Hamilton County. Today, OSI serves more than 1,250 students in all 92 counties in Indiana. Regular feedback is integral to improvement, and OSI gathers it in numerous ways. During OSI's 22-year history, OSI has engaged and continues to engage with individual parents, parent groups, parents on committees, and parents and former students serving on the OSI Board of Directors. Also, OSI has recruited community members to serve in volunteer mentor positions, to serve as consultants to the OSI Board and leadership team, and to serve as members of the OSI Board of Directors.

A Climate and Culture Survey is provided to students, parents/guardians, and staff each year to gather feedback about OSI and its programs. Parents and guardians are encouraged to interact informally with the teachers and leadership through several means, including at our community events. Often, this works well for parents and guardians who have

had previous negative experiences with other school systems. Parents and guardians interact closely with their student's advising teacher, often every week. Parents and guardians regularly interact with subject area teachers, principals, and other school staff. Important information about school events and developments is communicated through the school website, social media, email, weekly newsletters, and Bright Arrow. When concerns arise, parents and guardians may meet with the principals, or issues may escalate to include members of the leadership team, Executive Team, or the President. In addition, parents and guardians may attend the Board meetings and comment publicly.

2. Describe what has been done to assess and build parent and community demand for the school.

When assessing demand for Options Schools, Inc. (OSI), OSI tracks the number of student applications submitted compared to past months and years and evaluates how the number of applications received has changed. OSI can also assess demand based on the attendance at campus open house events and the engagement from families through social media, website, email, and phone conversations about potential OSI enrollment.

An integral part of assessing demand at the building level is informing the community about OSI at every opportunity. Whether through continually updating social media channels to show what students are doing or sharing school information and event flyers with community organizations and leaders at other schools, constantly sharing information about OSI externally informs the public about OSI's approach to education and what makes the schools unique. OSI has seen an increased awareness in the community from people who have not yet inquired about enrollment but have seen the content OSI is sharing externally.

One of OSI's most significant assets is word-of-mouth marketing because the programs provide such a positive and impactful experience to OSI students and their families that they make sure to mention OSI whenever they hear of someone with a student struggling in their current school setting. As OSI has grown over the 22 years, the need for increased awareness of the school has also increased. Therefore, a full-time marketing director was added to the OSI staff, and an annual budgetary commitment of approximately \$150,000 was made to raise community awareness of OSI and its programs.

3. Explain the plan for building family-school partnerships that strengthen support for learning and encourage parental involvement. Describe any commitments or volunteer activities the school will seek from, offer to, or require of parents.

Fortunately for Options Schools, Inc. (OSI), parent and guardian involvement occurs from the first interaction with prospective students during the enrollment process. When program leaders meet with enrolling families, they inform them of the relationship-based approach of OSI, with staff remaining in touch with families through weekly emails, phone calls, and alert system messages. Small program sizes allow staff to stay in close contact with parents and guardians throughout the school year. The small class sizes and relationship-based approach maintain a welcoming school climate, making OSI a place students want to be. Through the OSI website and social media channels, OSI remains transparent with the community, parents, and guardians about issues and events occurring within OSI programs.

OSI prides itself on maintaining strong communication between campuses and households throughout the year, with staff

fostering positive relationships with students, parents, and guardians. As a small school district with a small student-to-teacher ratio, strong parent and community involvement has led to a successful word-of-mouth pipeline for recruiting and enrolling new students. Through attending and hosting events, OSI can connect with potential OSI families and stakeholders with the ability to inform others of OSI and how they serve students. OSI has emphasized hosting various campus events during the calendar year and attending multiple events to expand awareness and directly connect with people in the community, regardless of whether they provide a potential enrollment. Being accessible and transparent is very important to OSI.

OSI leaders and staff use email, weekly newsletters, and Bright Arrow to communicate important messages to parents and students. Parents and guardians of enrolled students are encouraged to maintain a parent portal in PowerSchool to review student grades and access their student's records. Parents and guardians are invited to bring in donations or volunteer at various school events such as the annual Thanksgiving student lunch, Halloween party, prom and school dances, winter fun festival, and spring student picnics. Parents are also invited to show their support for teachers annually during Teacher Appreciation Week.

4. Describe how the school is identifying partnerships and creating a climate that is inclusive of the anticipated populations served in order to promote parent involvement.

At the core of the OSI mission is service to students and families. In the past two decades, the OSI leadership team and staff have identified partnerships across a wide range of categories to improve the quality of services offered. Identification of quality partnerships begins with the end in mind. When OSI recognizes an area for improvement in services relative to ongoing or new student and family challenges, a decision is made to identify state or community partners to implement or improve the service.

One example of this is OSI's partnership with the Hamilton-Boone-Madison County Special Services Cooperative (HBM). OSI's special education services had room for improvement in specific areas of service such as blind/vision impaired, staff professional development, and special education legal support. In the fall of 2016, after multiple conversations and contract negotiations, OSI was given the opportunity to join HBM. Immediately, the quality of service to the special education population of students and their families improved. The increase in the scope and quality of special education services improved the climate for the special needs population because OSI was able to access resources, regardless of the location of the student or the scarcity of the resource. In the initial special education determination, annual case conferences, or when a case conference committee meeting was scheduled in due process parents are part of a team discussing initial or additional special education supports for their child instead of having to fight for access to resources that OSI may not have had access to prior to the partnership. Creating a positive experience for both students and parents promotes a positive relationship among all stakeholders.

A second example is partnering with the Hallowell Agency, a top Indiana lobbying firm. OSI struggled to have its voice heard in the Indiana State Legislature and with key state governing bodies such as the State Board of Education. As a result, legislation and rulemaking negatively impacted the OSI mission. In addition, decisions were being made regarding the quality of OSI service to students and families, often negatively impacting dollars flowing to the school to support

critical programming. Through OSI's partnership with Hallowell lobbyists, they have not only lobbied on behalf of the OSI mission, students, and families, but have also educated the OSI President and Vice President on how to effectively advocate for themselves. One example of how this partnership directly impacts the climate for our students and promotes parental involvement is a recent payment to OSI of \$750,000 in CSP dollars. The state office tasked with overseeing this money changed the rules for distribution without prior notice. OSI filed a complaint with the Administrative Law Judge who ruled in OSI's favor. There was still a challenge, however, to get the State Board of Education to agree and to secure the funds to pay OSI. The leaders at the Hallowell Agency assisted the OSI leaders and the school attorney by working with state bureaucrats to negotiate the details of that payment. A percentage of those dollars went to support the social-emotional programs that address challenges that our students are facing. Parents become a partner with school leaders and counselors in selecting which of these programs might better help their students.

These two examples offer one direct and one indirect challenge to the OSI mission that was resolved by creatively identifying partnerships that create and protect the school climate for students, parents, and guardians. In doing so, OSI is able to promote parental involvement in critical areas such as IEP accommodations and partner with the school lobbyist and leaders in state lobbying and advocacy.

5. Include, as **Attachment 18**, existing evidence of support from intended community partners, such as letters of intent/commitment, memoranda of understanding, and/or contracts.
6. Discuss the community resources that will be available to students and parents. Describe any partnerships the school(s) will have with community organizations, businesses, or other educational institutions. Specify the nature, purposes, terms, and scope of services of any such partnerships, including any fee-based or in-kind commitments from community organizations or individuals that will enrich student learning opportunities.

Below is a non-exhaustive list of the OSI partnerships that support the school mission.

- **Academic**

- **PowerSchool-** Student information system for OSI, hosting district data for reporting to IDOE. Yearly contract for multiple services for approx. \$80,000
- **Edmentum-** Yearly contract for multiple services for approx. \$31,000
- **Bright Arrow-** Mass communication system that communicates with PowerSchool to send communication to stakeholder groups. Yearly contract for multiple services for approx. \$1,500
- **Hamilton-Boone-Madison County Special Services Cooperative-** contracted special education cooperative. OSI pays HBM a flat rate fee of \$100,000 from our Special Education Part B fund. In our contract, we get a full range of special education services, including initial evaluations, re-evaluations, IEP services support, legal services, staff professional development, etc. In addition to services, the Options President holds a seat on the HBM Special Services Cooperative Board.
- **J. Everett Light-** Career Center in Washington Township that provides CTE pathway options for students. Fee is based on the number of students enrolled and varies depending upon the program enrolled.
- **The Pursuit Institute-** Hamilton County Career Center cooperative that provides CTE pathway options for students. Fee is based on the number of students enrolled and varies depending upon the program enrolled.

- **Food and Nutrition Services**

- **OIEF Food Pantry-** The Options in Education Foundation (OIEF) runs a food and clothing pantry that provides students and their families access to free food, clothing, and toiletries. This allows students and families to access necessary items when in need, so students can focus on academics.
- **Hamilton County Harvest Food Bank-** Works with local food pantries in Hamilton County to provide food and supplies for pantries to distribute to community members. The OIEF Food Pantry collects food from the food bank to distribute to OSI students and families. There is no cost to OSI.

- **Mental Health**

- **American Foundation for Suicide Prevention-** Focused on eliminating loss of life from suicide through prevention programs, education, and raising awareness for suicide research. There is no cost to OSI for resources from this organization. Options is one of many organizations sponsoring the 2024 Out of the Darkness Walk in Indianapolis.
- **988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline-** Provides 24/7 free, confidential support for those in distress along with prevention and crisis resources.
- **NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness)-** The nation's largest grassroots mental health organization that is dedicated to raising awareness and providing support and education to those dealing with mental illness. There is no cost to OSI to refer students and families to this organization.
- **SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration)-** SAMHSA works to promote mental health and prevent substance misuse by providing treatment and support for recovery. There is no cost to OSI to refer students and families to this organization.
- **Aspire Indiana Health-** Helps Hoosiers overcome physical and mental illness and improve their quality of life through "whole health" care regardless of socioeconomic status. There is no cost to OSI to refer students and families to this organization.
- **Choices Coordinated Care-** Helps youth, adults, and families facing behavioral and emotional challenges by connecting them with local resources to address their specific needs. There is no cost to OSI to refer students and families to this organization.
- **Brooke's Place-** Provides support groups, therapy, and education to children, teens, youth adults, and families experiencing grief. There is no cost to OSI to refer students and families to this organization.

- **Student Programming**

- **Agape Therapeutic Riding-** provides instruction for student's mental and physical wellness by teaching horsemanship along with a unique curriculum that addresses mindfulness. Yearly cost to OSI is \$7,000.
- **The Chris Center-** The Chris Center has several programs, including The PAWS Therapy Dog Program, the Alpaca Farm Experience, and a new art therapy program that was piloted at the OSI Westfield and Noblesville campuses during the 2023-2024 school year. Yearly cost to OSI is \$6,000.
- **Isha Warriors-** Isha Warriors provides both in-person and virtual yoga classes led by Alli Louthain who specializes in teaching yoga to youth and teens with a focus on supporting their mental and emotional health. Yearly cost to OSI is \$3,000.
- **Bongo Boy Music School-** Bongo Boy Music School provides rhythmic wellness drumming that focuses on rhythm and movement with benefits such as reducing stress and anxiety and promoting community and cooperation. Yearly cost to OSI is \$8,000.
- **Teach One to Lead One-** Teach One to Lead One is "a community mentoring program that offers hope to

all students, including those at risk, to live out their purpose and potential” and helps students improve attendance, attitude, and academics (Teach One to Lead One, 2024). Yearly cost to OSI is \$10,000.

- **iLead** iLead is a values based leadership curriculum based on leadership expert John Maxwell’s book *Sometimes You Win, Sometimes You Learn for Teens* that students facilitate. This content helps students understand the characteristics of a person who positively influences society (leader) and reinforces self-leadership skills and mindset. Yearly cost to OSI is \$2,000.

- **College and Career**

- **21st Century Scholars-** The 21st Century Scholarship is an opportunity for students to afford college in Indiana. The 21st Century Scholarship pays up to 100% of tuition at public colleges in Indiana and part of the tuition at private or independent colleges. OSI students who met program requirements in seventh or eight grade will be enrolled and then must maintain eligibility throughout high school to participate in the scholarship program.
- **Kuder Journey Career Explorer-**Kuder partners with school districts to provide educators with the tools they need to provide individualized college and career guidance for students while empowering districts to meet all state and district reporting mandates. OSI students utilize Kudmer’s Journey Career Explorer to help students identify career goals and support students as they work toward post-secondary life. There is no cost to OSI to use these tools.
- **The Arc Indiana-** Is a branch of a national organization that supports people with disabilities. The Arc Indiana supports OSI students with Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) to help prepare students for post secondary life with education and career planning and support in carrying out the plan. There is no cost to OSI for these services.

- **Community Assistance**

- **Find Help-** Helps connect people with services in their state and area including financial assistance, food pantries, medical care and other services at a free or reduced cost. There is no cost to OSI to refer students and families to this organization.
- **Look Up Indiana-** Provides mental and behavioral health resources, information, and providers to raise awareness and reduce stigma. There is no cost to OSI to refer students and families to this organization.
- **Help4HamiltonCounty-** A group of nonprofits dedicated to having a positive impact in Hamilton County who work together to serve as a resource to those who need help or assistance. There is no cost to OSI to refer students and families to this organization.

- **Advocacy**

- **The Hallowell Group-** This firm provides lobbying services for OSI. This is a contracted service that costs OSI \$48,000 per year. Hallowell supports the school mission through direct lobbying efforts and by educating the Options President and Vice President on how to effectively advocate for themselves.
- **The Indiana Charter School Network (ICSN)-** ICSN is a charter-focused lobbying and advocacy organization. This is a contracted service that costs OSI \$5,000 per year. This is a network organization that represents a high percentage of charter schools in Indiana. OSI belongs to this group to coordinate our lobbying and advocacy efforts. Often, ICSN will support OSI-specific initiatives.
- **One Zone of Hamilton County-** County-wide Chamber of Commerce for Hamilton County. The cost to belong to One Zone is \$5,000 per year. This organization gives the OSI leadership team access to

organizations throughout Hamilton that might be in a position to assist OSI in the pursuit of its mission. An example is the connection to Talbott Talent and Leah York who is supporting OSI in identifying and recruiting highly qualified and experienced board members.

- **Additional**

- **Options in Education Foundation (OIEF)**- OIEF was started in 2006 as a 501(c) non-profit organization. The only cost to OSI is one salary with benefits. The mission of OIEF is to support the mission of OSI and more broadly the Indiana Charter movement. The Options Schools, Inc. Board of Directors oversees all school and OIEF operations. OIEF specifically targets donations, grants, alumni outreach, community involvement and awareness, and objectives that give back to the OSI school community.
- **Family Promise** - Family Promise prevents and ends homelessness for families with children and helps them achieve sustainable independence through a community-based response. There is no cost to OSI to refer students and families to this organization.
- **Hamilton County Youth Assistance Program**- Hamilton County Youth Assistance serves as an early intervention advocate for youth ages 3-17 who are facing challenging life circumstances. We take a holistic approach to coordinate our community's vast array of talents, services and resources to help youth and empower parents and caregivers. OSI serves as a school option for families who are working with Youth Assistance Program. OSI also refers families and students who could benefit from Hamilton County Youth Assistance Program support. There is no cost to OSI to refer students and families to this organization.
- **PFLAG**- PFLAG works to create a caring, just, and affirming world for LGBTQ+ people and those who love them. PFLAG serves as a resource partner for OSI students and families who are in need of their support. There is no cost to OSI to refer students and families to this organization.
- **Prevail**- Prevail is dedicated to serving victims of crime and abuse in a confidential, supportive, non-judgmental environment that is meant to empower, educate and strengthen those we serve, Prevail works free of charge with OSI to provide information and presentations on victims of crime. Prevail is a partner that can be shared with OSI families and students who are in need of their services as well. There is no cost to OSI to refer students and families to this organization.
- **Indiana Family and Social Services Administration**- OSI works with the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration to connect students and families to supports provided by the department or the department partners. OSI also serves as a potential schooling option for families in need connecting with the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration. There is no cost to OSI.

FACILITIES

If the applicant is seeking an existing public school facility, complete Part A and Part B. If you intend to identify and operate in an independent facility, complete only Part B.

Part A: Existing Public Facilities (if applicable)

Meets Standard Expectation

- Complete and compelling response to the facilities needs assessment aligned with the educational program and anticipated student population.

1. Describe the basic facility requirements for accommodating the school plan, including number of classrooms, square footage per classroom, common areas, overall square footage, and amenities.

N/A

2. List your anticipated specialty classroom needs, including the number of each type and the number of students to be accommodated at one time. Specialty needs may include but are not limited to the following:
- Science labs, art room (with or without kiln), computer labs, library/media center, performance/dance room, auditorium, etc.

N/A

3. List your anticipated administrative/support space needs, including anticipated number of each. Administrative/support space needs may include but are not limited to the following:
- Main office, satellite office, workroom/copy room, supplies/storage, teacher work rooms, etc.

N/A

4. List which, if any, of the following are essential to fulfillment of the core athletic program:
- Gymnasium, locker rooms, weight rooms, field(s) (football, soccer, multipurpose), baseball/softball field

N/A

5. Identify any other significant facilities needs not already specified, including:
- Playground, large common space for assemblies and other large group meetings, etc.

N/A

6. Does the applicant have a specific desired location(s) from those being made available?

Yes No

If yes and the applicant has a specific facility under consideration, identify by current school name and/or district:

Address of Desired Location:

N/A

7. Is the applicant willing to share the facility with another school?

Yes No

8. Discuss contingency plans in the event you do not receive this facility.

N/A

Part B: Independent Facilities

Meets Standard Expectation

- Sound plan and timeline for identifying, financing, renovating, and ensuring code compliance for a facility that will meet the requirements of the educational program and anticipated student population.

1. If you currently hold a facility or have an MOU or other proof of intent to secure a specific facility, please provide proof of the commitment as **Attachment 19**.
2. Briefly describe the facility(ies) including location, size, and amenities. You may provide, as **Attachment 20**, up to 10 pages of supporting documents providing details about the facility(ies). Charter school facilities must comply with applicable state, local, and authorizer health and safety requirements. In addition, charter school applicants must be prepared to follow applicable city planning review procedures.

Options Schools, Inc. currently operates facilities at the following locations:

School locations:

- **Options Westfield-** 17721 Gunther Blvd Westfield, Indiana 46074. Approximately 15,000 square feet, one reception, 12 classrooms, teachers lounge, one student resource area, seven offices, and one gym/workout room.
- **Options Noblesville-** 9945 Cumberland Rd Noblesville, Indiana 46060. Approximately 12,000 square feet, one reception, 11 classrooms, one teacher lunch, one student resource area, nine offices, and one gym.
- **ABA@Fishers-** 10029 E. 126th St Fishers, Indiana 46038. Approximately 3,500 square feet, one reception, five classrooms, and four offices/small meeting spaces.
- **ABA@IBAA-** 114 W. Jackson St Kokomo, Indiana 46901. Approximately 7,000 square feet. Some of this is leased to IBAA. One reception, 10 classrooms, one teacher lounge, and three office/small meeting space.
- **ABA@Engaging Minds-** 114 E. Streeter Ave., Muncie, Indiana 47303. One classroom. Use of common space.

Administrative locations:

- **OSI Executive Suite-** 14701 Cumberland Rd. Suite 140, Noblesville, Indiana 46062. Approximately 2,600 square feet. Five offices, one large conference room (shared), one small conference room, and one small group space.
- **OSI Operational Suite-** 18077 River Road, Suite 106, Noblesville, Indiana 46062. Approximately 3,000 square feet. One reception area, eight offices, board room/large conference room, and one teacher lounge.

Attachment 20 includes the building layouts for Options Westfield, Options Noblesville, ABA@Fishers, and ABA@Kokomo. OSI did not include building layouts for the two administrative spaces or the Muncie location. The administrative spaces are nothing more than large squares with offices all around. At this time, the Engaging Minds space is only one classroom and would consist of one giant square. OSI completes the annual building inspection required by the county. These include topics such as fire and safety. In facilities that OSI leases, the building owner is required to complete these annual inspections. Copies of the paperwork for all required annual inspections are turned into the appropriate county officials. The safety and fire inspection report is required for the two facilities in Westfield and Noblesville. For the two buildings that are leased in Fishers and Kokomo, the OSI Director of Facilities coordinates with the building owners to complete the required building inspections.

3. If a current facility has not been secured, describe the process for identifying and securing the facility, including any brokers or consultants you are employing to navigate the real estate market, plans for renovations, timelines, financing, etc. Briefly describe the facility needed, including location, size, and amenities.

Options Schools, Inc, (OSI) has secured all the necessary facilities.

4. Describe the organization's capacity and experience in facilities acquisition and management, including managing build-out and/or renovations, as applicable.

The Options Schools, Inc. Board of Directors has several members with finance, commercial, and private property acquisition or management backgrounds. In addition, the leadership, such as the OSI President and Vice President, has a background in property and facility acquisition and construction. The OSI Chief Financial Officer is also experienced in property acquisition, management, and finance. The day-to-day management and operations of all brick-and-mortar sites are overseen by the OSI Director of Facilities and supported by the Assistant to the Facility Director, Director of Technology, Director of Safety, and the program leader. The following are short bios of the two facility personnel and the Directors of Technology and Safety who coordinate with our program leaders on facilities operations and management.

Darryl Gustin, Director of Facilities- *He has 42 years of experience in residential, commercial, and institutional construction and construction management. He has direct experience in construction and project management with projects at Guerin Catholic High School Noblesville, IN., Stonegate Early College H.S., Indianapolis, IN., OSI, Noblesville, IN. Darryl has on-site experience as a site superintendent for commercial projects such as Rue 21, Ollie's Bargain Outlets, and Angie's List offices on Washington Street in Indianapolis. He has also worked for residential home builders as a site construction superintendent.*

Don Stuart, Assistant to the Facility Director- *Works with the director of facilities on the daily operations of on-site maintenance in the schools. Don has a background in medical equipment repair. He has worked for Siemens and traveled in the United States and Canada, performing equipment repairs in hospitals. Don is very detail-oriented and an asset to OSI.*

Joseph Tewell Jr, Director of Technology- *Has over four years of experience in public education, including two years as Director of Technology and four years as an assistant and head wrestling coach for grades 6-12. He also earned a B.A. from IU and has over 20 years of leadership, management, and operations experience in the medical industry and the United States Marine Corps.*

Joe Hopper, Director of School Safety - *Served 12 years of active duty in the military, followed by another seven years in the Indiana Army National Guard. During that time, Mr. Hopper obtained six Military Operational Specialties, including service as Military Police. While in the Indiana Army National Guard, Mr. Hopper served as the Operations Sergeant for many quick-response crisis teams, including a global partnership between the 438th Chemical Extraction Response Force Package Unit, NATO, Slovakia, and Israel. During this stint, Mr. Hopper became certified as an ASSIT leader specializing in suicide prevention and recovery for Military veterans. Following this and working with the FEMA Region 5*

response team, Mr. Hopper joined the Options team in 2018, bringing a passion for safety and mental health welfare and many certificates in FEMA response, crowd control, and emergency management.

START UP & ONGOING OPERATIONS

Meets Standard Expectation

- Detailed start-up plan specifying tasks, timelines, and responsible individuals, which is aligned with sound Start-Up Budget.
- *(If the school will provide transportation)* Sound plan for student transportation, including both daily and special-event transportation.
- Sound plans for school and student safety and security, including security personnel, technology, equipment, and policies.
- Plan to secure comprehensive and adequate insurance coverage, including workers' compensation, liability, property, indemnity, directors and officers, automobile, and other.

1. Provide, as **Attachment 21**, a detailed start-up plan for the school/network, specifying tasks, timelines, and responsible individuals. This plan should align with the Start-Up (Year 0) Budget and Staffing Workbook, that will be included as Attachment 28.
2. If the school(s) will provide transportation, describe the transportation arrangements for prospective students. In addition to daily transportation needs, describe how the school plans to meet transportation needs for field trips and athletic events.

Options Schools, Inc. (OSI) does not provide transportation from home to school. Still, they own three activity buses transporting students between the schools and career technical opportunities, such as Ivy Tech and J Everett Light Vocational Center. OSI currently employs two bus drivers. For field trips and other outside events, if the three activity buses OSI owns cannot accommodate the number of students and staff, OSI contracts transportation services with an approved outside vendor.

3. Provide the school's plan for safety and security for students, the facility, and property. Explain the types of security personnel, technology, equipment, and policies that the school will employ.

OSI used the space in Attachment 21 for the OSI Safety Plans and Emergency Preparedness Plans. This decision was made because OSI is not a start-up school/network and has no additional data regarding tasks, time, and responsible individuals to place here. OSI employs a Director of Safety who oversees two safety specialists at the school buildings. OSI has electronically secured access to all exterior and interior doors within the buildings. In addition, OSI has an extensive camera system for each building serving students. Fire safety systems are installed in all student buildings and comply with all state regulations.

4. Provide, as **Attachment 22**, a list of the types of insurance coverage the school will secure, including a description of the levels of coverage. Types of insurance should include workers' compensation, liability to indemnify the school, its board, staff and teachers against tort claims, property, directors and officers, automobile, and other.

FINANCIAL PLAN

Meets Standard Expectation

- Draft financial procedures, policy, or other reasonable assurance that the operator will have sound systems, policies and processes for financial planning, accounting, purchasing, and payroll, including a description of how it will establish and maintain strong internal controls, ensure compliance with all financial reporting requirements, and conduct independent annual financial and administrative audits.
- Evidence that the school's leadership has a strong understanding of the appropriate delineation of roles and responsibilities among the administration and governing board regarding school finance.
- Evidence that the school will ensure financial transparency, including plans for public adoption of the school's budget and public dissemination of its annual audit and an annual report.
- Sound criteria and procedures for selecting contractors for any administrative services and the acquisition of liability insurance.
- Complete, realistic, and viable start-up and five-year operating budgets.
- Detailed budget narrative that clearly explains reasonable, well-supported revenue and cost assumptions, including grant/fundraising assumptions, including identifying the amount and sources of all anticipated funds, property, or other resources (noting which are secured vs. anticipated, and including evidence of firm commitments where applicable).
- Sound contingency plan to meet financial needs if anticipated revenues are not received or are lower than estimated.

1. Describe the systems, policies, and processes the network/school will use for financial planning, accounting, purchasing, and payroll, including a description of how it will establish and maintain strong internal controls and ensure compliance with all financial reporting requirements.

The Options Schools, Inc. (OSI) financial planning process is extensive, including active advocacy in the statehouse during every legislative cycle and throughout the year. The school leadership team has recently forged meaningful connections with key legislators and government staff, testified in education and other committees, and successfully influenced pro-charter legislation to improve funding flow to OSI and other charters. The OSI finance and leadership team also actively participates in many groups and organizations to network with peers and influencers, benchmark other schools' financial and management philosophies and processes, and gain financial and industry knowledge, including potential future changes. A few organizations with notable OSI membership and regular participation include the Indiana Association of School Business Officials (IASBO) workshops, conferences, regional and state level meetings, Indiana Charter School Network meetings and conferences, Indiana Leadership Forum, the Hamilton, Boone, Madison Co-Op meetings (The OSI President is a board member.), the Hamilton County Superintendents' monthly meetings, the Indiana Association of School Principals, One Zone and other chambers of commerce, and many more groups. In addition to the school board, OSI has an impressive network of outside advisors, including attorneys, CPAs, auditors, legislative consultants, grant writers, payroll and benefit consultants, insurance agents, bankers, and other school and business officials.

OSI follows a set of board-approved policies, procedures, and processes that have been in place for more than two decades and are reviewed continuously by OSI leadership and the school board on a defined schedule and revised as needed. Those policies are available for review at any time and comply with all rules and guidelines of governing authorities such as the IN DOE, SBOA, IRS, IN Department of Revenue, Generally Accepted Accounting Principles

(GAAP), etc., as it relates to financial planning, accounting, purchasing (state and federal guidelines), payroll, internal controls, and compliance in all areas of finance and accounting. Processes are continuously evaluated for improvements in effectiveness, compliance, and efficiency.

Annually, in February, the OSI executive team engages in strategic planning for the future. Various paths are considered, brainstormed, SWOT analyzed, and discussed during the planning process. Once the revised strategic plan is set, an 18-month implementation plan is developed, and budgets are constructed. Actionable items beyond 18 months are reviewed in the following strategic planning cycle. All advisors listed above and more are informed of this planning process.

OSI employs two accountants (CFO and Treasurer), a payroll specialist, and a human resources specialist who access portions of the accounting systems. Internal controls include separation of duties, dual sign-offs, and cloud-based backup and disaster recovery. The CFO, Treasurer, and Payroll Specialist are bonded and process 100% of expenditures within the approved budget. OSI's accounting systems include cash and accrual-based processes and systems that meet compliance and reporting requirements of the SBOA, IN DOE, IRS, GAAP, and other authorities.

Specifically, for cash basis and very detailed fund accounting by cost center, OSI uses Boyce School Financials (BSF) cloud-based software for compliance with the state chart of accounts for Form 9, 100R, voucher production, and other reports. All expenditures are processed through BSF, and all vouchers are dual-signed by the CFO and Treasurer. The school board approves all monthly vouchers at regular public meetings. The school board receives a monthly cash-based budget for actual statements for the school corporation.

Payroll is prepared in-house through BSF, verified, and dual-signed by the CFO and payroll specialist, paid by ACH through NACHA, and uploaded to the school's commercial banking portal. An electronic BSF employee portal provides paystubs, W2s, and other tax documents. Multi-factor authentication is used to access OSI's accounting systems.

For corporate-level accrual accounting and GAAP-based financial statements, OSI uses desktop-based SAGE 50 with cloud-based backups at least daily as changes are made. SAGE is only accessed by the CFO and Treasurer, with a contracted third-party CPA accessing our records on his system as needed via backup file only—accrual-based financial statements (balance sheet and income statement).

Purchasing is governed by a board-approved policy, as referenced in question two below. Purchases are made in compliance with the approved budget and follow state and federal guidelines. Beginning with the fiscal year 2025 (2024-2025 school year), OSI will deploy a purchasing portal, integrated directly with BSF, that uses the state-negotiated purchasing contract and approved vendors to aid compliance with federal debarment certification and E-Verify compliance. The portal will streamline accounting data entry, purchase orders, and expense approval processes. OSI still obtains multiple quotes for discretionary purchases between \$5000 and \$50,000

2. Describe the roles and responsibilities of the network/school's administration and governing board for school finances and distinguish between each.

The Governing Board (Board) approves the annual budget and interim expenses not included in the approved budget and sets the spending limit for the President. The Board monitors the financial situation of OSI by reviewing the annual audit

reports, annual and monthly financial statements (Balance Sheet, Income Statement, and Budget to Actual), credit card statements, and bank balances, and approves monthly expenditures at each Board meeting.

Policy Governance items 2.3 and 2.4 outline the guidelines in which OSI will expend money toward the mission. Please refer to these policies in Attachment 5. The Board has one member elected as Board Treasurer to interact with the President and CFO. The treasurer represents the Board on financial matters and works with the CFO to create a monthly Treasurer Report for the Board.

Administration is responsible for preparing annual budgets, maintaining accounting records, producing financial statements, and reporting financial information to the Board at each meeting. Administration manages the organization's cash flow and general financial business, including insurance, accounts payable, accounts receivable, payroll and benefits, tax, and financial reporting to local, state, and federal entities.

The OSI president is responsible for ensuring expenses align with the Board approved budget. If new expenditures exceed \$25,000, the President must get Board approval to proceed. If OSI is awarded new grants during a fiscal year, the Board shall be notified about how that new revenue will be expended per the grant guidelines.

3. Describe the process and procedure for conducting an annual audit of the financial and administrative operations of the network/school.

Options Schools Inc.'s (OSI) annual financial and compliance audits are conducted by CliftonLarsonAllen (CLA), which is contracted by authorizer Ball State University (BSU). OSI engages CLA in about May or June, and CLA opens an audit portal where all documentation requests are listed. Between the engagement date and the release of the final audit report, an exchange of documents and other communication occurs between OSI staff, the school board, and CLA. The CFO manages the internal flow of communication and documentation by assigning requests to OSI staff, reviewing documentation for submission, and answering inquiries from auditors. OSI continuously works with CLA to improve the timeline and quality of documentation for clarity and compliance. CLA conducts the audits in compliance with laws, rules, and guidelines of the SBOA, GAAP, IRS, and federal regulations. OSI completed its first single (federal) audit for fiscal year 2023. CLA noted that it was one of the best initial audits they had seen in Indiana, complimenting OSI on its documentation and compliance-focused processes. For at least the last four years working with CLA, OSI has had positive audit results with few minor comments.

Most charter school networks with multiple schools in a linear corporation-school model may have consolidated audits, where all the corporations are governed by a common board of directors, resulting in one audit report and one set of audited financial statements for the entire network. OSI also has a consolidated audit report and consolidated audited financial statements, but not because it has multiple schools (three school numbers). OSI is the first charter school under the recent Indiana legislative change that allows for a single fiscal agent (the corporation) to contain more than one school (school number).

OSI is the corporate fiscal agent for all three schools, operating precisely like a traditional school district. As such, an audit is conducted on the corporation as the fiscal agent, not on individual schools that are not fiscal agents. In the case

of OSI, the consolidated audit is a consolidation of the corporations governed by the same board of directors, including Options Schools, Inc. and the Options in Education Foundation, Inc. (OIEF).

The school corporation and the foundation are two separate and distinct entities. The foundation is the single member of both real estate holding companies, OCS Westfield, LLC and OCS Noblesville, LLC, which own the school buildings in Westfield and Noblesville, respectively. OSI leases space from the two LLCs and thus does not own any real estate or buildings. However, for audit purposes and due to the common board of directors, CLA has interpreted GAAP guidelines to require a consolidation of the financial statements of all four entities into one consolidated report and audited consolidated financial statements and disclosures. This creates a hybrid application of audit procedures for schools where OSI must comply with the rules set out by the SBOA, but the foundation does not.

For CLA to render an opinion on the material aspects of the consolidated report, only GAAP-compliant audit procedures are applied to the foundation to the extent necessary to ensure the issuance of a valid consolidated audit opinion. This consolidation process began with the 2020 fiscal year audit, the year CLA was contracted by BSU. So, some comments or findings on audit reports since 2020 are solely related to the foundation and LLCs and based only on GAAP guidelines, and are not comments or findings related to the operation of the school even though they appear on the official audit report of the school published with the SBOA. The result, while different from the way charter school audits are usually presented, is that the user can gain an even clearer picture of the overall health and support of OSI as its mission is supported by OIEF.

The OSI annual audit report, either by CLA or OSI, is provided to the board, the authorizer, banking partners, and state and federal grant authorities as requested. The report is also posted publicly by the State Board of Accounts.

4. Describe how the network/school will ensure financial transparency to the authorizer and the public, including the anticipated costs and criteria for selecting such services.

Options Schools, Inc. (OSI) strives to be as financially transparent as possible. As required by the State Board of Accounts (SBOA), OSI engages in an audit process annually. Currently, the auditor of OSI is selected and compensated by authorizer Ball State University. In the case where the authorizer does not select and compensate the auditor, OSI will select and compensate an auditor who is familiar with Indiana charter school law, the requirements of the Indiana DOE, IRS rules, federal single audit guidelines, audits to Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP), to the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB), and to the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) as appropriate. OSI would select an auditor who has a robust online client portal for the exchange of information, documentation, and communication and who works in partnership with the school to stay informed about upcoming changes in standards from any governing entity. The anticipated compensation for these audit services is anticipated to be between \$30,000 and \$50,000 annually depending on required services for any given year. OSI has always maintained great professional working relationships with all previous audit firms.

Financial transparency to the OSI authorizer is ensured through annual consolidated GAAP based audited financial statements and reports as well as periodic reporting as requested. All financial records and accounting systems of the school are available at any time for the authorizer to review. In the past, requests have been made for accrual based balance sheets and income statements, and cash basis budget to actual reports. OSI communicates openly with its

authorizer on financial matters as they arise and are considered by management and the school board..

Since the only Gateway reporting required of Indiana charter schools is the Annual Financial Report (which is basically a SEFA - Schedule of Expenditures of Federal Awards) and the 100R, primary public transparency reporting is accomplished through the SBOA posting of the annual audit report that includes the audited financial statements. The Form 9 is also filed bi-annually with the DOE, which includes all revenue, expense, and transfer data for the corporation and each school in the corporation. Monthly accrual based balance sheets and income statements, cash basis budget to actual reports, credit card statements, a monthly voucher listing all expenditures for approval, and a detailed treasurer's report are provided to the school board at each public board meeting. Notable portions of the treasurer's report to the board detailing expenditure totals, bank cash balances, and current budget to actual positions are read aloud in the public meeting. Proposed new grants and statuses of existing grant revenues are also reviewed in the open meeting. At any time the public can make requests for any financial information.

5. Describe any services to be contracted, such as business services, payroll, and auditing services, and include the anticipated costs and criteria for selecting such services.

Since Options Schools, Inc. (OSI) has been in business for 22 years, it has many contracted services related to financial management. However, a few of those services are listed here.

- *Cash basis accounting software is Boyce School Financials (BSF), a cloud-based platform. OSI owns the software but contracts annually with BSF for support and maintenance. Supported modules include fund accounting, payroll, personnel, Doculivity (employee access portal for pay stubs, W2s, and other tax forms), and SpendBridge integration (state contract procurement portal). Through this software, OSI completes payroll and accounting functions internally. Annual costs are about \$15,000. Boyce Systems was selected as a vendor nearly 20 years ago. It is still the best software service company in Indiana for managing fund accounting and reporting as it aligns with the state chart of accounts and reporting format requirements.*
- *Charles Madden CPA firm, specifically Danny Marsh CPA, has been an outside accounting consultant for OSI for about 15 years. Danny primarily prepares the organization's various tax returns, maintains depreciation and amortization schedules and prepaid expense schedules, consults on audit items as requested, and consults on general accounting topics as they arise in the course of business. Charles Madden receives between \$5,000 and \$20,000 per year, depending on the level of services requested. Over the last two years, fees have been reduced by two-thirds by moving most daily and monthly accounting data entry duties in-house.*
- *Indiana Charters provides advisory and grant writing services. Compensation works out to about seven percent of awarded competitive grant revenue. Selection was based on success in grant writing, or more accurately, lack of success, of vendors used in the past. Indiana Charters has been a critical factor in the success of our increased grant revenue over the last two years.*
- *Donovan CPAs have provided auditing services in the past and CliftonLarsonAllen (CLA) in the past four years. Under Ball State University as authorizer, OSI has no control over the selection of the firm that conducts the annual audits nor over the cost associated with the audits. Under a different authorizer, OSI anticipates autonomy in selecting an audit firm and has the ability to negotiate the fee. The expected cost average is around \$40,000.*
- *OSI has many other financial business services advising vendors for benefit services, including retirement account management, workers' compensation claims management, and health, dental, eye, and life policy*

management. A specific list of these vendors and costs can be obtained upon request at any time but is outside the scope of this question as it relates primarily to new start-up schools.

6. Submit, as **Attachment 23**, the Budget and Staffing Workbook. In developing the budget, please use the per-pupil revenue projections provided by the authorizer and ensure all tabs are completed.
7. Submit, as **Attachment 24**, a detailed narrative of the assumptions and revenue estimates, including but not limited to the basis for revenue projections, staffing levels, and costs. Specifically address the degree to which the school budget will rely on variable income (e.g., grants, donations, fundraising). Include the following in the narrative:
 - Per-Pupil Revenue
 - Anticipated Funding Sources: Indicate the amount and sources of funds, property or other resources expected to be available through banks, lending institutions, corporations, foundations, grants, etc. Note which are secured and which are anticipated, and include evidence of commitment for any funds on which the school's core operation depends.
 - Discuss the school's contingency plan to meet financial needs if anticipated revenues are not received or are lower than estimated.

Section V: Performance Evaluation Information

(Only Applicable for Network Schools)

Education One will base qualification decisions, in substantial part, on the organization's past performance when replicating a school model. Provide the following information about all schools operated by the organization and/or any ESP or CMO partner. Education One may request additional information from applicants at any time during the review process.

1. Submit the Historical Performance Workbook (provide the completed workbook as **Attachment 25**, and be sure to complete all sheets in the Workbook).
2. Select one of the consistently high-performing schools that the organization and/or ESP/CMO operates and discuss the school's academic performance. If possible, select a school with similar demographics to the targeted student population in the application.
 - Describe the primary causes to which you attribute the school's distinctive performance.

The Options Westfield Campus has outperformed the National Alternative Education Campus's four-year average graduation rate for six of the last seven years and the Indiana Alternative Education Campus for the last eight years. Credit attainment has steadily increased over the previous three school years, increasing by an average of five credits since the 2018-2019 school year. Students at Options Westfield earn an average of 13 credits per school year, putting students on pace to recover credits and on track to graduate with their four-year cohort. Enrollment increased from 117 in the 2019-2020 school year to 223 students in the 2022-23 school year. As a result, Options Schools, Inc. (OSI) created a cap for enrollment in certain grade levels at Options Westfield for the first time in the program's history.

Creating an environment supporting students who have yet to succeed in the traditional school setting is the primary reason for the increase in student credit attainment and ultimately graduating on time. OSI emphasizes building relationships with students and creating support that will allow students to work toward on-track graduation. The Options Westfield team has worked to support students who are struggling with mental health, which often impacts their attendance and connection to the school environment. Options Westfield adjusted the schedule during COVID-19 to a block schedule with four classes each quarter. Block scheduling increases the potential credits students can earn in a school year and decreases the number of courses students focus on simultaneously. Although the courses move quickly, the goal was to remove potential stressors for students to reduce potential anxiety triggers. While OSI had both a counselor and partnered mental health specialists in place to support students, they were often unable to sufficiently support every student who was struggling and asking for help. To meet the needs of the students, OSI increased mental health support, adding a full-time social-emotional counselor and expanded partnerships with other organizations. The mental health specialist began dog therapy in the 2021-2022 school year. As a result of the positive feedback from staff and students, Options Westfield started a partnership with the Chris Center to offer dog therapy sessions for students during the 2022-2023 school year. In addition, Options Westfield began a partnership with Agape Equine Therapy and Isha Warriors. During the 2024-2025 school year, Options Westfield will bring Bongo Boys Music School for rhythmic wellness drumming and introduce the Teach One to Lead One mentoring program to continue building more successful

partnerships with outside organizations. Some graduates are developing a family legacy with OSI by enrolling their siblings, family members, and children.

Due to the focus on community engagement before the opening of the new campus, enrollments increased at Options Westfield. The Options Westfield staff went into the community to meet with surrounding businesses and build positive relationships with new neighbors. To improve the program's visibility and highlight the support OSI offers students and families, the Options Westfield team hosted multiple events at the school building beginning the summer before the opening of the new campus. The hosting of events to increase visibility included the creation of the Annual Options Summerfest, Options 5k, and annual Options Middle School Winter FunFest. Options Westfield leadership also met with local faith-based groups and the Westfield Washington Schools to build positive and supportive relationships and provide them with information to recommend students who would benefit from the Options Westfield educational environment. As a result, the middle school program increased from less than 20 students to over 50 students. The high school program increased enrollment by more than 50 students.

- Identify any notable challenges that the school has overcome to achieve results.

Options Westfield, similar to all OSI programs, serves alternative education students who have yet to find success in the traditional school setting. Many students enter OSI behind their peers in credits earned or with no passing transfer grades. Sixty-six percent of all newly enrolled students at Options Westfield are credit-deficient. In the 2023-24 school year, 26 percent of new enrollments were in their junior or senior year. Seventy-two percent of the enrolling juniors and seniors were either credit deficient or out of cohort. When students enroll late into their high school career, graduating on time with their four-year cohort becomes more difficult. Of the students currently enrolled at Options Westfield, 94 percent of them enroll with one or more common risk factors that place them at risk of dropping out of school. In fact, 61 percent of the students enter with four risk factors for dropout.

Another factor impacting a student's on-time graduation is the number of schools attended. Gasper's (2012) study shows, "The dropout rate for youth who stay in the same high school is 8.1 percent. The dropout rate for youth who attend two high schools (one change) is over twice that rate—19.1 percent. The dropout rate for youth who attend three to five high schools is three times the dropout rate for youth who stay in the same school—between 25.9 and 29.5 percent" (Gasper et al., 2012). At Options Westfield, 67 percent of students have attended three or more school programs; even more alarming, 11 percent have attended five or more. In addition, seven percent of Options Westfield students enrolled after dropping out of school at least once. Another challenge that Options Westfield has faced is that forty percent of students qualify as special education students. In Indiana, special education students are five percent less likely to graduate than their peers in 2023 per IDOE (Doe, 2024).

In addition to serving a challenging population, Options Westfield relocated to a new campus before the 2021-2022 school year. After a tumultuous year of switching from in-person to virtual and back due to COVID-19, the Options Carmel campus was closed and relocated to Westfield. The new building is an additional 20 minutes north of the prior school location for families and is located in a community where OSI has not previously had a physical school space. Despite decreased enrollment during the transition out of Covid and the loss of several families due to the increased travel time,

the Options Westfield campus opened in the 2021-2022 school year with 163 students enrolled and offering middle school classes for grades 6 through 8 for just the second year.

References:

Doe.(2024, January 2). More Indiana Students are Graduating from High School. DOE.

<https://www.in.gov/doe/about/news/more-indiana-students-are-graduating-from-high-school/>

Gasper J, DeLuca S, Estacion A. Switching Schools: Reconsidering the Relationship Between School Mobility and High School Dropout. *Am Educ Res J.* 2012 Jun;49(3):487-519. doi: 10.3102/0002831211415250. PMID: 25554706; PMCID: PMC4279956.

- Explain the ways in which the school's success has informed or affected how other schools in the network or organization operate, including how the effective practice, structure, or strategy was identified and how it was implemented elsewhere.

Options Westfield students' success has greatly impacted all other OSI programs. With the success of the additional SEL supports, OSI added SEL counselors to the brick-and-mortar programs and further mental health professional support for the Options Indiana students so the existing counselors could focus more on supporting students in academic planning and getting on track for graduation. OSI increased the SEL partnerships offered at the Westfield Campus and replicated all the programming for the other brick-and-mortar locations, including art therapy groups, dog therapy, and equine therapy. The Yoga for Teens Isha Warriors was able to be shared both in-person and virtually. Students at all of the sites were able to participate in real-time at their school program or in their own homes. To better understand the student needs and support decision-making, OSI began to track SEL data through logs in PowerSchool during the 2023-2024 school year. The SEL counselors and safety specialists began an intentional data system to better understand students' actual needs and mental health needs. Over the course of seven months, Options Westfield and Noblesville logged 185 (42%) students who experienced at least one mental health incident during the school day, with some students experiencing as many as 34 incidents during that time.

In addition to the SEL supports that were enacted across the brick-and-mortar programs for students, OSI also moved all programs, including the virtual programs, to the four-quarter block schedule. Although this shortened the window of time students had to complete classes, it also decreased the number of courses students took at a time and set clear deadlines for the completion of courses for students. This schedule change increased accountability and structure for virtual students. As a result, the total credits earned by students has increased in all three schools with the district average increasing by four credits since the 2019-2020 school year.

As students continued to enroll credit deficient and parents commented that they wished that OSI had a middle school program to support their students earlier, OSI researched expanding the grade levels served. As a result, the Simon Youth Foundation at Options Noblesville began serving grades 6-8 in the 2015-16 school year. The Options Carmel campus began serving grades 6-8 in the 2020-2021 school year, serving less than 20 students. When the Options Westfield campus opened, the middle school programs were consolidated to offer more services for students in a single location. As a result, enrollment in the 9th-grade program has increased and added stability to the high school program.

The middle school program was expanded and will be replicated when a new building for the Simon Youth Foundation at Options Noblesville or other brick-and-mortar sites is constructed.

In order to identify successful strategies that could be implemented in other programs in OSI, program leaders complete a mid-year and an end-of-year longitudinal data sheet. The data collected focuses on the IDOE cohort progress, college credits and certifications, graduation and diploma data, attendance, and credit attainment. As part of this process, program leaders then identify practices or processes that went well during the school year and areas still in need of improvement. Leaders set goals for the next year based on these results. When a practice or process results in improvement, it is reviewed and shared with leadership teams. The teams then create a step-by-step plan to implement the identified practices or strategies in their program. A collaborative team is developed across programs to support the rollout of the initiative. The collaborative team meets regularly to report outcomes and discuss adjustments to the rollout plan. The team also defines the goal and data used to determine the success of the initiative.

3. Select one of the network's or organization's schools whose performance is relatively low or not satisfactory and discuss the school's academic performance. If possible, select a school with similar demographics to the targeted student population in the application.
 - Describe the primary causes to which you attribute the school's performance.

Options Indiana faces the challenge of supporting students seeking placement in an alternative virtual program across all 92 state counties. Many of these students have not found alternative school options in their local areas. For students who have been expelled and deemed ineligible to attend school for a period, Options Indiana provides a means to continue their education until they can return. The program also serves students who have struggled in traditional schools or other virtual school options, often being the last resort for those aiming to earn their high school diploma.

Credit Deficiency

Options Indiana intentionally enrolls credit-deficient students as part of the mission. Eighty-four percent of students enrolling at Options Indiana are credit deficient. Over 42 percent of students enrolling in Options Indiana are out of cohort at the time of enrollment. Out of cohort is defined by IDOE as not having enough credits to be on track toward graduation, determined by the student's current grade level. Another 42 percent of students are approaching the definition of an out-of-cohort student and are missing key core credits toward graduation. Forty-three percent of new enrollments in Options Indiana this school year are in their junior or senior year. This comprises over 58 percent of the overall junior-senior class. Forty-eight percent of the enrolled juniors and seniors are one or more years credit deficient compared to their assigned IDOE four-year cohort.

Student Risk Factors

Credit deficiency is not the only risk factor toward on-time graduation faced by students enrolling in Options Indiana. OSI also tracks 17 common risk factors among high school dropouts—four academic and thirteen life factors. The thirteen life factors are involvement in the juvenile justice system, substance abuse, homelessness or run away, poor school attendance, mental/emotional health challenges, physical health challenges, history of being bullied, being expelled from a previous school, chronic behavior resulting in school discipline, adjudicated parent, domestic violence in the family, or being a victim of abuse/neglect. Each single risk factor in itself can lead to a student not graduating. In Options Indiana,

98 percent of the students have at least one additional risk factor at the time of their enrollment, with 50 percent enrolling with four or more risk factors.

Student Mobility

Another factor impacting a student's on-time graduation is the number of schools attended. As mentioned, Gasper's (2012) study shows, "The dropout rate for youth who stay in the same high school is 8.1 percent. The dropout rate for youth who attend two high schools (one change) is over twice that rate—19.1 percent. The dropout rate for youth who attend three to five high schools is three times the dropout rate for youth who stay in the same school—between 25.9 and 29.5 percent" (Gasper et al., 2012). At Options Indiana, 23.6 percent of the enrolled students have a 19.1 percent chance of dropping out, and 76.4 percent have a 25.9 percent chance of dropping out. These facts are even more alarming when considering that some students attending Options Indiana have previously enrolled with five or more public schools (32%) or are re-enrolling in school after dropping out of high school (9%).

Comparative Graduation Rate

The Indiana's Alternative Education Campuses (IAEC) average graduation rate for 2021-22 was 29 percent (National Charter School Institute). Options Indiana's most recent four-year graduation rate was 28.8 percent. Options Indiana's graduation rate is on par with the state's alternative graduation rate for brick-and-mortar and virtual campuses combined. Furthermore, the National Alternative Education Campuses (NAEC) average was 50 percent. Options Westfield and the Simon Youth Academy at Options Noblesville, the brick-and-mortar campuses, had the most recent 4-year graduation rates at 56 percent. This means that the OSI brick-and-mortar campuses are outperforming the national average for graduation of all alternative campuses. Options Indiana has already moved its graduation rate up from 23% three years ago to nearly 29% last year. The 5-year graduation rate has increased by five and eight percentage points for each of the prior graduation cohorts. It should also be noted that Options Indiana is capturing additional graduates in the 5th- and 6th-year cohorts, increasing the graduation rate by as much as 17 percentage points. OSI believes that with continued academic and support measures, Options Indiana can eventually approach the national combined average graduation rate of 50%.

College and Career

Over the last three years, Options Indiana has increased its student attendance rate from 76.54 percent to 83 percent. The average attendance rate for the Alternative Education Campus from the 2021-2022 school year was 77 percent. Due to the continued growth of Options Indiana, OSI has been able to increase the opportunities for students over the last three years. In addition, Options Indiana students have also increased their college credits and certifications in the previous three school years. More Options Indiana students have taken advantage of the opportunities to take courses and earn college credits through partnerships with Ivy Tech, KLR Medical Certification Training School, and local career centers across Indiana. These opportunities are in addition to the career pathway courses that are offered, which have been expanded each of the last three years from three to five pathways.

The data sets provided show that Options Indiana enrolls students who are even more challenging than most brick-and-mortar alternative schools. In only the third school year, Options Indiana is already on par with the IAEC four-year graduation rate. The Options Indiana graduation rate has steadily increased over the three years. When the additional 5th and 6th year graduates are included in the data, Options Indiana is already approaching the NAEC graduation rate of 50 percent. An increase in enrollment to Options Indiana will allow additional students to achieve

graduation and additional resources to further increase Options Indiana's graduation rate and post-secondary and career opportunities.

References:

Gasper J, DeLuca S, Estacion A. Switching Schools: Reconsidering the Relationship Between School Mobility and High School Dropout. Am Educ Res J. 2012 Jun;49(3):487-519. doi: 10.3102/0002831211415250. PMID: 25554706; PMCID: PMC4279956.

- Explain the specific strategies that are being employed to improve performance.

As an alternative school, some students enrolling with OSI expect not to graduate in the traditional four-year window. OSI allows students to remain enrolled and enroll after their fourth year of high school, supporting those students until they meet graduation requirements. The design of the school schedule allows students to earn up to 20 credits in a school year. In addition, summer school is offered to students to allow additional opportunities to earn credits that students lack. The schedule will enable students who are credit deficient the chance to catch up and graduate with their Indiana Department of Education assigned cohort and improve the graduate four-year cohort rate.

Each student at OSI has an individualized service plan for academic, behavioral, or social-emotional goals designed to support students toward graduation. Students check in regularly with their advisor to monitor progress on those goals and their progress on their overall grades and credit attainment. Each campus offers a counselor who can support students academically and emotionally. Strong relationships between students and staff are vital to supporting OSI students. The advisor and counselor are just a few adults who work to forge strong relationships with students. Sometimes, staff have to leverage those relationships to help students meet their goals when they face a tough challenge.

Options Indiana provides synchronous and asynchronous learning opportunities for students. Several teachers offer a weekly rotation of in-person support sessions for students to receive face-to-face help from teachers in different subject areas. OSI provides intensive, individualized support to students who have fallen off track and face significant challenges to success. Students identified by teachers and engagement specialists who must progress toward passing their classes and graduation receive increased support, including future mandatory virtual help sessions each week.

In addition to these strategies, Options Indiana is enhancing wraparound support services to provide comprehensive student assistance. Options Indiana is actively working to increase work-based learning and apprenticeship opportunities to keep students engaged and to assist students in making postgraduate enrollment, employment, or enlistment decisions.

- Identify how you know when performance is satisfactory. Include the expectations for adequate performance in terms of levels and timing.

The overall measurement of the success of a federal high school program is the four-year graduation cohort rate. The improvement in attendance, credit attainment, and student wraparound support will ultimately impact the graduation rate. Therefore, the success of the initiatives will be measured by the improvement of the graduation rate compared to similar school populations. Options Indiana's graduation rate is already equal to the Indiana Alternative Education Campuses average. However, to be on par with the National Alternative Education Campuses' average of 50 percent for the

four-year graduation rate, a seven percent annual increase over the next three years will be required to demonstrate adequate performance.

4. For all schools operating in the state of Indiana, provide as **Attachment 26** (a) the last three years of audited financial statements for the school(s) and (b) the most recent internal financial statements, including balance sheets and income statements for the organization and any related business entities. Be sure that the school level, ESP/CMO level, and the overall operations are distinctly represented.
5. For the organization as a whole and any related business entities, provide the following as **Attachment 27**: (a) the last three years of audited financial statements and management letters; and (b) the most recent internal financial statements including balance sheets and income statements. Be sure that the ESP/CMO level and the overall operations are distinctly represented.
6. List any contracts with charter schools that have been terminated by either the organization or the school, including the reason(s) for such termination and whether the termination was for "material breach."

N/A

7. List any and all charter revocations, non-renewals, shortened or conditional renewals, or withdrawals/non-openings of schools operated by the organization and explain.

Charter Schools- Noblesville (9640) charter agreement to combine the OSI services under one charter, Options Schools, Inc. (formerly Options Charter Schools- Carmel 9325). This transition was a planned event between the Ball State Office of Charter Schools leadership and the OSI Board and leadership team. This significant shift in the OSI organizational structure gave the OSI Board and leadership team more flexibility when addressing equity issues, developing the organization's budget, and creating financial efficiencies through economies of scale. There was never a time or incident that necessitated surrendering the 9640 charter agreement for any financial, governance, or organizational shortcoming. It should also be noted that 9640 was never in an "improvement" status with the authorizer.

8. Explain any performance deficiency or compliance violations that have led to formal authorizer intervention with any school operated by the organization in the last three years, and how such deficiencies or violations were resolved.

In the 22 years of operation, Options Schools, Inc. has never had any deficiencies or compliance violations that led to formal authorizer intervention.

9. Identify any current or past litigation, including arbitration proceedings, by the school, that has involved the organization or any charter schools it operates. Provide, as **Attachment 28**, a summary of the following information: (a) the demand, (b) any response to the demand, and (c) the results of the arbitration or litigation.

Options Schools, Inc. has had two significant issues with litigation. The State Board of Education (SBOE) was the respondent in both instances. The first was regarding OSI's grade under Indiana's A-F Grading System, and the second was a withholding of a CSP payment to the organization. The brief details are below; the full details can be found in Attachment 28.

1. *Null grade- OSI filed a petition against the State Board of Education on September 18, 2020. The petition stated that because OSI served a student clientele consisting primarily of developmental, intellectual, or behavioral challenges, the organization should be granted a "null" grade for the 2019-2020 school year. The evidentiary hearing was on January 8, 2021. On March 15, 2021, the ALJ ruling stated that the OSI accountability category should be assigned a "null" grade for the 2019-2020 school year. On April 14, 2021, the SBOE issued a Final Order adopting the recommendation of the ALJ. Although the specific ALJ recommendation and SBOE Final Order referenced only the 2019-2020 school year, OSI has remained in a "null" status.*
2. *CSP Funding- OSI filed a petition against the State Board of Education on November 29, 2021. The petition stated that after OSI combined under one charter in July 2020, the Department of Education, handling rules for the distribution of the CSP funds, changed the rules for distribution without prior notice. OSI was adversely affected by a reduction in anticipated funding by approximately \$363,000. The SBOE filed a Motion for Summary Judgement on February 28, 2022. OSI filed a Response in Opposition to the Respondent's Motion of Summary Judgement on April 6, 2022. Oral arguments were made on April 20, 2022. The ALJ granted OSI Motion for Summary Judgment on July 5, 2022. On October 22, 2022, the SBOE issued a Final Order adopting the recommendation of the ALJ. The result was that the CSP funds were restored in full to OSI.*

CHARTER ACTIVATION AND/OR EXPANSION

Meets Standard Expectation

- Individual and collective qualifications for implementing the Operations Plan successfully, including capacity in areas such as staffing, professional development, performance management, school start-up, general operations, and facilities management.
- *(If proposing an independent facility)* Demonstrated experience in facilities acquisition and management, including managing build-out and/or renovations.

1. **Replication Schools:** Provide an implementation schedule, as **Attachment 29**, that explains the strategy and targets the organization will meet, in order to evidence capacity for expansion.