



# Charter School Application

Education One at Trine University  
1 University Ave.  
Angola, IN 46703

[www.education1.org](http://www.education1.org)

## Application Introduction and Specifications

A charter school is a public school that operates under a contract, known as a charter, between the school's governing board (or organizer) and an approved charter school authorizer. Charter schools are designed to offer high-quality, innovative educational options that cater to the diverse needs of students and families in the communities they serve.

Education One at Trine University has developed a rigorous, phased application process to ensure that only qualified and mission-aligned applicants are invited to move forward. Submission of a full charter school application is by invitation only, following an initial evaluation of the applicant's Letter of Intent, submission of an Initial Proposal, and participation in a Proposal Pitch. While Education One operates on an open application cycle, recommended submission timelines are outlined to support planning and ensure a strong school launch. It is recommended that an application be submitted 12-15 months prior to the intended start date of school.

The application is designed to elicit clear, concise information to support a comprehensive and equitable review process. The Education One Application Review Team evaluates each submission using clearly defined criteria aligned to national quality standards. Education One reserves the right to reject incomplete or non-compliant applications. All official communication will be directed to the authorized representatives identified by the applicant group.

Education One is governed by its own Board of Directors, independent from Trine University. Final authorization decisions are made by the Education One Board, based on a formal recommendation from the Executive Director. Education One's application and review process is informed by national best practices and quality authorizing standards outlined by the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA). For more information, visit [www.qualitycharters.org](http://www.qualitycharters.org).

### Application Specification 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 50 pages.
- For Application Attachments that require a specified template, ensure all pages of the document are completed.

## Notice of Disclosure

All information submitted as part of the charter school application process, including financial documentation, is subject to disclosure under the Indiana Access to Public Records Act (IC § 5-14-3). This includes potential disclosure to the public and media.

If an applicant believes that certain portions of the application qualify for exemption under the Act, the applicant must obtain an advisory opinion from the Indiana Public Access Counselor before submitting any materials. If the Public Access Counselor supports the applicant's position, any information deemed confidential must be:

1. Clearly marked as confidential within the application;
2. Accompanied by a written statement citing the specific exemption(s) under the Act; and
3. Accompanied by the Public Access Counselor's written opinion supporting the exemption claim.

If this process is not followed, all information submitted will be considered subject to public disclosure unless Education One independently determines that specific content must be withheld under the Public Records Act. By submitting an application, the applicant and its representatives, employees, and agents acknowledge that:

- All application materials may be reviewed or copied by the public.
- Education One, Trine University, the Indiana Department of Education, and any associated officials, employees, or agents shall not be held liable for any such disclosures; and
- The applicant waives any rights to legal recourse or claims arising from the release of application materials in accordance with the Public Records Act.

## Application Attachments

Education One utilizes a shared drive system to organize each applicant's submission, including all required application materials and attachments as outlined in the table below. Each applicant group will be provided with access to a secure shared folder that contains all necessary templates and resources to complete the application.

Within the shared folder, a subfolder titled "Application Attachments" will be used to store all required attachments. Please follow these guidelines for uploading:

- Each required attachment should be saved as a single PDF document.
- Name each file using the format: *[School Name] – Attachment [Number]* (e.g., "Example Charter School – Attachment 1").
- Upload all documents to the "Application Attachments" folder within the shared drive.

Once uploaded, applicants must link each attachment to the corresponding row in the table below by generating a shareable view-only link. Ensure that link access is set to allow anyone with the link to view the document. Add a space after each pasted link in the table to activate it for reviewers.

Failure to follow these formatting and upload instructions may result in delayed review of your application materials. If you experience technical issues with the shared drive system or have questions about the file naming or linking process, please contact Education One staff for assistance.

Application Attachment Table		
Attachment	Description	Link
Attachment 1	<b>Organizational Charts for Governing, Managing, &amp; Staffing</b> <i>Submit an organization chart that shows school governance, management, and staffing structure for Year 1 and at full build-out.</i>	<a href="#">RSI-Attachment1</a>
Attachment 2	<b>Planned Curriculum</b> <i>Provide a sample course scope and sequence for one subject for one grade level for each division (elementary, middle, high) the school will serve.</i>	<a href="#">RSI-Attachment 2 - MS</a>
Attachment 3	<b>Enrollment Policy</b> <i>Provide the school's proposed enrollment policy. The policy should include a plan for compliance with any applicable desegregation order.</i>	<a href="#">RSI-Attachment 3</a>
Attachment 4	<b>Proposed School Calendar</b> <i>Provide the proposed school calendar for the first year of operation, including the number of days/hours of instruction. Instructional calendar guidance from the Indiana Department of Education can be found <a href="#">here</a>.</i>	<a href="#">RSI-Attachment-4</a>
Attachment 5	<b>A Description of Staff Responsibilities</b> <i>Provide a description of the major staffing positions that make up the school's structure (e.g., principal, instructional coach, teacher), including the core responsibilities of each role.</i>	<a href="#">RSI-Attachment 5</a>
Attachment 6	<b>Proof of Secured Facility</b> <i>Provide proof of commitment for the facility.</i>	<a href="#">RSI-Attachment 6</a>
Attachment 7	<b>Completed Budget and Staffing Workbook</b> <i>Use the workbook provided by Education One.</i>	<a href="#">RSI-Attachment 7</a>
Attachment 8	<b>Budget Narrative</b> <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>	<a href="#">RSI-Attachment 8</a>
Attachment 9	<b>Discipline Policy</b> <i>Provide the school's proposed discipline policy.</i>	<a href="#">RSI-Attachment 9</a>
Attachment 10	<b>Start-up Plan/Timeline</b>	<a href="#">RSI-Attachment 10</a>

	<i>Provide a detailed start-up plan for the school, specifying tasks, timelines, and responsible individuals. Include when the charter school is expected to begin school operations and have students attending.</i>	
Attachment 11	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Non-Profit Status Proof/Board Policies</b></p> <i>Submit Articles of Incorporation, proof of non-profit status and tax exempt status (or copies of filings). Attach all existing organizational founding documents, approved board policies or resolutions, and a status update on policies the organization plans to adopt relating to school governance before opening</i>	<a href="#">RSI- Attachment 11</a>
Attachment 12	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Signed Statement of Assurances</b></p> <i>Submit one completed and signed Statement of Assurances on behalf of the board. Use the template provided by Education One.</i>	<a href="#">RSI- Attachment 12</a>
Attachment 13	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>School's Founding Team, Leadership Team, and Governing Board</b></p> <i>List the members of the school's founding team, proposed leadership team, and governing board. Include full resumes that contain contact information for each individual listed.</i>	<a href="#">RSI- Attachment 13</a>
Attachment 14	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Board Member Notice of Disclosure</b></p> <i>Submit completed and signed information sheets for each board member. Use the template provided by Education One.</i>	<a href="#">RSI- Attachment 14</a>
Attachment 15	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Board Code of Ethics &amp; Conflict of Interest</b></p> <i>Provide the board's proposed Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest policy.</i>	<a href="#">Rooted Attachment 15</a>
Attachment 16	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Term Sheet for Contract</b></p> <i>If engaging with an EMO/CMO, 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 17	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Insurance/Levels of Coverage</b></p> <i>Provide a list of the types of insurance coverage the school will secure, including a description of the level of coverage.</i>	<a href="#">RSI- Attachment 17</a>
Attachment 18	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Evidence of Community Support</b></p> <i>Provide evidence of support from community partners (i.e., letters of intent/commitment, memoranda of understanding, and/or contracts).</i>	<a href="#">RSI- Attachment 18</a>
Attachment 19	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Historical Performance Workbook</b></p> <i>If applicable, use the workbook provided by Education One.</i>	<a href="#">RSI- Attachment 19</a>
Attachment 20	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>3 Years of Audited Financials for IN Schools</b></p> <i>If applicable, provide the last three years of audited financial statements for the school(s) and the most recent internal financial statements.</i>	<a href="#">RSI- Attachment 20</a>
Attachment 21	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>3 Years of Audited Financials for Whole Organization</b></p> <i>If applicable, provide the last three years of audited financial statements for the organization as a whole and the most recent internal financial statements</i>	N/A
Attachment 22	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Litigations</b></p> <i>If applicable, provide a summary of the demand, any response to the demand, and the results of the arbitration or litigation.</i>	<a href="#">RSI- Attachment 22</a>

## Executive Summary

Proposed School Information	
<b>School #1</b>	Rooted School Inc.
<b>Address</b>	5750 E. 30th Street
<b>School District</b>	Indianapolis Public Schools
<b>Planned Year of Opening</b>	2028
<b>Model or Focus</b>	Rooted School Indianapolis K–6 focuses on ensuring students master foundational literacy and math, develop strong identity and learning habits, and receive the coherent academic and student support needed to enter Rooted’s 7–12 program fully prepared for college, career pathways, and long-term financial freedom.

<b>Legal Group Name</b>	Rooted School Inc.
<b>Primary Contact Person</b>	Ma’at Lands
<b>Primary Contact Email</b>	mlands@rootedschoolindy.org
<b>Primary Contact Cell Phone</b>	317-998-0045

**Applying as a/an** [New School] [Existing School][Replication]  
 If applying as an existing school, please indicate the school’s first year of operation, the current authorizer, and the year renewal of the current charter will take place.  
*Insert Text Here*

**Does the applicant group seek approval for multiple campuses under a single charter?** [Yes] [No]  
 If yes, please indicate how many.  
*Insert Text Here*

**Does the applicant group already operate schools elsewhere in the United States?** [Yes] [No]  
 If yes, please indicate where.  
*Insert Text Here*

**Will the applicant group partner with an Education Service Provider (ESP)?** [Yes] [No]  
 If yes, please provide the name of the ESP.  
*Insert Text Here*

**Has the applicant group had any charter school applications under consideration by any other authorizer(s) in the United States, within the last five years?** [Yes] [No]  
 If yes, please indicate the state, authorizer name, proposed school name, application submission date, and decision date for each applicable application  
*Insert Text Here*

**Mission and Vision:** Provide an explanation of why this proposed school is the right fit for the intended community and how it aligns with the mission and vision of the school. The response should include the proposed school’s mission and vision, an overview of the educational model that will be implemented, and a description of the community the school intends to serve.

The mission of Rooted School Indianapolis (Rooted) is to provide our students personal pathways to financial freedom. We exist to see our students academically prepared and financially free. Rooted currently co-locates at Eastern Star Church’s facility and provides a safe and secure place for students. We see high school students, particularly high school students from the poorest quarters of the population, as an untapped talent source for generating economic growth. Nobel Prize economist James Heckman found that 50 percent of lifetime earnings inequality is determined by factors present in the life of a person by age eighteen. This means that the longer it takes for our most financially insecure young adults to get high paying jobs, the less likely it becomes that they will obtain a high paying job. This is not a matter of hard work. This is the consequence of fading economic mobility—the fair chance to get ahead.

At Rooted, we believe that our students can reach their fullest potential when they are given access to the region’s high-wage jobs in tandem with an academically rigorous high school education. We ultimately aim to disrupt the cycle of poverty by ensuring that Rooted students are equipped to succeed in their post-secondary plans, whether that be obtaining a college degree, building the next groundbreaking company or working in a high-wage job.

Starting with the local technology sector, Rooted will guide students to meet the rigorous demands of the college of their choice while partnering with local companies to expose students to the world of work. In this way, students form connections between algebra and app development, English class and digital marketing, history and community organizing. Through this approach, students can start to understand the value of education, not through memorization but through problem-solving real-world issues.

We make our students a competitive pool of talent by collaborating with local industries to shape our curriculum. This helps us prepare students for the demands of the dynamic workplace. Students work with industry-grade technology while learning and meeting state core academic standards. This will give students an advantage over their peers if they decide to enter their community’s most promising companies upon graduation.

**Founding Team:** Provide the full name, current job title, employer, and connection with the proposed school for all persons on the founding teams, adding lines as needed.

Full Name	Current Job and Employer	Connection with Proposed School
Ma’at Lands	Rooted School Indianapolis	Founder/Executive Director
David McGuire	Rooted School Indianapolis	School Leader
Devan Heiber	Rooted School Indianapolis	Director of Academics
Diane Tarapata	Rooted School Indianapolis	Operations Manager

**Enrollment Summary:** Complete the table below, indicating grade level and enrollment projections for the school’s first five years.

	Year 1 2028	Year 2 2029	Year 3 2030	Year 4 2031	Year 5 2032	Year 6 2033
Grade Levels Served	6	6	K-2,6	K-3,6	K-4. 6	K-5, 6
Total Enrollment	25	25	100	125	150	200

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

The school’s initial grade configuration was intentionally designed to align with our mission, instructional model, and operational capacity. We began by serving a limited number of grade levels in order to concentrate resources on building a strong academic culture, establishing consistent instructional practices, and providing intensive student support. Launching with a focused grade band allowed leadership and staff to develop deep relationships with students and families, refine curriculum and assessment systems, and ensure fidelity to the school model before expansion.

This approach also supports continuity for students as the school grows, enabling us to add grade levels in a planned and predictable manner while maintaining program quality and student outcomes.

## Section I: People

The strength of any high-quality school lies in the people who bring its mission to life, from the founding team and leadership to the community stakeholders and future educators. This section evaluates the depth of the founding team's understanding of the community they intend to serve, their capacity to engage diverse stakeholders, and their ability to assemble the talent and infrastructure necessary to successfully design, launch, and sustain a high-performing charter school.

Applicants are asked to demonstrate how their community engagement, coalition-building efforts, leadership experience, and staffing strategies are aligned with the school's mission, vision, and educational model. The responses provided in this section will offer critical insight into the team's readiness to build a school that is responsive to community needs, built on access for all students, and staffed by professionals prepared to drive strong academic and operational outcomes.

### 1.1 Community and Coalitions

#### Meets Standard Expectation

- The founding team has a deep understanding of the community the proposed school seeks to serve.
- The founding team builds and maintains relationships across diverse interest groups and engages others in understanding, supporting, and acting on behalf of the mission.
- The founding team can navigate power and influence within local systems, structures, and people

1. Describe the community the school seeks to engage and the target student population.

Unless there is a significant shift in U.S. policy, it would take 228 years for the average black family (84 years for the average Latino family) to obtain the same amount of wealth as the average white family.<sup>1</sup> And despite gains in income and wealth, even when it comes to Americans with comparable levels of education, the median net worth of whites remains nearly 10 times that of blacks. This is the difference between white families having a median net worth of \$171,000 compared to \$17,600 for blacks and \$20,700 for Latinos. When it comes to asset building and disrupting multi-generational cycles of poverty,<sup>2</sup> this gap has significant consequences for people of color in a city like Indianapolis.

Indianapolis is uniquely positioned to find a solution because it is at the heart of this national crisis. According to the POLIS Center at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, the city has a general poverty rate of 22 percent and a child poverty rate of 33 percent, both well above national averages and disproportionately affecting people of color. From 2005 to 2013, the Annie E. Casey Foundation reported that Indianapolis saw a 41 percent increase in the percentage of children living in poverty; only four cities had larger increases: Seattle, Phoenix, Jacksonville, and Las Vegas. All of these numbers underscore that millions of children nationally, and thousands locally, are living in families who are barely surviving financially which can affect their well-being and their ability to succeed as adults.

Few neighborhoods feel this more palpably in Indianapolis than the far eastside which has become a cradle of the city's poverty crisis. People of color make up 75 percent of the neighborhood's residents; it maintains a 29 percent poverty rate and a 14 percent unemployment rate. If a quality education is the potential bridge to higher-paying jobs and financial security, the far east side will remain in disrepair. In Marion County, 43 percent of all students attend A and B rated schools compared with the far east side's 12 percent.

Coupled with the financial insecurity crisis that is crippling people of color, *Ascend Indiana* recently reported that at least 300,000 new jobs over the next decade will require a post-secondary credential (not necessarily a two or four-year college degree). This highlights a widening disparity between job growth and a decline in the working-age population from 2018-2028. With Indiana facing a shortage of new talent, our communities will need innovative and bold solutions to address

the real possibility that local companies will consider leaving the region in search of talent. This is where we believe Rooted can work alongside several local stakeholders to pursue transformational work.

While our 7–12 model prioritizes Industry Credentials, our K–6 model prioritizes Identity, Language, and Literacy. The partnership strategy shifts from "Career Training" to "Curiosity and Foundation."

**High Priority: Literacy & Cultural Foundation**

- **Bilingual Bridges & Indy Spanish Place:** For K–6, language acquisition is a primary lever for future financial freedom. These partnerships will be prioritized to ensure students are globally competitive and cognitively flexible from a young age.
- **Marion County Public Library:** Prioritized for K–6 to foster a "Culture of Reading" that supports the EL Education curriculum, ensuring every child has a library card and a home library by Grade 1.
- **libadda Dance & DJ ISM317:** These partnerships are elevated in K–6 to build School Joy and Belonging. Arts-integrated learning is a research-backed method for increasing attendance and engagement in elementary years.
- **Indiana Learns:** Statewide grant program that provides eligible families with microgrants to access high-dosage tutoring outside of school hours for grades 3–8 in math and ELA.

**Medium Priority: Early STEM Awareness**

- **Swift Coding & Girls Who Code:** Unlike in high school where these lead to jobs, in K–6 these partnerships serve to build **logic and sequence skills**. They turn "consumers" of games into "thinkers" about how games are made.
- **Next Gen:** Provides the "STEM workshops" that ignite curiosity, acting as a feeder into the more rigorous CTE pathways in 7–12.
- **Exponentia Prime:** Personalized learning and acceleration partner for the K-6 Model that offers an AI-driven, adaptive learning platform with 1:1 individualized instruction in literacy and mathematics.
- **Amplify Science:** Provides core k-6 science curriculum using a phenomena-based approach where students act as scientists and engineers to solve real-world problems.

2. Identify key stakeholders the founding team has engaged with (e.g., families, students, community leaders, business people, elected officials, organizations, and others) and describe:
  - Their support for the proposed school, including any commitments they have made. (Include letters of support or similar, as appropriate.)
  - Any reasons for strong opposition, and strategies to mitigate this.

The founding team of Rooted School Indianapolis engaged a broad and diverse group of stakeholders, including East Side families and residents, students, community leaders, nonprofit organizations, higher education partners, and local and national business leaders, particularly within the technology and innovation sectors. Community engagement efforts included a recent survey of 90 East Side residents and stakeholders, the results of which demonstrate strong alignment with Rooted's mission and model. Survey data showed that 98.5 percent of respondents affirmed support for Rooted's mission and goals, while 97.8 percent expressed a shared understanding of the need for multiple pathways to financial security and career success following high school graduation. In addition, 100 percent of respondents affirmed the importance of a strong family–community–school partnership, a foundational pillar of Rooted's design, and 97.8 percent agreed on the relevance of Rooted's mission. Respondents also strongly supported Rooted's self-paced learning model combined with targeted remediation and enrichment, indicating that the proposed school is a strong fit for the far East Side Indianapolis community.

Rooted secured significant support from a wide range of organizational and industry partners who view the school as both a community investment and a future talent pipeline. Key partners include Salesforce, which has committed to piloting its Pathfinder program with Rooted as a local partner; Greenlight Guru, ClearObject, Kinney Group, Passageways, Viral-Launch, and Woven, all of which have expressed commitment to serving as potential talent pipelines and workforce partners. The Mind Trust has invested directly in Rooted Schools to support the launch of the Indianapolis model. Postsecondary and talent-development partners such as Ivy Tech Community College, TechPoint, Purpose.ly, and Zylo support Rooted's emphasis on industry-recognized credentials, financial literacy, and college-to-career pathways. Community-based organizations including Meals on Wheels of Central Indiana, Central Indiana Community Foundation, Cancer Support Community, and Crossroads Education provide wraparound services,

intervention support, and potential facility collaboration. Many of these partners have submitted formal letters of support, which are included in the application.

At this time, Rooted has not encountered organized or sustained opposition to the proposed school. Potential concerns, such as questions about differentiation within the local school landscape or alignment with workforce demand, have been proactively addressed through transparent community engagement, data-driven design, and strong partnerships with employers and higher education institutions. Rooted's emphasis on economic mobility, career-connected learning, and collaboration among families, schools, and community partners directly responds to expressed community needs and mitigates common sources of resistance. Overall, stakeholder feedback and commitments indicate broad-based support for Rooted School Indianapolis and strong confidence in its ability to serve students, families, and the regional workforce effectively.

3. Summarize the founding team's approach to gathering community input and explain how this input shaped the school design.

The founding team of Rooted School Indianapolis took a deliberate, community-centered approach to gathering input and designed the school to ensure that community voice is both continuous and influential. In addition to early surveys, listening sessions, and conversations with East Side families and partners, Rooted intentionally created multiple, accessible entry points for ongoing feedback. One such strategy is the use of community "Lunch and Learn" sessions, hosted by the school in partnership with neighborhood organizations and local leaders. These informal gatherings allow families, residents, and community partners to learn more about Rooted's programs while also providing real-time feedback on school design, student supports, and community needs. By meeting community members in familiar, low-barrier settings and centering dialogue over presentations, Lunch and Learns create space for honest input from voices that may not typically participate in formal meetings.

This community feedback directly shaped Rooted's policies, programs, and practices. Central to the school design is the Advisory program, which functions as the nerve center of student development and family engagement. Each student is paired with a consistent advisor who supports academic and social-emotional growth while serving as a primary point of contact for families. Advisors are required to communicate with families at least every two weeks, reflecting community input that emphasized frequent, proactive, and relationship-based communication. Rooted also established My Rooted, the school's parent organization, to formalize family voice and partnership in shaping school programming, policies, and culture. Through regular meetings, My Rooted solicits parent and community input, increases family engagement events, supports student recruitment and retention, and expands communication and learning resources for families.

For deeper leadership engagement, Rooted created the Family Leadership Council (Rooted School Advisory Council), composed of parents and community members nominated by educators, neighborhood groups, and board members. Council members receive leadership training and serve as community advocates, helping to craft and execute Rooted's community involvement strategy. The Council leads committees focused on event planning, communication, volunteering, and student and family support, creating structured and systematic ways for community members to provide feedback and take action. Finally, community input underscored the importance of supporting entire families, not just students, which led Rooted to incorporate Adult Education Workshops open to parents and the broader community. Together, surveys, Lunch and Learns, advisory relationships, family organizations, leadership councils, and workshops ensure that community input meaningfully shapes Rooted's school design and continues to inform its evolution over time.

4. Describe coalition-building successes and challenges, including the team's strategies for overcoming these challenges. Include any coalition-building strategies planned between now and the potential school opening.

The founding team of Rooted School Indianapolis has prioritized coalition-building as a core strategy for launching and sustaining a school that is deeply embedded in the East Side community and aligned to regional workforce needs. One

of Rooted’s most significant coalition-building successes has been the development of a broad, cross-sector network that includes families, community organizations, higher education institutions, workforce intermediaries, and local and national employers, particularly within the technology sector. These partnerships have resulted in tangible commitments, with companies and advisory and board participation from leaders across education, technology, and community development. This coalition reflects Rooted’s intentional strategy of aligning educational outcomes with economic opportunity and has helped establish early credibility and momentum for the school.

At the community level, Rooted has successfully built trust by anchoring the school within the Eastern Star Church and The ROCK Initiative ecosystem and by engaging families through surveys, listening sessions, Lunch and Learns, and ongoing relationship-based structures such as Advisory, and the Family Leadership Council. These efforts have helped overcome a common early challenge: skepticism rooted in past experiences with short-lived or externally driven school initiatives. Rooted addressed this challenge by emphasizing transparency, demonstrating long-term commitment to the neighborhood, and elevating community members into formal leadership and decision-informing roles within the school’s governance and engagement structures.

The team has also faced challenges in aligning diverse stakeholder priorities, particularly balancing family expectations for immediate academic support with employer and postsecondary partners’ focus on long-term workforce readiness. Rooted has navigated this tension by clearly articulating its dual mission of academic growth and economic mobility, and by designing a model that integrates self-paced learning, remediation, enrichment, and career-connected experiences rather than positioning these priorities as competing goals. Regular communication, shared planning sessions, and clear role definition have been key strategies for maintaining alignment across the coalition.

Rooted continues to deepen and formalize coalition-building efforts by expanding its Family Leadership Council, increasing the frequency of community Lunch and Learns, and executing memoranda of understanding with additional employer and postsecondary partners to support work-based learning and credential pathways. The team also plans to strengthen collaboration with neighborhood organizations to coordinate student supports and family services, and to engage elected officials and civic leaders through site visits and briefings to build broader public awareness and support. Collectively, these strategies position Rooted to continue overcoming coalition-building challenges while strengthening a durable, community-driven network in advance of school opening and beyond.

## 1.2 Founding Team

### Meets Standard Expectation

- The founding team has the relevant knowledge, skills, and abilities to execute in areas of education, finance, governance, and the proposed school’s identified key design elements.
- The founding team demonstrates a track record of success in a variety of endeavors, large and small, as well as experience with failure and a demonstrated ability to learn, grow, and adapt.
- The founding team demonstrates an awareness of their areas for growth and how they plan to address them.
- The founding team understands how the organization will have to mature.

1. Explain how the founding team has the relevant skills, knowledge, and abilities to develop, start up, and operate the proposed school.

### Ma’at Lands

Ma’at Lands is the founder and Executive of Rooted School—Indianapolis a secondary school serving 7-12 grade students. Born and raised on the eastside of Indianapolis, she is a graduate of North Central High School, Tennessee State University and Marian University. She started her teaching career as a science teacher in Indianapolis Public Schools. After 7 years of teaching and leading she transitioned to a career in non-profit serving as the Youth Director and then as an Assistant Director for Fay Biccard Glick Neighborhood Center at Crooked Crook, responsible for the

overall operations and administration and development of all programs. In this role she worked with families and was able to understand the importance of community organizations and educational entities working together to effectively execute on academic outcomes and improve the quality of life for all. Determined to provide access and opportunities for all students, she returned to the K-12 sector where she felt she could have the most impact while partnering with the community organizations as a resource. She completed her Building Level Administrator Certification from Marian University and returned to work as a teacher and administrator in a public charter school in Indianapolis responsible for coaching and developing teachers, establishing foundations for successful classrooms, providing data to inform the development of the schools' strategic plan aligned with the school and network goals. She is currently completing her doctoral degree in Organizational Leadership.

Ma'at Lands brings a rare combination of technical school leadership and lifelong community advocacy to the Rooted School Indianapolis K-6 expansion. As a native of the Arlington Woods neighborhood in the 46218 zip code, Ms. Lands' leadership is informed by a visceral understanding of the specific needs and aspirations of Eastside families. Her professional journey, which includes serving as an Assistant Principal at Lighthouse Academies and leading Rooted School Indy to significant growth in ELA accountability ratings, demonstrates her ability to build the high-achieving academic cultures necessary for elementary success. Her experience as the former Youth Director and Assistant Director of the Fay Biccard Glick Neighborhood Center further distinguishes her leadership; in these roles, she managed the complex operations of preschool, after-school, and summer enrichment programs. This unique background in early childhood and community-based administration ensures she can oversee a K-6 model that is as operationally sound as it is pedagogically rigorous. Ms. Lands is uniquely equipped to bridge the gap between foundational K-6 skills and Rooted's high-school "Financial Freedom" mission. With a Master's Degree in Teaching and current doctoral work in Organizational Leadership, she possesses the academic depth to align the EL Education and EnVision Mathematics frameworks with long-term career readiness. Her globally recognized certification in Cultural Intelligence and Unconscious Bias allows her to lead a K-6 staff that is not only academically elite but culturally responsive to the majority-Black student body in 46218. By leveraging her deep ties to Eastern Star Church's The ROCK Initiative and her proven track record of creating "producers" of technology, Ms. Lands ensures that Rooted K-6 will be more than a school; it will be a community-driven engine for upward mobility. Her leadership guarantees that students will begin their journey toward financial freedom on their very first day of Kindergarten, supported by a leader who has dedicated her life to the prosperity of their neighborhood.

### **Dr. David McGuire- School Leader**

Dr. David McGuire is a school leader with 15+ years of experience in education, including eight years as a principal. His leadership journey has centered on improving student outcomes, developing and mentoring educators, and creating learning environments where every student is safe, challenged, supported, and affirmed. Dr. McGuire has successfully led school turnarounds, guided strategic school growth, and built strong partnerships that extend the impact of schools into the broader community.

He is deeply committed to expanding pathways for educators, building leadership pipelines, and advocating for equitable access to high-quality education. His work reflects a belief that schools thrive when they are rooted in equity, excellence, and belonging. Now serving as School Leader at Rooted School Indy, Dr. McGuire continues to champion a vision where students graduate prepared for both college and high-wage careers. He is also expanding his impact at the system level through district leadership, nonprofit executive work, consulting, and leadership coaching—continuing his mission to build strong schools, strong leaders, and stronger communities.

Dr. McGuire's career is defined by his successful tenure as Principal of Tindley Summit Academy, where he led an elementary school for over six years. During this time, he was instrumental in leading a school expansion and developing a teacher leadership program, skills that are directly transferable to Rooted's growth into the K-6 space. His most recent role as Assistant Principal at Forest Glen Elementary—a Spanish immersion school serving nearly 1,000 students—further refined his ability to manage large-scale elementary operations and foster inclusive environments for diverse learners. Dr. McGuire has a proven track record of moving students toward proficiency. At Tindley Summit, he implemented a virtual learning experience and achieved one-to-one technology integration in grades 3-6 well ahead of the pandemic curve, ensuring that foundational literacy was supported by modern digital tools. A graduate of the Relay National Principal Academy and a fellow of the Indiana Principal Leadership Institute, Dr. McGuire is an expert at using diagnostic data (such as i-Ready and state benchmarks) to pivot instruction. Dr. McGuire identifies as an "agent for parents." He famously created PEAK (Parents and Educators Alongside Kids) to bridge the gap between home and school. In the 46218 zip code, his ability to build trust with families is vital to ensuring that Rooted's mission of financial freedom is a shared goal between the classroom and the living room. Dr. McGuire's dissertation research focused on the experience of Black male elementary teachers, reflecting his commitment to building a teaching staff that serves as a mirror for our students. His vision for Rooted K-6 is not merely to build "school skills," but to build identity. Under his leadership, the K-6 program will transition from a

model of compliance to one of agency, where students as young as five learn that their curiosity and hard work are the first steps toward a lifetime of financial freedom and community contribution.

### **Dr. Devan Heiber- Director of Academics**

Devan Heiber is an instructional leader whose career has centered on collaborating with diverse professionals, leaders, and learners to optimize student, teacher, and content development. Her professional experiences span curriculum design, instructional coaching, and systems-level academic leadership, all grounded in a commitment to research-based best practices. Devan's dedication to education relies on the continual examination, innovation, and refinement of instructional approaches to ensure students receive rigorous, equitable, and engaging learning experiences.

Over the years, she has developed a deep understanding of the importance of academic equity and the authentic dissemination of knowledge that narrows learning gaps and improves classroom experiences across contexts. As Director of Academics at Rooted School Indy, Devan leads instructional strategy, educator development, and the implementation of Rooted's future-ready, competency-based model. Her work reflects a commitment to ensuring every student has access to high-quality instruction that empowers them to succeed in both college and high-growth career pathways.

Devan Heiber brings a strategic blend of instructional coaching and administrative oversight specifically tailored to the unique developmental needs of K-6 learners. Her experience at the Paramount School of Excellence in 6th-grade STEM instruction provided a critical understanding of the academic transition from the primary years into middle school, particularly within inclusive and high-ability environments. This foundational knowledge was further expanded during her tenure as a Teacher Development Coach, where she directly facilitated the pedagogical growth of K-6 educators. By executing development plans for pre-service teachers in the elementary setting, she refined the instructional scaffolding and classroom management strategies necessary to ensure high-quality, age-appropriate learning across all primary grade levels. Most recently, Devan demonstrated her capacity for large-scale elementary leadership as the Summer School Director for MSD of Decatur Township. Managing a K-6 population of approximately 350 students, she oversaw the holistic operations of a primary program, balancing academic intervention with the specialized administrative demands of an elementary environment.

### **Diane Tarapata- Operations Manager**

Diane brings over five years of experience working in partnership with schools in her role as an Operations Manager, supporting strong organizational systems and effective school operations. She has collaborated closely with school leaders and staff to manage day-to-day operations, coordinate schedules and communications, and ensure key initiatives are implemented smoothly. Her responsibilities have included overseeing operational logistics, supporting school-based events, maintaining compliance-related documentation, and improving internal processes to strengthen efficiency and accountability. Diane's steady leadership, attention to detail, and commitment to supporting school communities make her a trusted operational partner in educational environments.

2. Conduct a gap analysis of the founding team's capacities and plans to fill gaps with training, new team members, future hiring, and/or coalition building.

Our current team brings strong experience in school leadership, operations, and student support; however, as the school grows, additional capacity will be needed to ensure consistent implementation of student services, compliance,

and accountability systems. While current team members have experience supporting student needs and managing operational requirements, the team recognizes the need for a dedicated leader to oversee special education, 504 coordination, attendance, state reporting, and compliance with all applicable state and federal regulations.

Our current team brings strong experience in instructional leadership, school culture development, operations, and secondary school design. The team has demonstrated the ability to launch and operate a mission-driven grades 7–12 school, build systems for student success, and establish a positive and accountable school culture. However, as the school grows in enrollment, staffing, and program complexity, the team recognizes the need to expand leadership capacity to ensure sustainability, consistency, and high-quality implementation across all school systems.

One identified gap is the need for increased leadership bandwidth to support instructional coaching, staff development, and day-to-day school management. While the current leadership team has successfully led launch and early implementation, the demands of operating a growing secondary school require additional dedicated leadership to ensure consistent execution of instructional priorities, student culture systems, and staff support. To address this gap, the school will add an additional school leader position to strengthen schoolwide leadership, improve responsiveness to staff and student needs, and increase the team's ability to monitor instructional quality and student outcomes in real time.

A second gap is the need for a dedicated leader to oversee student services and compliance systems as the school expands. While the founding team has experience supporting student needs and managing operational requirements, the school recognizes the importance of having a specialized leader responsible for special education coordination, 504 systems, discipline procedures, attendance interventions, state reporting, and compliance with all applicable federal and state requirements. To fill this gap, the school will create a Director of Student Services & Compliance role. This position will ensure high-quality service delivery, strengthen compliance monitoring, and support training for staff on IDEA, Section 504, student discipline, and documentation procedures.

To further strengthen capacity, Rootedl will invest in targeted professional development for school leaders and staff in areas such as MTSS implementation, special education compliance, restorative practices, attendance systems, and IDOE accountability requirements. In addition, the school will continue to build external partnerships with service providers and education support organizations to provide technical assistance, compliance support, and specialized student services. As enrollment grows, additional staffing will be added to support case management, mental health services, and intervention programming to ensure students receive consistent, equitable support.

Through planned leadership expansion, strategic hiring, targeted training, and coalition building, the school is positioned to fill capacity gaps proactively while maintaining strong implementation and alignment to the school's mission and key design elements.

### 1.3 Staffing

#### Meets Standard Expectation

- The founding team develops compensation packages (salary and employment benefits), systems, and strategy that are likely to attract and retain strong staff.
- The founding team develops 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
- The founding team has the relevant knowledge to develop a plan for supporting, developing, and annually evaluating school leadership and teachers that is likely to produce and retain a successful staff.

1. 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.

The founding team—Ma’at Lands, Diane Tarapata, Devan Heiber, and Dr. David McGuire—brings deep, directly relevant experience in school leadership, financial management, and organizational development that positions the school to attract, support, and retain a strong, highly qualified staff.

Ma’at Lands brings more than ten years of experience as a school leader, including over six years as a founder of a charter school with direct responsibility for creating, managing, and executing annual operating budgets. In this role, Ma’at led budget development aligned to staffing models, compensation structures, and benefit costs, ensuring fiscal sustainability while prioritizing competitive salaries and staff retention. Ma’at has also completed a certificate in School Finance from Georgetown University, strengthening expertise in public school finance, budgeting, compliance, and long-term financial planning. In addition, Ma’at’s experience as Assistant Executive Director at the Fay Biccard Glick Center included responsibility for managing organizational budgets, monitoring expenditures, and aligning financial decisions with programmatic goals—experience that directly informs the development of sustainable compensation systems and staffing strategies.

Dr. David McGuire brings over ten years of experience as a school leader, with a strong track record in organizational leadership and financial oversight. Dr. McGuire has worked closely with third-party finance partners to develop and manage school budgets, align staffing plans with available resources, and engage in long-term financial strategy. This experience contributes to Rooted School Indianapolis’s strong financial position, ensuring that staffing decisions, compensation packages, and benefits are both competitive and fiscally responsible.

The founding team’s financial and leadership capacity is further strengthened through collaboration with the finance team AT Financial which includes, Brian Anderson, Kim Tarin, and Adis Coubliably, who provide additional expertise in budgeting, financial analysis, and compliance. Together, the leadership and finance teams ensure that compensation packages, benefit structures, and staffing systems are aligned with best practices and long-term sustainability.

In recruitment and hiring, the founding team’s combined experience in school leadership enables the development of clear hiring criteria, timelines, and procedures that prioritize both instructional quality and mission alignment. Hiring practices are designed to ensure staff meet ESEA requirements for being “Highly Qualified,” while also identifying educators and leaders who are well suited to the school’s academic model and student population.

Finally, with more than a decade of school leadership experience across the founding team, Rooted School Indianapolis has the capacity to design and implement a comprehensive plan for supporting, developing, and annually evaluating teachers and school leaders. This plan emphasizes clear expectations, ongoing professional development, and meaningful evaluation processes that support growth and accountability. By pairing evaluation with targeted support and leadership development, the founding team is well positioned to build and retain a strong, effective, and mission-driven staff.

2. 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.

The proposed K–6 school offers a competitive, transparent, and growth-oriented compensation system designed to attract and retain high-quality educators and staff. Teacher base salaries follow a structured step scale aligned to years of experience and demonstrated effectiveness. Entry-level teachers begin with salaries ranging from \$51,000–\$54,000, with an average starting salary of approximately \$53,000. Annual step increases allow teachers to progress to salaries exceeding \$95,000 by year 12. This predictable growth structure rewards longevity, performance, and professional growth, while ensuring compensation remains competitive within the Indianapolis region.

School leaders, operations staff, and support staff receive salaries benchmarked against comparable charter and district roles in the Indianapolis area to ensure competitiveness and equity across positions. As the school scales,

compensation structures will support the recruitment and retention of high-quality educators and operational staff essential to sustaining a strong elementary foundation in literacy, math, and school culture.

All full-time employees are eligible for a comprehensive benefits package that includes:

- **Health insurance** (medical, dental, and vision)
- **Employer-supported retirement benefits- TRF**
- **Paid time off**, including sick leave and personal days
- **Family and medical leave**, with compensation determined by role and coverage needs
- **Support for certification and licensure**, used selectively and aligned to school needs

These benefits are designed to support employee well-being, financial security, and long-term retention.

In addition to base salary, the school offers multiple opportunities for additional compensation through stipends and bonuses, ensuring staff are rewarded for leadership, extended responsibilities, and impact.

### **Incentives, Stipends, and Reward Structures**

In addition to base salary, the school provides multiple opportunities for additional compensation through stipends and bonuses. These incentives are designed to reward leadership, extended responsibilities, and contributions to student learning and schoolwide success.

### **Student Experience and Extracurricular Stipends (K–6)**

Because K–6 programming includes fewer traditional athletic coaching roles, stipends are structured to support high-impact student experiences such as:

- Clubs and enrichment programming
- Academic competitions
- After-school and Saturday tutoring
- Intercession programming (fall, winter, spring break)  
Schoolwide student events and family engagement programming

Extracurricular stipends range from \$600 to \$2,400, based on program duration, student participation, and anticipated hours of work.

### **Bonus Structure**

The school implements a values-aligned bonus system that reinforces high performance and mission alignment. Bonuses are awarded annually and tied to four core areas:

- **Preparation:** High attendance and strong planning systems (up to \$1,000 annually)
- **Growth:** Achievement of professional goals and advisory attendance (\$1,500)
- **Excellence:** Alignment to state accountability metrics, academic outcomes, and school culture indicators (amount determined annually)
- **Community:** Contributions to enrollment, recruitment, family engagement, and student belonging

Additional incentives include:

- **\$250 per enrolled student** recruited and retained through October 1

- **\$500 per teacher** successfully recruited and retained for a full year

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

Since opening, Rooted School Indianapolis has spent the past six years refining and executing a recruitment and hiring strategy that has consistently resulted in a strong, mission-aligned, and highly qualified teaching staff. The school's approach is informed by operational experience, data from prior hiring cycles, and lessons learned about retention, instructional effectiveness, and leadership development.

## **Recruitment Strategy and Proven Pipelines**

Over six years of operation, Rooted School Indianapolis has successfully recruited teachers through multiple established pipelines, including Teach For America (TFA) and Indianapolis Teaching Fellows (ITF). These partnerships have provided access to diverse, rigorously selected candidates with strong instructional foundations and a commitment to educational equity. In addition, the school recruits experienced educators through regional and national job boards, professional networks, and partnerships with educator preparation programs.

Recruitment messaging has been refined over time to clearly communicate the school's mission, instructional model, professional growth opportunities, and compensation structure, resulting in stronger candidate pools and improved alignment between candidates and the school's design.

## **Hiring Timeline and Staffing Based on Operational Experience**

Rooted School Indianapolis follows a consistent annual hiring timeline informed by six years of operating a school:

- **Fall–Winter:** Review enrollment projections and staffing needs; refine job descriptions and compensation ranges based on budget and retention data.
- **Winter–Early Spring:** Begin active recruitment, screening, and interviews, with priority given to early hiring of high-need subject teachers and leadership roles such as Multi-Classroom Leaders.
- **Spring–Early Summer:** Finalize offers, complete credential verification, and onboard new hires.
- **Late Summer:** Complete remaining hires and provide pre-service professional development prior to the start of the school year.

This timeline allows the school to secure strong candidates early while maintaining flexibility to respond to enrollment or staffing changes.

## **Highly Qualified Staff and ESEA Compliance in Practice**

For the past six years, Rooted School Indianapolis has ensured that all instructional staff meet **ESEA "Highly Qualified"** requirements. The school verifies bachelor's degrees, licensure or certification, and subject-area endorsements prior to employment and monitors ongoing compliance. When hiring teachers through alternative certification pathways such as TFA or ITF, the school ensures that all requirements are met within established timelines and provides support for completion as needed.

## **Selection Criteria Aligned to Rooted's School Design**

Through six years of experience, Rooted has identified the selection criteria most predictive of teacher success in its model. In addition to required qualifications, hiring decisions prioritize:

- Demonstrated or emerging instructional effectiveness.
- Strong alignment with Rooted’s mission and student-centered, real-world learning design.
- Ability to build strong relationships with students and families.
- Openness to coaching, feedback, and continuous improvement.
- Collaboration and leadership potential within team-based instructional structures.

These criteria reflect the school’s emphasis on instructional quality, culture, and long-term retention.

## **Compensation, Bonuses, and Retention Supports**

Over six years of operation, Rooted has refined a compensation structure designed to attract and retain strong educators. In addition to competitive base salaries and benefits, the school offers:

- **Bonuses** tied to performance, leadership responsibilities, or school-wide goals.
- **Stipends** for additional duties, including mentoring, curriculum development, extended learning time, and Multi-Classroom Leader roles.
- Transparent compensation structures that support fairness, sustainability, and staff retention.

## **Hiring, Evaluation, and Dismissal Procedures**

Rooted School Indianapolis follows clear, consistent procedures for hiring, evaluating, and dismissing staff, grounded in six years of operational practice. All employees undergo required state and federal criminal background checks prior to employment. Hiring decisions are based on structured interviews, performance tasks, and reference checks.

Staff are evaluated annually using a combination of classroom observations, student outcomes, and professional responsibilities. When performance concerns arise, Rooted implements a documented improvement process that includes feedback, coaching, and clear expectations. Dismissal decisions, when necessary, are conducted in a fair, timely, and legally compliant manner.

## Section II: Model

This section evaluates the overall design and instructional approach of the proposed school, including its alignment with the mission and responsiveness to the needs of the intended student population. A high-quality school model clearly defines what success looks like for students and provides the structures, strategies, and systems needed to reach those outcomes. Applicants must present a compelling mission and vision, outline the school's educational philosophy and key design elements, and demonstrate how the curriculum, instruction, and assessment systems will be implemented effectively.

In doing so, the founding team should clearly show how the proposed model supports academic achievement, student growth, and long-term readiness. Additional attention is given to how the school will serve all students, maintain a safe and productive learning environment, and build the foundation for long-term sustainability through sound planning, clear goals, and a strong understanding of the community landscape.

### 2.1 Mission, Vision, Purpose

#### Meets Standard Expectation

- The proposed school's mission is clear, cohesive, and measurable, and centers students and the community. The mission outlines the proposed school's purpose, what it does, and for whom.
- The vision outlines a clear aspirational long-term goal or ideal state the school aims to achieve.

1. Outline the proposed school's mission. Include a description of the indicators of success in achieving the mission and how you will evaluate the extent to which the school is achieving it.

The mission of Rooted School Indianapolis (Rooted) K–6 is to provide our students the academic and developmental foundation for personal pathways to financial freedom. We will do this by altering the trajectory of Indianapolis' most financially insecure students at the earliest possible stage—ensuring they master literacy, mathematics, and critical thinking, develop strong learning habits and character, and build the confidence and identity necessary to thrive in rigorous middle school and high school coursework. Rooted K–6 exists to interrupt generational poverty and racial inequity by preparing students not only to succeed academically, but also to see themselves as future college students, innovators, and contributors to Indianapolis' high-growth, high-wage economy.

At Rooted, we believe students reach their fullest potential when they are provided a joyful, safe, and academically rigorous learning environment that is tightly connected to purpose. In K–6, this means students experience an education that builds strong foundational skills and knowledge while also developing curiosity, agency, and early exposure to technology, problem solving, and the future world of work. Rooted K–6 serves as the beginning of a coherent K–12 model in which students progress from strong foundational academic mastery in elementary school, to rigorous college- and career-ready preparation in secondary grades, and ultimately to postsecondary pathways that lead to financial stability and long-term economic mobility.

At Rooted School Indianapolis, our mission is to provide students with personal paths to financial freedom. In the K–6 space, this mission transcends foundational literacy and numeracy; it is lived out through the cultivation of intellectual independence, community contribution, and the Innovator's Mindset.

**1. Purposeful Agency through EL Education:** While EL Education is our vehicle for state standards, it is the "Content-Based Literacy" model that lives out our mission. Unlike traditional programs, EL Education engages students in Learning Expeditions—long-term, in-depth studies of "real-world" issues.

- **Mission Alignment:** Students don't just read about biology; they study local Indianapolis ecosystems and present findings to community partners. This builds the belief that their voice and work have market value and community impact from age five, laying the psychological groundwork for the "Industry-Recognized Credentials" they will earn in high school.

**2. Financial Literacy as a Language, Not a Subject:** In alignment with our teaching and learning model, EnVision Mathematics is leveraged to go beyond computation into applied economics.

- **Mission Alignment:** We integrate "Financial Freedom Minutes" into the K–6 math block. Students use their EnVision skills to manage "Rooted Bucks," understand the ROI (Return on Investment) of their effort, and participate in classroom economies. We are building a culture where financial literacy is a foundational language, ensuring that by Grade 7, students aren't just "good at math," but are "economically literate."

**3. Building the Curiosity Infrastructure:** The RSI 2.0 vision emphasizes building curiosity. In K–6, we live this out through Maker-Centered Learning integrated with our tech-career focus.

- Mission Alignment: Utilizing the Northstar Digital Literacy framework starting in the early grades, students view technology not as a consumer tool, but as a producer tool. Whether they are coding a simple sequence in 2nd grade or designing a solution for a neighborhood problem in 5th grade, they are experiencing the Rooted promise: that technology and innovation are the fastest paths to bridging the wealth gap.

**4. The "Rooted Scholar" Identity:** The most vital way the mission is lived out in K–6 is through the development of social-emotional agency.

- Mission Alignment: Our teaching model prioritizes "Student-Led Conferences" from Kindergarten upward. By taking ownership of their i-Ready and I-LEARN data, students learn to say: *"This is where I am, this is where I want to go, and this is the work I need to do to get there."* This habit of self-directed growth is the exact behavior required to navigate the personalized pathways of our 7–12 model and the professional world beyond.

Strategic Coherence: The K–12 Bridge

K–6 Living the Mission	7–12 Living the Mission
Curiosity: Exploration through EL Education expeditions.	Clarity: Specializing in career pathways and tech sectors.
Contribution: Solving classroom and school-level problems.	Credentialing: Solving industry-level problems through WBL.
Competence: Mastering the "language" of Math and Literacy.	Capital: Converting mastery into high-wage job offers and college entry.

2. Outline the proposed school’s vision (i.e., describe what will be different if the school successfully meets its mission).

If Rooted School Indianapolis K–6 successfully meets its mission, Indianapolis will see students from the city’s far eastside entering middle school academically prepared rather than behind. Students will read fluently, write clearly, reason mathematically, and demonstrate the habits of success required to persist through rigorous academic challenges. They will also develop a strong sense of identity, belonging, and purpose, viewing themselves as scholars and future leaders with access to opportunities historically denied to their communities.

Rooted K–6 will produce students who are on track for advanced coursework and college and career readiness long before high school begins. Families will experience a school that is both academically demanding and deeply supportive, one that partners with caregivers to build consistent attendance, strong learning routines, and shared expectations. Over time, Rooted’s success will strengthen an entire community by creating a pipeline of academically prepared and resilient students who will move through Rooted’s 7–12 program prepared to earn college credit, obtain industry-recognized credentials, and ultimately graduate with both a college acceptance letter and a high-wage job opportunity within reach.

## 2.2 Key Design Elements

### Meets Standard Expectation

- Key design elements of the educational model are aligned with the mission and designed to achieve positive outcomes for the proposed student population.
- The approach to serving special populations is likely to lead to high-quality educational outcomes for students with diverse needs.
- The school environment will be safe, supportive, and conducive to student learning for all students.

1. Describe and justify the proposed school's key design elements, including how they align with the mission; the research basis and/or examples of other schools or programs the founding team researched or visited; what they learned from them; and how that may be applied to this school.

Rooted's K-6 is intentionally designed to deliver on its mission: ensuring every child achieves strong foundational skills in literacy and math, develops the habits and character needed for long-term success, and experiences school as a joyful, safe, and affirming community. The founding team's design is grounded in the belief that academic excellence and student well-being are not competing priorities; rather, they are mutually reinforcing. Students learn best when they are known, supported, and challenged every day, and when the school's systems are coherent enough that high-quality instruction is not dependent on a single classroom or teacher. For this reason, Rooted's model is built around a small set of mission-aligned non-negotiables: a rigorous and consistent instructional program, early and sustained intervention for students who are behind, strong student culture and family partnership, and a robust system for developing and retaining excellent educators.

A central design element of the school is a coherent, rigorous academic program, with particular emphasis on literacy as the cornerstone of equity and long-term success. The school will implement a daily literacy block that protects time for foundational reading skills, knowledge-rich reading and discussion, and daily writing. This approach reflects what the founding team learned from studying high-performing networks such as Achievement First, which emphasizes strong curriculum, consistent instructional practice, and systems that support teachers to deliver high-quality instruction across classrooms. Achievement First's model demonstrates that students achieve at high levels when the school reduces variability through aligned materials, clear expectations for teaching and learning, and a culture that makes academic rigor both accessible and joyful. The founding team's review of Achievement First's approach reinforced the importance of treating curriculum and instruction as an integrated system rather than as individual teacher choices, especially in early grades where reading proficiency is the gateway to all future learning.

In addition to curriculum coherence, the proposed school is designed around a continuous improvement cycle that uses assessment and data as tools for instructional action. The school will use frequent checks for understanding, short-cycle assessments, and regular grade-level data meetings to ensure that student needs are identified early and addressed quickly. Rather than using data solely for reporting, the school's system is designed to drive timely reteaching, targeted small-group instruction, and regrouping based on student skill gaps. This approach is consistent with best practices found in high-performing schools and evidence-based improvement models, which emphasize that the effectiveness of data systems depends on the speed and precision with which adults translate results into instructional changes. The founding team's research confirmed that the strongest academic outcomes are achieved when teachers have structured time and support to analyze student work, plan reteach lessons, and monitor progress in predictable cycles.

A third key design element is the inclusion of high-impact tutoring and acceleration supports within the school day. The founding team prioritized this feature based on the growing research base showing that high-impact tutoring, when delivered in small groups, with sufficient dosage, and aligned to classroom instruction, can produce substantial learning gains, especially for students who enter school below grade level. The school will embed a daily "What I Need" (WIN) block into the master schedule to provide targeted tutoring and intervention for students who need it, while also providing enrichment and extension for students who are already meeting or exceeding grade-level expectations. This design choice reflects the founding team's conclusion that effective intervention cannot be optional, inconsistent, or dependent on after-school attendance. Instead, acceleration must be built into the core operating model so that all students have equitable access to the support required to meet the school's ambitious academic goals.

The school's schedule and culture are also intentionally designed to balance rigorous academic expectations with student joy, belonging, and enrichment. Consistent with lessons learned from Achievement First's emphasis on a "warm and demanding" approach, the proposed school will establish clear, schoolwide routines and expectations while also investing in positive relationships, community-building practices, and daily opportunities for students to experience success. The school will provide daily enrichment such as art, music, physical education, and STEM learning to ensure that students develop as whole children and experience school as engaging and meaningful. The founding team's research affirmed that high-performing elementary schools protect enrichment not as an add-on, but as a critical component of student engagement, attendance, and long-term motivation. The proposed school will therefore use extended learning time strategically, ensuring that additional minutes are used for targeted instruction, intervention, and enrichment rather than simply extending the same instructional blocks without purpose.

Another foundational design element is the school's commitment to a multi-tiered system of student support. The school will implement a clear MTSS framework that provides strong Tier 1 instruction for all students, Tier 2 small-group intervention for students who need additional support, and Tier 3 intensive services for students with significant academic or social-emotional needs. The founding team's design recognizes that students bring varied experiences and needs, and that a mission-driven school must remove barriers to learning through predictable systems rather than reactive responses. This includes strong special education services, structured progress monitoring, and consistent collaboration between classroom teachers, interventionists, and student support staff. The school will also incorporate social-emotional skill development through daily routines and community practices that build self-management, conflict resolution, and resilience, ensuring that students are supported in developing both academic and life skills.

The success of this design depends on adult excellence, and Rooted therefore places educator development at the center of its operating model. which invests in coaching, feedback cycles, and structured professional learning for both teachers and leaders. Rooted will implement weekly coaching cycles, aligned instructional rubrics, and ongoing professional development tied directly to curriculum and student learning needs. Teachers will have protected time for collaborative planning and data analysis, ensuring that the school's academic systems are sustainable and not dependent on individual heroics. The founding team's research highlighted that high-performing schools do not simply hire strong teachers and hope for the best; they build systems that continuously develop teachers and create consistency in instructional quality across the building.

Finally, Rooted is designed to treat family partnership as a core driver of student success. Research and school visits reinforced that strong academic results in elementary grades are most sustainable when families are true partners in building habits of attendance, reading, and learning at home. The school will implement proactive communication routines, student-led conferences, and family workshops that equip caregivers with practical tools to support learning. The school will also establish clear responsiveness expectations, ensuring that family questions and concerns are addressed quickly and respectfully. This approach reflects the school's mission-driven commitment to serving students in the context of their families and communities, and to building trust through consistent and transparent communication.

In summary, Rooted's K-6 school design is grounded in proven practices from high-performing schools and networks, focused on rigorous instruction, aligned curriculum, strong coaching systems, and a culture of high expectations and joy. The founding team also drew from the growing evidence base supporting high-impact tutoring and structured intervention models as essential strategies for accelerating learning and closing opportunity gaps. These research-based lessons have been applied to create a coherent school model that integrates strong Tier 1 instruction, built-in intervention, student-centered culture, educator development, and family partnership into a single mission-aligned system. This design positions the proposed school to deliver strong academic outcomes, a safe and joyful learning environment, and long-term success for the students and families it will serve.

2. Summarize and provide a rationale for the proposed school's chosen instructional approaches.

Rooted School Indianapolis K-6 will implement an instructional model designed to ensure that all students, particularly those who have historically had the least access to high-quality education, leave elementary school academically prepared for the rigorous secondary pathway that leads to Rooted's mission of postsecondary readiness and financial freedom. The school's instructional approach is grounded in the belief that early academic mastery is the most powerful lever for long-term opportunity, and that students can only access high-wage careers and postsecondary success if they first develop strong literacy, mathematics, and problem-solving skills. Rooted's K-6 instructional model is therefore intentionally structured around coherent curriculum, explicit instruction, frequent checks for understanding, and embedded intervention, ensuring students build both grade-level mastery and the learning habits required for long-term success.

Rooted K–6 will prioritize a structured, knowledge-rich approach to literacy aligned to the science of reading. Instruction will explicitly teach foundational reading skills in the early grades, including phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, while also building background knowledge through rich texts and intentional writing instruction. This approach is chosen because literacy is the gateway to all future learning and is strongly predictive of long-term academic success. Rooted’s mission depends on students’ ability to succeed in advanced coursework in middle and high school, including high-level reading, writing, and analysis; therefore, the K–6 program will ensure students develop strong reading and writing skills early, reducing the likelihood that students enter secondary grades with significant skill gaps that limit their future opportunities.

In mathematics, Rooted K–6 will provide rigorous grade-level instruction that emphasizes both procedural fluency and conceptual understanding. Students will engage in daily math instruction that builds number sense, reasoning, and problem-solving, while also ensuring mastery of essential skills. The school’s math approach is chosen to prepare students for the quantitative demands of advanced coursework and for Rooted’s long-term focus on high-growth, high-wage sectors, including technology and the digital economy. Strong math foundations in elementary school are essential for success in later algebra, data analysis, and computer science pathways that are central to Rooted’s 7–12 model.

Across all content areas, Rooted K–6 will use a coherent, standards-aligned curriculum with consistent lesson structures and clear expectations for teaching and learning. This approach is chosen to reduce classroom-to-classroom variability and ensure that every student receives access to rigorous grade-level content regardless of teacher assignment. Teachers will use explicit instruction, modeling, guided practice, and frequent opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery. Rooted will incorporate daily checks for understanding, including exit tickets and short assessments, to ensure teachers have real-time insight into student learning and can respond quickly to misconceptions or gaps. This instructional design reflects Rooted’s commitment to measurable growth and aligns to Indiana’s accountability expectations while supporting the school’s mission of preparing students for long-term success.

Finally, Rooted K–6 will embed intervention and acceleration into the school day through a structured multi-tiered system of supports. Students who need additional help will receive targeted small-group instruction and high-impact tutoring aligned to core classroom content, while students who are on or above grade level will receive enrichment and extension. This approach is chosen because Rooted serves students who may enter school behind grade level due to systemic inequities; to meet the school’s mission, Rooted must ensure that students make accelerated growth and reach grade-level proficiency as early as possible. By integrating intervention into the daily schedule rather than relying on optional after-school supports, Rooted ensures equitable access to the instruction and time required for all students to succeed.

Collectively, Rooted K–6’s instructional approaches are chosen because they are research-informed, operationally coherent, and aligned to Rooted’s long-term K–12 mission. By combining strong Tier 1 instruction, structured literacy, rigorous math, consistent curriculum, frequent progress monitoring, and built-in intervention, Rooted will ensure students leave elementary school prepared to succeed in Rooted’s 7–12 program and ultimately achieve the postsecondary readiness and economic mobility outcomes that define Rooted’s mission.

3. Explain the plan for ensuring the curriculum aligns with state content standards while being rigorous, engaging, and effective for all students.

Rooted School Indianapolis K–6 will ensure curriculum alignment to Indiana Academic Standards while maintaining rigor, engagement, and effectiveness for all students through a coherent curriculum adoption process, systematic internal review, and ongoing monitoring of implementation and student outcomes. Rooted’s approach is grounded in the belief that strong curriculum is one of the most important drivers of equity: when all students have consistent access to grade-level content, high expectations, and effective instruction, the school can deliver the academic foundation students need to thrive in Rooted’s 7–12 model and ultimately access postsecondary pathways leading to financial freedom.

Rooted will begin by selecting high-quality, evidence-based core curricula for English Language Arts, mathematics, science, and social studies that are demonstrably aligned to Indiana standards. Curriculum selection will be guided by a rubric that evaluates standards alignment, rigor, sequencing, cultural relevance, knowledge-building, instructional support for teachers, and accessibility for diverse learners. Once selected, Rooted will conduct a standards crosswalk for each subject and grade level to confirm that every Indiana standard is explicitly taught, assessed, and revisited as appropriate. Where gaps are identified, Rooted will supplement intentionally rather than relying on teacher-created materials that can unintentionally reduce coherence and rigor. This ensures that the written curriculum is fully aligned to state expectations while remaining consistent across classrooms.

To ensure the curriculum is rigorous and effective, Rooted will prioritize materials that include grade-level tasks, strong text complexity, high-quality mathematical reasoning opportunities, and frequent writing and problem-solving. Rooted will also ensure that lessons include regular checks for understanding and opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery through writing, discussion, performance tasks, and standards-aligned assessments. Rooted will use common unit assessments and interim assessments aligned to both Indiana standards and ILEARN expectations, allowing the school to monitor student mastery, identify gaps early, and adjust instruction before students fall behind. This approach ensures the curriculum is not only aligned on paper, but also results in measurable learning outcomes.

Rooted will ensure the curriculum is engaging and relevant by integrating knowledge-rich content and purposeful learning experiences that connect academics to the real world. In elementary grades, this includes high-interest texts, inquiry-based science and social studies units, project-based learning opportunities, and consistent exposure to problem-solving and early technology experiences that align with Rooted's long-term mission. Rooted will prioritize instruction that builds curiosity and student voice while still maintaining the clarity, structure, and explicit teaching needed for strong academic growth. Engagement will be monitored through attendance trends, student surveys, classroom observations, and the quality of student work.

Rooted will also ensure the curriculum is effective for all learners by embedding support for differentiation and accessibility without lowering expectations. Teachers will use scaffolds such as language supports, guided practice, and structured discussion protocols to ensure multilingual learners and students with disabilities can access grade-level content. Rooted will implement a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) in which students receive additional targeted instruction through small-group intervention and tutoring aligned to the core curriculum. This ensures that students who are below grade level receive accelerated support while continuing to engage with grade-level learning. Rooted will also use progress monitoring tools to ensure interventions are working and to adjust supports quickly when they are not.

Finally, Rooted will ensure high-quality implementation through professional development, coaching, and curriculum-based planning systems. Teachers will receive training on the curriculum's instructional routines and will engage in weekly collaborative planning to maintain alignment, pacing, and rigor across classrooms. School leaders will conduct frequent classroom walkthroughs using a standards-aligned instructional rubric to monitor whether the curriculum is being delivered as intended and whether students are consistently engaging in grade-level work. Rooted will use these observations, along with student data, to identify trends and provide targeted coaching and professional learning. This ensures that the enacted curriculum matches the intended curriculum, and that Rooted continuously improves its instructional program over time.

Through these systems, careful curriculum selection, standards crosswalks, aligned assessments, coherent implementation, and continuous improvement, Rooted K–6 will ensure that its curriculum is fully aligned to Indiana standards while remaining rigorous, engaging, and effective for all students. This approach supports Rooted's broader K–12 mission by ensuring that students enter middle and high school with the academic mastery, learning habits, and confidence needed to succeed in advanced coursework and future college and career pathways.

While Rooted School Indianapolis maintains a robust Curriculum Choice SOP (SOP-Academics-013) to ensure ongoing quality and alignment, the curricula identified for the K–6 expansion—EL Education (Language Arts) and EnVision Mathematics—were selected through the proactive application of this exact protocol.

The "selection" mentioned in this section is the result of a completed cycle of our vetted process, detailed as follows:

**1. Evidence-Based Selection (SOP Alignment: Section 5 & 6):** Our SOP requires that curriculum be "high-quality, vetted, and evidence-based." To fulfill this, our Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) conducted an exhaustive review using EdReports as a primary benchmark.

- **EL Education:** Chosen because it consistently earns "All-Green" ratings across all three gateways (Text Quality, Building Knowledge, and Usability) on EdReports.
- **EnVision Mathematics:** Selected for its top-tier alignment to Indiana Academic Standards and its proven track record in building both conceptual understanding and procedural fluency.

2. **Research and Comparative Analysis (SOP Alignment: Section 7):** The SOP mandates a review of "external outcomes and research." Our team analyzed the success of these programs in peer charter networks and similar urban districts. The research confirmed that EL Education's "Learning Expeditions" and EnVision's problem-based learning models directly support the Rooted Mission by fostering the agency and critical thinking skills necessary for our "Personal Pathways" model.

3. **Technological and Inclusion Integration (SOP Alignment: Section 13):** As a school focused on technological advancement, the digital flexibility of these platforms was a deciding factor. Both curricula allow for:

- **Pre-inputted Accommodations:** Ensuring fidelity for our Special Education and ELL populations.
- **Digital Interoperability:** Seamless integration with our secondary assessment platforms (like Pear Assessment and i-Ready), ensuring a consistent K-12 data narrative.

The curriculum is stated as "already chosen" because it has successfully passed through the gates of our SOP-Academics-013. Moving forward, this SOP will remain the active framework for our Annual Compliance Review (Section 11), where the leadership team will evaluate the effectiveness of EL Education and EnVision Mathematics against real-time student growth data (i-Ready and I-LEARN) to determine if adjustments or supplemental materials are required.

4. Describe the proposed school's approach to serving students with disabilities and English learners.

Rooted School Indianapolis K–6 will serve students with disabilities and English learners through an inclusive, mission-aligned model designed to ensure that all students have full access to rigorous, grade-level instruction while receiving the individualized support and services they need to thrive. Rooted's approach is grounded in the belief that educational equity is essential to Rooted's mission of creating personal pathways to financial freedom: students cannot access advanced coursework, postsecondary credentials, or high-wage career opportunities if they are systematically denied access to strong instruction and meaningful supports in elementary school. Rooted will therefore operate with the expectation that students with disabilities and English learners will participate in the full academic program, receive appropriate services aligned to their needs, and demonstrate growth toward ambitious goals.

Rooted will implement a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) that ensures early identification of academic and behavioral needs and provides structured interventions before gaps widen. All students will receive strong Tier 1 instruction aligned to Indiana Academic Standards, delivered through coherent curriculum and consistent instructional routines. For students who require additional support, Rooted will provide Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions in literacy and math through small-group instruction and targeted skill-building aligned to the core curriculum. Progress monitoring will occur regularly so that interventions are adjusted quickly when students are not demonstrating adequate growth. This framework ensures that supports are proactive, data-driven, and embedded within the school day rather than dependent on optional programs or inconsistent access.

For students with disabilities, Rooted will provide a continuum of special education services designed to maximize inclusion while meeting individual needs in accordance with IDEA and state requirements. Rooted will prioritize an inclusive service delivery model in which students with IEPs receive the majority of instruction in general education classrooms with appropriate accommodations, modifications when necessary, and specialized instruction provided through co-teaching, push-in supports, and small-group pull-out services as determined by each student's IEP. Rooted will ensure that special education teachers and related service providers collaborate closely with general education teachers through shared planning time, aligned lesson preparation, and consistent use of data. This approach is intended to ensure that students with disabilities have access to grade-level standards, strong instruction, and meaningful participation in the full school community, while still receiving specialized support that address their unique learning needs.

Rooted will also implement strong systems to ensure legal compliance and high-quality IEP implementation. This includes timely identification and evaluation processes, clear case management structures, consistent documentation, and ongoing monitoring of service minutes and student progress toward IEP goals. Rooted will hold regular student support meetings that include school leaders, general education teachers, special education staff, and family representatives as appropriate. These meetings will review academic data, intervention effectiveness, and student needs, ensuring that decisions are made collaboratively and based on evidence. Rooted will also prioritize family

partnership in special education by ensuring that families understand the IEP process, have access to translation and interpretation services when needed, and are treated as essential members of the student's support team.

For English learners, Rooted will provide language development services that ensure students acquire English proficiency while maintaining access to grade-level academic content. Rooted will implement a structured approach that combines dedicated English language development instruction with integrated language supports within core content classes. English learners will receive explicit instruction in listening, speaking, reading, and writing aligned to state English language proficiency standards, and teachers will use consistent strategies such as vocabulary routines, structured academic discourse, sentence frames, and visual supports to make grade-level content comprehensible. Rooted's approach is based on the understanding that English learners develop language most effectively when they are engaged in meaningful, grade-level academic work with appropriate scaffolding rather than being removed from rigorous instruction.

Rooted will ensure that all educators are equipped to support English learners and students with disabilities through professional development and coaching. Teachers will receive training in differentiated instruction, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and evidence-based language acquisition strategies. Special education and multilingual learner staff will provide ongoing coaching and collaboration to strengthen Tier 1 instruction and ensure that accommodations and scaffolds are used consistently across classrooms. Rooted will also use data systems to monitor both academic growth and language proficiency growth, ensuring that students are making progress toward grade-level standards as well as toward English proficiency benchmarks.

Finally, Rooted will ensure that its approach to serving students with disabilities and English learners is fully aligned to Rooted's broader K–12 mission and long-term outcomes. The purpose of K–6 is not only to meet compliance requirements, but to ensure students build the academic foundation necessary to succeed in Rooted's rigorous 7–12 program, including advanced coursework, dual credit opportunities, and career pathway preparation. By providing inclusive access to grade-level instruction, targeted interventions, and strong family partnerships, Rooted will ensure that students with disabilities and English learners leave elementary school academically prepared, confident, and on track to pursue the postsecondary and career opportunities that lead to financial freedom.

5. Describe how the proposed school will ensure a safe environment conducive to student learning and development. Include the approach to student discipline and well-being.

Rooted School Indianapolis K–6 will ensure a safe environment conducive to student learning and development by establishing a school culture rooted in strong relationships, consistent routines, culturally responsive practices, and a proactive approach to student well-being. Rooted's approach is grounded in the belief that academic achievement and student development are inseparable: students are most able to engage in rigorous learning when they feel physically safe, emotionally secure, known by adults, and connected to their peers. Rooted's K–6 culture model will reflect the same values that guide the 7–12 program—Growth, Preparation, Hospitality, Excellence, and Community—while adapting implementation to be developmentally appropriate for elementary students. These values will be explicitly taught, modeled, and reinforced through daily classroom routines, schoolwide expectations, and family partnership practices that establish a consistent and supportive learning environment.

Rooted K–6 will build its safety and discipline approach around what Rooted refers to as 360° Student Supports, a wrap-around model that ensures students receive integrated academic, behavioral, and mental health support. Rooted's K–6 360° support team will include special education staff responsible for IEP and 504 implementation, English staff providing multilingual learner services, classroom teachers, a designated administrator, and a school-based mental health professional who provides counseling services and supports staff in responding to student needs. This team-based structure ensures that student concerns are addressed early, that discipline decisions are informed by student context and needs, and that the school responds to challenges with a consistent system rather than relying on punitive or inconsistent approaches. Rooted will use regular student support meetings and progress monitoring to identify patterns related to behavior, attendance, and student well-being, and to coordinate

interventions that keep students engaged in learning.

A cornerstone of Rooted's safe and supportive environment is its use of attachment-based teaching, which is grounded in the understanding that learning is built on secure relationships. Rooted draws on the work of Louis Cozolino, who emphasizes that attachment, empathy, and belonging are foundational to student motivation and cognitive development. Rooted K–6 will operationalize this approach by ensuring that students are known well by a consistent set of adults, by building classroom communities where students feel accepted and valued, and by creating predictable routines that reduce anxiety and increase student readiness to learn. Teachers will be trained to build strong relational practices, such as consistent positive interactions, structured community-building routines, and proactive communication with families. In elementary grades, where social-emotional development is rapid and students rely heavily on trusted adults, this approach is particularly essential to ensuring safety and promoting healthy development.

Rooted K–6 will implement a restorative practices discipline model that reflects Rooted's core belief that discipline is fundamentally about relationships and learning, not punishment. Rooted's approach is aligned to the principles described in *Better Than Carrots or Sticks: Restorative Practices for Positive Classroom Management*, which distinguishes punitive responses that focus on rule violations from restorative responses that focus on harm to people and relationships. When a student makes a mistake or harms a relationship, Rooted K–6 will respond through developmentally appropriate restorative strategies, including individual conferences, structured opportunities for students to share their perspective, and guided processes for repairing harm. Rooted will teach students explicit skills for conflict resolution, emotional regulation, and repairing relationships, ensuring that restorative practices are not simply a response after harm occurs, but a proactive part of student development. This approach supports student learning by reducing exclusionary discipline practices, strengthening relationships, and increasing students' sense of belonging and accountability.

To ensure consistent implementation, Rooted K–6 will maintain a clear culture plan with tiered responses to behavior. The school will establish schoolwide expectations aligned to Rooted's values and will explicitly teach routines and behavioral norms at the beginning of the year and continuously reinforce them throughout the year. Teachers will use consistent language, predictable consequences, and positive reinforcement systems that are developmentally appropriate for K–6 students. Rooted will prioritize prevention by emphasizing strong classroom management, structured transitions, clear academic engagement routines, and proactive social-emotional supports. When behavioral issues occur, the school will respond using graduated interventions that prioritize keeping students in learning whenever possible, while also ensuring that serious incidents are addressed promptly and appropriately to protect the safety of the broader school community.

Rooted K–6 will also ensure a safe and inclusive learning environment through its commitment to cultural responsiveness and anti-bias education. Rooted is committed to respecting the cultural diversity and cultural wealth of the communities it serves and will ensure that policies, practices, and curriculum promote understanding and value diversity. Rooted will utilize the Southern Poverty Law Center's Anti-Bias Framework as a foundation for age-appropriate learning outcomes in four domains: identity, diversity, justice, and action. In elementary grades, this work will be implemented through developmentally appropriate classroom discussions, inclusive curriculum materials, and routines that teach students respect, empathy, and responsible citizenship. Rooted's staff will receive training in culturally responsive teaching, systemic and personal critical analyses, restorative justice, and understanding microaggressions. Rooted will also ensure that families are informed and engaged in this work through regular communication, family meetings, and conferences.

Finally, Rooted K–6 will ensure student well-being by integrating social-emotional learning and advisory structures into the school day. Rooted will implement a structured advisory program adapted for elementary grades, ensuring every student has consistent access to an adult advocate and a classroom community that reinforces belonging and social-emotional growth. Rooted will draw from Developmental Designs and related advisory resources used in the 7–12 model, adapting lessons and routines to support younger students' developmental needs. Advisory will be used to teach skills such as self-management, goal setting, peer relationships, and emotional regulation, and it will serve as an additional layer of support for identifying student needs early. Rooted will also build strong partnerships with families, recognizing that student well-being is strengthened when caregivers and school staff work together to reinforce routines, expectations, and supports.

Through these integrated systems—Rooted's values-based culture, 360° student support, attachment-based teaching, restorative practices, anti-bias and culturally responsive education, and structured advisory—Rooted School

Indianapolis K–6 will create a safe environment where students can thrive academically and socially. This approach ensures that students experience school as a secure and supportive community, develop the habits and skills needed for success, and build the strong foundation required to progress into Rooted’s rigorous 7–12 program and ultimately achieve Rooted’s mission of postsecondary readiness and financial freedom.

### 2.3 High School Graduation Requirements (High Schools Only)

#### Meets Standard Expectation

- The founding team has developed a 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.
- The founding team provides a 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).
- The founding team has built effective systems and structures for students at risk of dropping out or not meeting graduation requirements.

1. Describe the founding team’s capacity to design and implement a high school program that meets or exceeds Indiana’s graduation requirements and Education One’s performance standards. Include relevant team experience supporting students to earn Core 40 diplomas or higher, monitoring on-track status, and increasing graduation rates.

N/A

2. Explain how the school will ensure that all students graduate on time and are prepared for postsecondary success. Describe how students will earn credits, how progress toward graduation will be tracked, and how your proposed pathways align with Indiana Graduation Pathways, Core 40 diploma requirements, and Postsecondary-Ready Competency options.

N/A

3. Describe how the school will implement rigorous and relevant programs of study that support students in earning Indiana Employability and Postsecondary Readiness Seals. Include any plans for dual credit, CTE, internships, work-based learning, or industry certifications. Identify partners that will support these pathways.

N/A

4. What early warning systems and student support structures will the school use to identify and intervene with students at risk of falling behind, not graduating on time, or not meeting diploma strength expectations? How will these systems support continuous progress across all student groups?

N/A

### 2.4 Outcomes

#### Meets Standard Expectation

- Goals are clear, rigorous, and relevant, and include indicators of performance for all students, including subgroups.

- Goals are aligned with the school’s mission.
- Measures are aligned with the goals.
- The founding team has a clear plan for establishing goals and using data to track progress and inform practice.

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 model, curriculum, performance goals, and state standards.

In addition to all required Indiana state assessments, Rooted School Indianapolis K–6 will use a coherent interim assessment system designed to (1) measure student mastery of Indiana Academic Standards, (2) monitor progress toward Rooted’s performance goals, and (3) provide timely, actionable information that teachers and school leaders can use to adjust instruction, deliver targeted intervention, and accelerate student learning. Rooted’s interim assessment approach is grounded in the school’s instructional model: high-quality Tier 1 curriculum aligned to standards, frequent checks for understanding, and embedded intervention through a multi-tiered system of supports. Rooted will prioritize interim assessments that are tightly aligned to its core instructional materials—EL Education for English Language Arts and Envision Mathematics for math—so that assessment results directly inform reteaching, regrouping, and tutoring within the daily schedule.

Rooted K–6 will implement a three-tiered interim assessment system. First, teachers will use daily and weekly formative assessments embedded in the curriculum, including exit tickets, fluency checks, writing tasks, and unit-level checks for understanding. These assessments are aligned directly to the lesson-level standards and learning targets in EL Education and Envision Math, and they provide immediate data on whether students are mastering the specific skills taught each day. This frequent formative data supports Rooted’s instructional model by allowing teachers to adjust instruction quickly, identify misconceptions early, and ensure students remain on track for grade-level mastery. Rooted will also use common weekly assessments in foundational reading skills (especially in grades K–2 and for any students in grades 3–6 who require foundational intervention), ensuring early literacy gaps are identified and addressed before they become barriers to long-term success.

Second, Rooted will administer curriculum-aligned unit assessments at the end of each major unit in EL Education and Envision Math. These unit assessments will serve as primary interim measures of mastery for grade-level standards and will be common across classrooms to ensure consistency and comparability of results. Because these assessments are embedded within the adopted curricula, they are intentionally aligned to the scope and sequence of instruction and to the standards students are expected to master. Rooted will use unit assessment data in grade-level data meetings to determine which standards require reteaching, which students need additional support through intervention or tutoring, and which students are ready for enrichment and extension. This approach ensures that assessment results are actionable and tied directly to what students have been taught, reinforcing Rooted’s commitment to coherent instruction and equity of access to grade-level content.

Third, Rooted will implement schoolwide benchmark interim assessments three times per year (fall, winter, and spring) to measure student progress toward year-end performance goals and readiness for state assessments. These benchmark assessments will provide a broader view of student mastery across multiple standards and domains and will be used to monitor growth over time. Rooted will select benchmark assessments that align to Indiana standards and reflect the rigor and format of ILEARN expectations, ensuring that students are not only mastering curriculum content but are also developing the skills needed to demonstrate proficiency on required state assessments. These benchmark assessments will be used to evaluate schoolwide instructional effectiveness, identify grade-level trends, and inform adjustments to curriculum pacing, professional development priorities, and intervention structures.

In literacy, Rooted will supplement EL Education’s curriculum assessments with specific interim measures that provide strong diagnostic information on foundational reading development. In grades K–2, Rooted will administer regular phonics, decoding, and fluency assessments to ensure students are on track to become proficient readers by the end of 2nd grade and to meet the school’s third-grade reading goals. In grades 3–6, Rooted will continue to monitor fluency and comprehension through common reading assessments and writing tasks aligned to EL Education modules. Rooted will also use common writing prompts and rubrics several times per year to monitor student growth in sentence structure, organization, evidence-based writing, and grade-level language standards. These measures align directly to Rooted’s instructional model by ensuring literacy progress is continuously monitored and addressed through targeted intervention and explicit instruction, particularly for students who enter school below grade level.

In mathematics, Rooted will use Envision Math’s topic and unit assessments as primary interim measures of grade-level standards mastery, supplemented by common performance tasks and short-cycle checks for understanding. Rooted will also administer periodic cumulative assessments that measure retention and application of previously taught skills, ensuring students build durable mastery rather than short-term performance. These interim assessments align to Rooted’s model by supporting the school’s emphasis on strong foundational math skills and problem solving—both of which are essential for students’ long-term success in the STEM and technology pathways that are central to Rooted’s 7–12 program and mission.

Across both ELA and math, Rooted’s interim assessment system will be directly aligned to the school’s performance goals and accountability expectations. Rooted will use interim assessment data to monitor year-over-year growth, identify students at risk of not meeting proficiency benchmarks, and provide targeted supports through MTSS and tutoring. Rooted will also disaggregate interim results by student subgroup, including students with disabilities and English learners, to ensure the school is closing achievement gaps and delivering equitable outcomes. Interim assessments will be reviewed in structured data meetings and used to inform instructional planning, intervention grouping, and coaching priorities. This system ensures that assessments are not isolated events, but part of Rooted’s continuous improvement process and core instructional model.

Through this curriculum-aligned interim assessment system—daily formative checks, unit assessments embedded in EL Education and Envision Math, and triannual benchmark assessments—Rooted K–6 will ensure that student progress is monitored consistently throughout the year. This approach provides teachers and leaders with timely, actionable data, supports rigorous instruction aligned to Indiana standards, and ensures that all students are on track to meet Rooted’s long-term academic and life outcomes: graduating prepared for postsecondary success and positioned for financial freedom.

**Assessment Framework**

Rooted School Indianapolis operates on a standards-based mastery academic model that is data-driven and designed to ensure every student is prepared for the high-wage, high-demand careers of the future. Our assessment framework is built on the pillars of consistency, coherence, and targeted intervention. By utilizing a mix of foundational growth monitors, state-aligned benchmarks, and industry-recognized certifications, we provide a transparent pathway for students to track their own progress toward college and career readiness.

**Comprehensive Assessment & Progress Monitoring Matrix**

Category	Assessment Tool	Student Population	Frequency & Timing	Purpose & Academic Alignment
Universal Screener	Acadience	K-6	BOY testing	Design to identify students at risk for reading difficulties
Interim Assessment	i-Ready	K-6	Benchmark: Quarterly	Diagnostic and growth data for EKA and Math
Foundational Literacy	EL Education K-2 Skills/ 3-6 Benchmarks	Grades K-6	End of each Module (4x/year)	Tracks phonics mastery, fluency, and comprehension aligned to IN Academic Standards
Early Literacy Mastery	I-READ 3	Grade 3	Spring (March)	State-mandated assessment to ensure foundational reading proficiency before Grade 4.

<b>Foundational Math</b>	<b>EnVision Math Topic Tests &amp; Benchmarks</b>	Grades K-6	End of each Topic; Quarterly Benchmarks	Measures conceptual understanding and procedural fluency in alignment with IN Math Standards
<b>Elementary Growth</b>	<b>ILEARN Checkpoints &amp; Summative</b>	Grades 3-6	Checkpoints 1-3; Summative in April	Provides real-time data on standards mastery and end-of-year proficiency.

**Systems for Continuous Improvement**

- I. Data Analysis Cycles:** To maintain instructional coherence and responsiveness, Rooted School employs a rigorous review schedule:
  - **Weekly PLCs:** Faculty teams collaborate to align daily instruction with recent Pear Assessment and IXL data.
  - **Weekly Coaching:** Coaches and staff meet to norm on intervention strategies for students falling below established performance bands.
  - **Bi-Weekly Data Meetings:** School leadership analyzes broader trends to identify achievement gaps and adjust school-wide resource allocation.
- II. Support for Special Populations:** We prioritize equitable access to all assessment measures to ensure every student can demonstrate mastery:
  - **Accommodations:** Digital platforms including IXL, Pear Assessment, and state portals allow for pre-inputted accommodations (e.g., extended time, text-to-speech) to meet individual student needs.
  - **ELL Support:** English Language Learners receive additional quantitative and qualitative monitoring through MobyMax and the yearly WIDA assessment to track language acquisition progress alongside academic growth.
- III. Intervention Protocols:** When assessment data indicates a student is "off track" (e.g., scoring <79% on an EOC benchmark or falling below Lexile growth targets ), mandatory interventions are triggered:
  - **Targeted Support:** Students participate in daily small-group, 1:1 intervention, and/or tutoring in English, Math, or Reading.
  - **Mastery Pacing:** Students off-track in core content areas are required to attend winter and spring intersessions and/or summer school for targeted support and remediation.

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.

Rooted School Indianapolis (RSI) K–6 will measure and evaluate academic progress through a comprehensive, real-time Student On-Track/Off-Track monitoring system that is developmentally aligned to elementary outcomes and tightly connected to Rooted’s K–12 mission of academic preparedness and long-term financial freedom. While the 7–12 model focuses on credits, graduation pathways, and diploma strength, Rooted K–6 will focus on the indicators that most strongly predict later success: grade-level mastery of Indiana Academic Standards, early literacy proficiency, math fluency and reasoning, consistent attendance, and the learning habits required for long-term achievement. This system will allow Rooted to identify risks early, intervene strategically, and ensure continuous progress toward grade-level promotion and readiness for Rooted’s rigorous 7–12 program.

**Individual Student Progress Monitoring**

Each student in Rooted K–6 will have an individualized on-track profile that is reviewed at regular instructional checkpoints and at the end of each quarter. The K–6 On-Track/Off-Track tracker will capture the most critical indicators of elementary success, including: grade-level performance in ELA and math, mastery of priority standards from EL Education and Envision Math, benchmark assessment results, progress toward foundational reading skills (phonics, decoding, fluency, and comprehension), writing performance, and math fact fluency. The tracker will also

monitor attendance, chronic absenteeism risk, and behavioral or SEL indicators that impact learning. Teachers, instructional leaders, and the 360° Student Supports team will use this data to guide student conferences, family communication, and individualized intervention plans. Progress monitoring will occur frequently enough to ensure that students are not allowed to fall behind for long periods without structured support.

### **Early Identification and Intervention**

Rooted K–6’s monitoring system is intentionally designed to flag risk before students experience long-term academic failure. Early warning indicators such as below-benchmark reading fluency, lack of phonics mastery, low performance on unit assessments, repeated difficulty with grade-level math standards, or chronic absenteeism will automatically trigger tiered interventions through Rooted’s MTSS structure. Interventions may include targeted small-group instruction, high-impact tutoring during the school day, adjusted instructional groupings, increased progress monitoring, and family engagement support. Interventions will be logged directly in the tracker so that staff can evaluate effectiveness over time, adjust strategies quickly, and ensure that support lead to measurable improvement rather than simply increased services.

### **Cohort-Level Monitoring (Grade-Level and Schoolwide Trend Analysis)**

In addition to monitoring individual students, Rooted K–6 will aggregate student data to evaluate progress across grade-level cohorts and identify patterns that require instructional or operational changes. Cohort-level metrics will include the percentage of students meeting grade-level benchmarks in literacy and math, growth trends across the year, mastery of priority standards by unit, and the percentage of students requiring Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions. Rooted will pay particular attention to key transition years such as kindergarten readiness, third-grade reading proficiency, and fifth/sixth-grade readiness for middle school. This cohort-level monitoring will allow leadership teams to identify systemic gaps, adjust pacing or instructional strategies, refine professional development priorities, and allocate staffing resources to the grades and content areas with the greatest need.

### **Monitoring Special Populations (IEP, 504, Multilingual Learners)**

Rooted K–6 will ensure equity of outcomes by using the tracker to disaggregate academic progress data for special populations, including students with disabilities (IEP and 504 plans) and multilingual learners. Rooted will monitor subgroup performance on curriculum-aligned assessments, benchmark assessments, and state assessments, as well as progress in foundational literacy and language development. For students with disabilities, the school will track progress toward IEP goals, effectiveness of accommodations, and growth toward grade-level standards. For multilingual learners, Rooted will monitor both academic growth and English language proficiency growth, ensuring that students are acquiring language while also accessing rigorous grade-level content. Special education staff, multilingual learner staff, classroom teachers, and instructional leaders will collaborate through regular MTSS meetings and case management structures to ensure that students receive appropriate support without lowering expectations.

### **Schoolwide Progress and Accountability**

At the school level, Rooted K–6 will use aggregated tracker data to evaluate overall academic health and alignment to Rooted’s performance goals and Indiana accountability expectations. Schoolwide metrics will include student growth and proficiency trends, benchmark attainment rates, I-READ readiness indicators, attendance and chronic absenteeism rates, and intervention participation and outcomes. Leadership teams will review this data during monthly and quarterly data cycles to guide continuous improvement decisions related to instructional coaching, curriculum implementation, scheduling, intervention design, and professional development. Rooted will also use these schoolwide results to ensure that K–6 outcomes are aligned to the long-term success indicators that Rooted tracks in 7–12, including college and career readiness and postsecondary access.

## Continuous Review and Adjustment

Rooted K–6’s measurement system will be iterative and responsive. Data will not only be collected but actively used to adjust instruction, supports, and student plans throughout the year. This may include regrouping students for intervention, intensifying tutoring supports, refining instructional routines, adjusting pacing, or strengthening family engagement strategies. End-of-year outcomes will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum and intervention systems, identify root causes of gaps, and inform planning for the following school year. This continuous improvement approach ensures that Rooted K–6 is not only measuring student progress, but using that information to strengthen instruction and accelerate learning in real time.

Through its Student On-Track/Off-Track monitoring system, Rooted K–6 will ensure that academic progress is continuously measured, clearly documented, and strategically addressed at every level—individual students, grade-level cohorts, special populations, and the school as a whole. By combining real-time data, structured review cycles, and relationship-based interventions, Rooted will ensure that students leave elementary school academically prepared, confident, and on track to succeed in Rooted’s rigorous 7–12 program and ultimately achieve Rooted’s mission of postsecondary readiness and financial freedom.

Leadership teams review this data during monthly and quarterly data cycles to guide professional development, scheduling decisions, and continuous improvement efforts.

## Continuous Review and Adjustment

RSI’s measurement system is iterative and responsive. Data is not only collected but actively used to:

- Adjust student schedules and supports mid-year
- Refine intervention strategies
- Improve instructional practices
- Strengthen advisory and student support systems

End-of-year outcomes are used to inform program evaluation and planning for the following school year, ensuring that lessons learned directly impact future practice.

Through its Student On-Track/Off-Track monitoring system, RSI ensures that academic progress is continuously measured, clearly documented, and strategically addressed at every level. By combining real-time data, structured review cycles, and relationship-based interventions, RSI is able to support individual student success, close equity gaps for special populations, and drive schoolwide improvement toward on-time graduation and postsecondary readiness.

3. *Outline the proposed school’s student outcome goals. Explain the rationale for these goals and targets. Include any mission-specific student outcomes you seek to achieve.*

Rooted School Indianapolis K–6 has established clear student outcome goals that are already embedded in the school’s scorecard and continuous improvement systems. These goals are grounded in Rooted’s mission to provide students personal pathways to financial freedom by altering the academic trajectory of Indianapolis’ most financially insecure students as early as possible. Because Rooted’s K–12 model is designed to culminate in graduates who leave with both a college acceptance letter and a job offer, Rooted K–6 is intentionally focused on the earliest and strongest predictors of long-term college and career readiness: grade-level mastery in literacy and mathematics, accelerated growth for students who enter below grade level, strong attendance and engagement, and the development of learning habits aligned to Rooted’s core values. Rooted uses a balanced scorecard approach to monitor these

outcomes for individual students, cohorts, special populations, and the school as a whole throughout the year.

Academically, Rooted K–6 has adopted outcome goals that prioritize year-over-year growth and grade-level proficiency in English/language arts and mathematics, consistent with the Indiana Department of Education’s (IDOE) accountability framework. Rooted tracks student growth and proficiency on IREAD and uses curriculum-aligned interim assessments in all grades to ensure that students are mastering Indiana Academic Standards throughout the year. Rooted’s primary literacy outcome goal is that students will read on grade level by the end of third grade and sustain grade-level reading performance through sixth grade. This goal is supported by benchmark targets in foundational reading skills, reading comprehension, and writing development. Rooted’s mathematics outcome goals similarly require students to demonstrate grade-level mastery of standards each year and to enter middle school prepared for advanced math coursework. These academic goals are monitored through a combination of benchmark assessments, unit assessments aligned to the school’s adopted curricula, and state assessment performance, ensuring that student progress is measured consistently and acted upon in real time.

Rooted K–6 also has outcome goals focused on continuous progress and acceleration, recognizing that many students may enter elementary school below grade level due to systemic inequities. Rooted monitors growth using multiple assessment points across the year and sets explicit targets for students to demonstrate accelerated gains when needed to close skill gaps. These goals are reflected in Rooted’s on-track/off-track monitoring system, which identifies students who are not yet meeting benchmarks and automatically triggers tiered interventions, including small-group instruction, tutoring, and individualized learning plans. By monitoring both proficiency and growth, Rooted ensures that student outcomes reflect sustained learning over time rather than a single end-of-year measure.

In addition to academic outcomes, Rooted K–6 has established schoolwide goals for attendance, engagement, and student persistence. Rooted tracks daily attendance and chronic absenteeism as core indicators of student success and implements proactive systems to address barriers to attendance early. Rooted also monitors behavior and climate indicators to ensure that students experience school as safe, supportive, and conducive to learning. These outcomes align directly to IDOE priorities and reflect Rooted’s belief that students achieve at high levels when they feel secure, known, and connected to a community grounded in Rooted’s values of Growth, Preparation, Hospitality, Excellence, and Community.

Equity is embedded in Rooted K–6’s student outcome goals. Rooted disaggregates all major academic and engagement indicators for special populations, including students with disabilities, multilingual learners, and other historically underserved student groups. Rooted sets targets for these groups to demonstrate continuous progress toward grade-level standards and monitors whether accommodations, interventions, and language supports are resulting in improved outcomes. These measures ensure that Rooted’s accountability is applied equitably and that the school is systematically working to close achievement gaps while maintaining high expectations for all learners.

Finally, Rooted K–6 has established mission-specific student outcomes that intentionally connect elementary success to Rooted’s long-term goal of postsecondary readiness and financial freedom. While K–6 students are not yet completing graduation pathways, Rooted monitors early indicators of readiness for the school’s future-focused model, including the development of strong learning habits, goal setting, perseverance, collaboration, and communication. Rooted also ensures that students engage in early exposure to technology, problem solving, and real-world learning connections that build relevance and purpose. These mission-specific outcomes reflect Rooted’s belief that preparation for high-wage career pathways begins in elementary school through strong academics, strong identity development, and early skill-building aligned to the digital economy.

Rooted K–6’s student outcome goals were selected intentionally to align with both Rooted’s mission and IDOE’s accountability system. Academic goals align to IDOE’s emphasis on growth and proficiency, attendance and engagement goals align to IDOE’s school quality measures, and equity goals align to state and federal expectations for subgroup performance. At the same time, Rooted’s K–6 goals are designed to ensure that students leave elementary school prepared for the rigorous 7–12 program, including advanced coursework, credential attainment, and work-based learning experiences. Collectively, Rooted K–6’s student outcome goals provide a comprehensive and measurable framework for evaluating student success, driving continuous improvement, and ensuring that students remain on a trajectory toward Rooted’s ultimate mission: graduating academically prepared and positioned for financial freedom.

4. Describe how internal and external stakeholders, including the public, will know the extent to which the school is achieving its mission.

Rooted School Indianapolis will ensure transparency and accountability by regularly sharing progress toward its mission with both internal and external stakeholders through multiple, accessible communication channels. These structures are intentionally designed so that families, staff, community partners, and the broader public understand how well the school is advancing its mission and where continuous improvement efforts are focused.

At the governance level, the Board of Directors plays a central role in monitoring mission progress. Board meetings are held regularly and include updates on academic performance, student growth, graduation indicators, and postsecondary readiness aligned to the school scorecard. These meetings provide an opportunity for school leadership to present data, reflect on progress toward mission-driven goals, and discuss strategies for improvement. Board materials and summaries serve as a public record of accountability and demonstrate how decisions are grounded in student outcomes and mission alignment.

RSI also engages families and community members through town halls, which create open forums for sharing schoolwide progress and listening to stakeholder feedback. During town halls, leadership highlights key indicators such as student engagement, academic growth, graduation readiness, and career-connected learning experiences. These sessions allow stakeholders to ask questions, better understand the school's performance, and contribute ideas that inform ongoing school improvement.

The Family Leadership Council is a key mechanism for deep, two-way engagement with families. Through regular meetings, families receive clear updates on student outcomes, school initiatives, and progress toward the mission. Council members provide feedback on programs, policies, and supports, ensuring that family voice informs decision-making. This structure reinforces trust and shared ownership of student success.

In addition, RSI uses consistent communication tools such as newsletters and parent meetings to keep families informed throughout the year. Newsletters share updates on academic milestones, student achievements, postsecondary planning, and upcoming opportunities, while parent meetings provide more detailed discussions about student progress, expectations, and available supports. These communications help families understand how daily instructional practices and student supports connect to the school's broader mission.

Collectively, these internal and external communication structures ensure that progress toward the school's mission is visible, understandable, and actionable. By combining formal governance reporting with ongoing family and community engagement, Rooted School Indianapolis creates a culture of transparency, accountability, and partnership that allows stakeholders to clearly see the extent to which the school is fulfilling its mission.

5. 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.

### ***Corrective Actions for Academic Underperformance***

The school employs a continuous improvement framework to monitor academic performance and respond promptly when student achievement falls short of established expectations at the school-wide, classroom, or individual student

level. Data from multiple measures—including interim assessments, competency-based progress tracking, project rubrics, and formative assessments—are reviewed regularly to identify trends and gaps.

**School-Wide Level:**

If school-wide academic performance does not meet benchmarks, leadership will initiate a comprehensive data review to identify root causes related to curriculum alignment, instructional practices, or implementation fidelity. Corrective actions may include revising curriculum pacing or scope and sequence, increasing instructional coaching and professional development, reallocating resources to priority areas, and adjusting the school schedule to increase instructional time or intervention blocks. Progress toward improvement targets is monitored through shortened data cycles, with leadership reporting regularly to the governing board.

**Classroom Level:**

When classroom-level data indicates underperformance, school leaders and instructional coaches will conduct targeted observations, review lesson plans and student work, and engage teachers in coaching cycles focused on specific instructional strategies. Corrective actions include differentiated professional development, co-planning support, model lessons, and increased feedback frequency. Teachers are supported in adjusting instructional strategies, assessment practices, and student grouping to better meet learner needs.

**Individual Student Level:**

For individual students who are not meeting academic expectations, the school implements tiered interventions aligned to its competency-based model. These interventions may include small-group instruction, personalized learning plans, targeted skill remediation, tutoring, and increased progress monitoring. Families are engaged as partners in intervention planning, and students receive regular feedback and goal-setting support. Interventions are adjusted based on ongoing data to ensure timely acceleration toward mastery.

Across all levels, corrective actions are grounded in data, implemented with urgency, and evaluated for effectiveness. This systematic approach ensures that academic challenges are addressed early and that all students receive the support necessary to achieve high academic standards.

**2.5 Addressing Community Needs, Challenges, and Opportunities**

**Meets Standard Expectation**

- The founding team presents an evidence-based assessment of the challenges and opportunities this school is acting on and articulates how the proposed school addresses an unmet need in the target community.
- Current student and parent demand suggests that the proposed school will meet projected enrollment targets for Year 1 through full enrollment.

1. Detail how the current options available to families do not meet the expressed needs of the community (academic, programmatic, access, demographic, other).

While families in the community technically have access to multiple schooling options, those options do not consistently meet families’ expressed academic, programmatic, and access-related needs, particularly for students experiencing poverty, mobility, and historically unequal access to opportunity. The primary gap is not the absence of schools, but the absence of coherence across the educational continuum, which limits students’ ability to sustain academic growth and reach long-term outcomes such as college completion and financial stability.

Academically, families report that students often experience inconsistent expectations and instructional approaches as they move between elementary, middle, and high schools. Many students enter secondary grades without strong literacy and math foundations, despite years of schooling, requiring remediation rather than acceleration. This reality reduces access to advanced coursework, credentials, and career-aligned programming once students reach high school. While Rooted’s 7–12 program is designed to produce graduates who leave with both a college acceptance letter and a job offer, those outcomes are more difficult to achieve when students arrive significantly behind due to

misaligned or inconsistent earlier academic experiences. Existing options do not reliably ensure continuity in academic rigor, attendance expectations, or learning habits across grade levels.

Programmatically, current school options operate largely as disconnected entities, with elementary, middle, and high schools functioning independently rather than as part of a unified pathway. Families must repeatedly navigate new systems, new cultures, and new definitions of success as their children transition between schools. This fragmentation disproportionately affects students who already face barriers related to poverty, housing instability, and limited access to supplemental supports. While some schools offer strong isolated programs, there is no comprehensive K–12 model that intentionally aligns academics, student supports, culture, and postsecondary preparation over time. Rooted's existing 7–12 school addresses these needs at the secondary level, but families have expressed a need for that same coherence to begin earlier and be sustained consistently.

From an access and equity perspective, families also face limited options that combine high expectations, strong student supports, and meaningful family partnership within a single, stable school community. Frequent school transitions interrupt relationships, weaken trust, and create gaps in support, particularly for students requiring special education services, intervention, or consistent adult mentorship. Existing systems often rely on families to navigate these transitions independently, rather than designing schools around long-term stability and continuity.

Demographically, the community includes a high percentage of students from low-income households and students of color, many of whom experience educational disruption over time. These students are least well-served by fragmented systems that rely on short-term interventions rather than sustained preparation. Families have expressed a desire for schools that provide predictable routines, clear expectations, and aligned supports across years, not just during a single grade span. Current options do not consistently deliver this experience.

In response to these unmet needs, Rooted's model is intentionally designed to extend the coherence already established in its 7–12 program into earlier grades. The goal is not to replace existing schools, but to fill a critical gap by offering families a unified K–12 pathway where academic rigor, student supports, school culture, and family engagement are aligned and reinforced over time. By addressing fragmentation and inconsistency across grade levels, Rooted seeks to meet expressed community needs for stability, continuity, and long-term preparation that existing options do not fully provide.

### **1. The Proficiency Gap: A Critical Need for Early Intervention**

The 46218 zip code remains one of the most educationally underserved areas in Indianapolis. Data from the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) for surrounding elementary schools (including IPS and local charters within a 3-mile radius) reveals a systemic struggle to move students toward proficiency in foundational skills:

- **ELA & Math Proficiency:** In several neighboring schools, I-LEARN proficiency rates in 3rd through 6th grade consistently track below 10-15% in both English/Language Arts and Mathematics.
- **The "Grade 3 Pivot":** Data shows that less than 20% of 3rd graders in 46218 are passing the I-READ 3 on their first attempt. Without a high-dosage literacy model like EL Education in K-2, students enter the 7-12 Rooted program already requiring intensive "safety net" interventions.
- **The Need for RSI:** By starting at Kindergarten, Rooted can apply its i-Ready and EL Education framework early, ensuring students "learn to read" by grade 2 so they can "read to learn" and "read to earn" by grade 7.

### **2. Lack of Specialized Career-Ready Elementary Models**

While traditional schools in 46218 focus on basic compliance and remediation, there is a total absence of a STEM-focused, financial-literacy-embedded elementary model.

- **Early Tech Deserts:** According to census and local education data, students in 46218 have significantly lower access to high-speed internet and hardware at home compared to the Marion County average.
- **The Rooted Solution:** Our K-6 model introduces Northstar Digital Literacy and financial agency (Rooted Bucks) in the early years. By the time our students reach 7th grade, they will have already closed the "digital divide" that their peers in surrounding schools still face.

### **3. High Demand vs. Low Quality Seats**

A review of the Enroll Indy data and school quality maps shows that while there are seats available in 46218, there is a profound shortage of "High-Quality" (A or B rated equivalent) seats.

- **Waitlist Trends:** High-performing charter networks in adjacent zip codes often have waitlists, while underperforming schools in 46218 have high mobility rates.
- **Stabilizing the Neighborhood:** Families in 46218 are currently forced to "out-migrate" for quality elementary education. A Rooted K-6 expansion allows 46218 families to stay in their neighborhood for a continuous, high-quality K-12 experience that is specifically aligned to the high-wage job market.

**Summary Table: 46218 Contextual Data vs. Rooted Target**

Metric	46218 Neighboring Schools (Avg)	Rooted K-6 Target (Year 3)
I-READ 3 Pass Rate	~18% - 35%	>60%
I-LEARN ELA Proficiency	<15%	>35%
I-LEARN Math Proficiency	<12%	>25%
Digital Literacy Access	Low/Consumer Focus	High/Producer Focus (Northstar)
Financial Literacy	None	Integrated EnVision Math + Economics

2. Describe how the school will meet an unmet need among the target community and students.

Rooted School Indianapolis K–6 exists in the heart of the Arlington Woods/Eastside Indianapolis community, a neighborhood with high poverty rates and longstanding barriers to accessing consistently high-quality elementary options that place students on a clear pathway to long-term economic mobility. While families may have schools available to them in name, many still experience an educational landscape that is fragmented, inconsistent, and disconnected from the long-term outcomes Rooted promises in grades 7–12. Rooted K–6 fills this gap by providing a high-quality, neighborhood-based elementary school within walking or short travel distance for families who want both academic excellence and a stable, mission-aligned K–12 pathway. By locating the K–6 school directly across the street from Rooted’s existing 7–12 campus on the Eastern Star Church property, Rooted strengthens access for families, reduces transportation barriers, and creates a seamless educational pipeline for students and siblings.

Rooted’s K–6 mission is explicitly tied to closing the financial wealth gap by ensuring that students develop the foundational academic skills and learning habits required to access the postsecondary and career opportunities that lead to financial freedom. While the work-based learning and industry certification components of Rooted’s model become most visible in secondary grades, Rooted K–6 provides the critical early foundation that makes those outcomes possible. Rooted K–6 will ensure that students master literacy and mathematics, develop strong problem-solving skills, and build the confidence and identity needed to persist through rigorous coursework over time. This approach responds directly to the reality that many students in underserved communities enter middle and high school already behind, limiting their ability to take advantage of advanced coursework, dual credit, credential pathways, and high-wage career opportunities later. Rooted K–6 is designed to prevent this outcome by ensuring students leave elementary school academically prepared rather than needing remediation.

Rooted K–6 also meets an unmet need by offering families a coherent, full-system model rather than an isolated school experience. Many families in the community are required to navigate multiple school transitions, each with different academic expectations, different support systems, and different definitions of success. This fragmentation often disrupts learning and disproportionately harms students facing barriers related to poverty, housing instability, or limited transportation. Rooted’s K–6 program strengthens Rooted’s existing 7–12 model by creating a unified K–12 pathway where students experience consistent academic rigor, aligned curriculum, and shared cultural expectations across grade levels. This coherence is essential for Rooted’s mission, because the school’s long-term outcomes—college acceptance, employability, and access to high-wage careers—depend on sustained preparation over time, beginning in the earliest grades.

In addition, Rooted K–6 responds to community needs by prioritizing strong relationships and individualized support for students and families. Rooted’s model emphasizes personalized learning and close adult-student connections, ensuring students are not “lost in the crowd.” This is especially important in elementary school, where strong relationships and early intervention are critical to both academic development and long-term engagement. Rooted K–6 will provide structured intervention, tutoring, and wraparound supports through Rooted’s 360° Student Supports model, ensuring that students with academic, behavioral, or social-emotional needs receive timely assistance before challenges become barriers to success. This approach directly addresses long-standing concerns in underserved communities that students do not always receive individualized attention or early academic support.

Rooted K–6 will operate as a tuition-free, open-enrollment public charter school with no academic prerequisites or entrance requirements, ensuring equitable access for all families in the community. Students will be admitted through a lottery if demand exceeds capacity, consistent with Rooted’s commitment to serving all students. Rooted will also maintain its commitment to reducing barriers for families by ensuring that students continue to benefit from programs such as the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), which provides free breakfast and lunch to all students. This supports student well-being and ensures that food insecurity is not a barrier to learning, particularly in a community where many families experience economic hardship.

Finally, Rooted K–6 strengthens the community impact of Rooted’s broader mission by anchoring education within the same community-based ecosystem that supports families beyond the school building. Rooted’s location on the Eastern Star Church campus, as part of The ROCK Initiative’s broader community revitalization efforts, ensures that the school is not separate from the community but embedded within it. This allows Rooted to serve as a stable neighborhood institution that connects families to trusted resources, strengthens community relationships, and creates a long-term pipeline of students prepared to succeed academically and economically. In this way, Rooted K–6 is not simply an additional school option; it is an essential extension of Rooted’s K–12 model and a direct response to the community’s need for a high-quality, accessible, coherent educational pathway that leads to financial freedom.

3. Explain how the evidence of community demand, included in the attachment section, supports the school’s ability to meet its proposed enrollment.

Indianapolis is uniquely positioned to find a solution because it is at the heart of this national crisis. According to the POLIS Center at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, the city has a general poverty rate of 22 percent and a child poverty rate of 33 percent, both well above national averages and disproportionately affecting people of color. From 2005 to 2013, the Annie E. Casey Foundation reported that Indianapolis saw a 41 percent increase in the percentage of children living in poverty; only four cities had larger increases: Seattle, Phoenix, Jacksonville, and Las Vegas. All of these numbers underscore that millions of children nationally, and thousands locally, are living in families who are barely surviving financially which can affect their well-being and their ability to succeed as adults.

Few neighborhoods feel this more palpably in Indianapolis than the far eastside which has become a cradle of the city’s poverty crisis. People of color make up 75 percent of the neighborhood’s residents; it maintains a 29 percent poverty rate and a 14 percent unemployment rate. If a quality education is the potential bridge to higher-paying jobs and financial security, the eastside will remain in disrepair. In Marion County, 43 percent of all students attend A and B rated schools compared with the far east side’s 12 percent

Rooted High School currently serves students from approximately 22 different middle schools. Of these students more than half of them read below grade level and are less than 5% on track to being college ready. In addition, over 75% of students have not had any previous exposure to tech or computer science courses. In order to fulfill the mission for students to be academically prepared for college and/or career, it is imperative to be able to support students proactively in their academic matriculation instead of working to pull students from behind. Rooted expanded to include 7th and 8th grade will allow us to address learning and skills gaps earlier which could provide us the opportunity to accelerate students through high school

## Section III: Execution

This section evaluates the founding team's ability to carry out a detailed and realistic plan to launch and sustain a high-quality public charter school. Successful applicants will demonstrate that they have established the systems, structures, and governance necessary to operate effectively and responsibly. Reviewers will look for evidence of a sound organizational framework, clearly defined roles and responsibilities, strong governance practices, and thoughtful planning across critical operational areas such as facilities, student recruitment, transportation, and finance.

The applicant must also show that the school is positioned to meet legal obligations, respond to unforeseen challenges, and maintain long-term fiscal and operational sustainability while advancing its stated goals for students and families. The strength and viability of execution plans are a key indicator of the school's readiness to open and thrive.

### 3.1 Organizational Systems

#### Meets Standard Expectation

- The school's organizational design supports the fulfillment of the commitments and responsibilities of a public school, implementation of the key design elements, oversight of school finances, and achievement of the school's mission.
- Governance structures and systems ensure that the board meets its governance and fiduciary responsibilities while avoiding infringement on management's prerogatives and obligations.

1. Describe the proposed school's organizational structure. Include the rationale and any research basis for this structure. Describe how the organizational structure will support the school's governance plan.

The Rooted School Indianapolis Board of Directors holds full legal and fiduciary authority over Rooted School Indianapolis. The Board is the ultimate governing body responsible for oversight of the school's mission, strategic direction, financial stewardship, executive leadership, and compliance with all applicable laws and charter requirements. All major organizational decisions, policies, and accountability structures flow through and are subject to the authority of the Rooted School Indianapolis Board of Directors. No external organization exercises governance authority over Rooted School Indianapolis.

While Rooted School Indianapolis operates under the sole governance of its Board of Directors, it collaborates closely with other Rooted organizations as strategic partners.

These partnerships are grounded in:

- **Thought Partnership** – Engaging in shared learning, strategic dialogue, and collaborative problem-solving to strengthen implementation and impact.
- **Research & Development** – Studying instructional models, operational practices, and student outcomes across Rooted communities to refine and improve the work.
- **Innovation & Continuous Improvement** – Leveraging collective insight to move the Rooted model forward in ways that benefit students locally and nationally.

These relationships are collaborative rather than supervisory. Other Rooted organizations serve as partners in innovation and learning, not governing bodies. Governance authority remains exclusively with the Rooted School Indianapolis Board of Directors.

The Board of Directors (BOD) of Rooted School Indianapolis have the sole responsibility for setting policy for the local campus so long as those policies align with the stipulations agreed to in its licensing arrangement with the national group. This local perspective is mission critical for us because the levers needed to execute the Rooted mission will be different city to city.

The BOD will expand and develop over time through recruitment of new board members after assessing the needs of the current board during an annual board retreat. After authorization and the Founding Board's transition to the Governing Board, the BOD will continue to select directors based on a commitment to support, maintain and uphold its mission and vision and to take on the governance responsibilities of a charter school board member accountable to the public.

As it creates policies, the BOD will consider external factors such as legal requirements (including those stipulated by the charter contract and state law), as well as the organization's vision, mission and current strategic plan. The BOD will ensure that all policies are aligned to the organization's Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, and that all stakeholders are able to inform the impact of proposed policies.

The BOD will meet monthly and all policies and decisions will be subject to public meetings with consent agendas approved in advance, documents for discussion issued one week prior to any BOD meeting and public comments and board management discussions held at every meeting.

The BOD will operate by Robert's Rules of Order to ensure streamlined, informed decision-making for the school.

## **Board Training and Development**

### ***Continuous Board Training***

Continuous training for the BOD will happen both formally and informally. Formally, each year at a board retreat, the same outsourced training partner mentioned above may be re-engaged to provide both a refresher course as well as advanced courses and training as our local board evolves through various life cycle stages (i.e. planning, launch, start-up, iterate, sustain, and scale). Informally, Rooted School's CEO will meet individually with each board member between board meetings so that every board member has one-on-one interaction at least quarterly. In addition to relationship building, this is an opportunity for board members to dig deeper into a particular area of interest (e.g. school finance, performance assessment, HR recruitment, community engagement, school discipline statistics, governance).

2. Describe how the board will be organized to manage and provide strategic direction for the proposed school, including any board committees.

The board is organized to provide strong oversight, strategic direction, and accountability for the proposed school through a clear governance structure and standing committees aligned to the school's academic, operational, and financial priorities. The board operates as the school's governing authority and will be responsible for ensuring the school fulfills its mission, meets performance expectations, and remains compliant with all legal, financial, and authorizer requirements. The board meets regularly and maintains a clear distinction between governance responsibilities and day-to-day school operations, which will remain the responsibility of school leadership.

As the school grows, the board will intentionally expand its membership to ensure it has the expertise and capacity needed to effectively govern a high-performing charter school. The board will recruit additional members with backgrounds in fundraising. This planned expansion will strengthen the board's ability to provide informed oversight, reduce risk, and support long-term sustainability.

To ensure effective governance and distribute responsibilities, the board has the established standing committees that report to the full board and support deeper review of key priorities. These committees will include:

**Governance Committee:** Responsible for board recruitment, onboarding, training, policy oversight, board evaluation, and ensuring the board operates in alignment with legal and ethical requirements. This committee will also support succession planning and ensure board members maintain strong accountability practices.

**Finance Committee:** Responsible for oversight of budgeting, financial reporting, audits, internal controls, cash flow monitoring, and long-term financial planning. The Finance Committee will work closely with school leadership and any contracted financial services provider to ensure the school remains financially sound and compliant with all reporting requirements.

**Academic Committee:** Responsible for monitoring academic performance, school culture indicators, student supports, and progress toward the school's accountability goals. This committee will review assessment data, attendance and discipline trends, instructional priorities, and progress on school improvement initiatives to ensure the school is on track to meet authorizer expectations.

Through this structure, the board continues to maintain strong oversight while supporting the school's continuous improvement. The committee system will allow for deeper analysis, consistent monitoring, and more strategic decision-making, ensuring the board is well-positioned to guide the school's success over time.

### 3.2 Plan of Execution

#### Meets Standard Expectation

- The founding team understands the necessary steps and timeline to effectively launch a new school and is making sufficient progress toward the start-up. The school's core components are well-planned-for: education program, facility, transportation, enrollment, staffing, governance, etc.
- The founding team effectively plans for a sustainable organization with measurable benchmarks to assess progress and adjust course as needed.

1. Discuss the key milestones achieved to date and the key milestones that must be achieved to successfully launch this school.

Rooted School Indianapolis has already achieved several critical milestones that position the organization to successfully launch a K–6 expansion in a phased and sustainable way. First, Rooted has successfully launched and operated a mission-driven secondary program in Indianapolis, demonstrating the capacity to recruit and retain students, implement a rigorous instructional model, and build a strong school culture grounded in Rooted's core values of Growth, Preparation, Hospitality, Excellence, and Community. Rooted has also developed and implemented key systems that support student success, including a real-time Student On-Track/Off-Track monitoring system, structured intervention supports, and a comprehensive 360° Student Supports model that integrates special education, multilingual learner services, mental health supports, and relationship-based student development. These foundational systems demonstrate Rooted's operational readiness and provide a strong base for expanding into earlier grades while maintaining coherence across a full K–12 pathway.

In addition to proven school operations, Rooted has made meaningful progress toward K–6 program readiness through early curriculum research and school design planning. Rooted has identified core instructional materials aligned to Indiana Academic Standards and Rooted's long-term outcomes, including EL Education for English Language Arts and Envision Mathematics for math. Rooted has also developed a K–6 school design that aligns directly to the established 7–12 mission of preparing students for financial freedom through academic preparedness, strong student supports, and long-term college and career readiness. This planning work ensures that the K–6 model is not being developed in isolation, but as an intentional extension of Rooted's existing program and as the foundational stage of a coherent K–12 system.

Rooted has also achieved a significant facility milestone that strengthens the feasibility of the proposed expansion. Rooted currently has access to an elementary facility located directly across the street from its existing secondary campus, creating a rare opportunity to build a unified K–12 pathway in the heart of the Arlington Woods/Eastside Indianapolis community. This location reduces transportation and access barriers for families, supports sibling enrollment, and allows Rooted to offer long-term stability for students and caregivers. Rooted's campus location on

the Eastern Star Church property, as part of The ROCK Initiative’s broader community revitalization efforts, further positions the school as a neighborhood anchor that connects education with community-based supports and services.

While these milestones provide a strong foundation, Rooted has also identified several key milestones that must be achieved in order to successfully launch the K–6 school. The most immediate milestone is securing authorizer approval for expansion and ensuring governance systems are prepared to oversee a phased K–12 model. Rooted must also finalize a detailed implementation plan aligned to the proposed growth timeline, including the opening of grade 6 in 2028 and the launch of K–3 in 2030. This includes refining the academic program scope and sequence for each grade level, completing standards crosswalks, and finalizing interim assessment calendars and data cycles aligned to EL Education and Envision Math. Rooted must also ensure that elementary-specific student support systems, including special education and multilingual learner service delivery models, compliance processes, and progress monitoring structures, are fully operational prior to opening.

A second major milestone is staffing and talent pipeline readiness. Rooted must recruit and retain strong elementary educators, including classroom teachers, interventionists, special education staff, multilingual learner staff, and K–6 instructional leadership. Because Rooted is pursuing a slow-growth model, staffing must be carefully aligned to each phase of expansion so that quality is protected as new grades are added. Rooted will also ensure that professional development and coaching systems are in place prior to launch, including training on curriculum implementation, structured literacy practices, restorative culture routines, and data-driven instruction. This milestone is essential to ensuring that the K–6 school delivers the same level of rigor and mission alignment that families expect from Rooted’s existing 7–12 program.

Facility readiness and operational planning remain key milestones as well. Rooted must ensure that the K–6 facility is fully prepared for younger students, including classroom build-out, age-appropriate learning spaces, safety and security systems, and compliance with all accessibility and health requirements. Rooted must also finalize the operational systems necessary for elementary launch, including transportation coordination, food service continuation under CEP, student enrollment systems, family engagement structures, and daily schedules that protect core instruction, intervention, and enrichment. These operational milestones will ensure that the K–6 school is ready to serve students effectively from the first day of operation.

Finally, Rooted must meet milestones related to community engagement and enrollment readiness to ensure that families understand and trust the phased growth plan. This includes ongoing communication with families about the grade expansion timeline, clear outreach to neighborhood families, and the establishment of elementary-specific family partnership structures such as conferences, workshops, and regular communication routines. Rooted’s long-term success depends on being deeply embedded in the community and maintaining strong relationships with caregivers as partners in student learning and development.

Rooted has already achieved major milestones that demonstrate readiness for a K–6 expansion, including the successful operation of a secondary school model, the implementation of strong academic and student support systems, access to an elementary facility across the street, and early curriculum research and school design planning aligned to Rooted’s mission. The key milestones remaining, authorizer approval, final program and assessment planning, staffing, facility readiness, and community engagement are clearly defined and aligned to Rooted’s phased approach of opening grade 6 in 2028 and beginning K–3 in 2030. This deliberate timeline ensures Rooted can expand sustainably while protecting instructional quality and maintaining coherence across the full K–12 pathway toward Rooted’s ultimate mission: graduating students academically prepared and positioned for financial freedom.

2. Describe the marketing, outreach, and student recruitment strategies the school will employ in the pre-opening year and once operational, to reach proposed enrollment targets.

Rooted School Indianapolis K–6 will employ a comprehensive, community-centered marketing, outreach, and student recruitment strategy designed to meet enrollment targets during the pre-opening year and to sustain full enrollment once the school is operational. Rooted’s recruitment strategy is grounded in the school’s mission and location: Rooted

exists to expand educational and economic opportunity for families on Indianapolis's far eastside, and its K–6 campus will be located directly across the street from Rooted's established 7–12 program on the Eastern Star Church property. This geographic proximity, combined with Rooted's existing community presence and partnerships through The ROCK Initiative, positions the school to recruit students through trusted neighborhood networks and through families already engaged with Rooted. Rooted will use a multi-channel recruitment strategy that prioritizes relationship-based outreach, clear communication of the school's mission and model, and equitable access for all families through a tuition-free, open-enrollment process.

In the pre-opening year, Rooted will focus on building awareness and trust among families with elementary-aged children, while also ensuring families understand the phased expansion plan. Rooted will conduct targeted outreach in the neighborhoods surrounding the campus, prioritizing door-to-door canvassing, community events, and partnerships with local organizations that serve families, including churches, community centers, childcare providers, and youth-serving nonprofits. Rooted will host a series of information sessions, school tours, and family engagement events designed specifically for K–6 families, including opportunities for caregivers to meet school leaders, learn about the academic model, and ask questions about enrollment, transportation, and student supports. Rooted will also leverage its existing secondary families by creating clear pathways for sibling enrollment and by engaging current Rooted families as ambassadors within their networks. Because Rooted is already a known institution in the community, Rooted will intentionally build on that trust and expand its reach to families who have not yet interacted with the secondary program.

Rooted will implement a clear and accessible enrollment process that removes barriers for families. As a tuition-free, open-enrollment public charter school, Rooted will not require entrance exams or academic prerequisites. Rooted will provide enrollment support through multiple formats, including in-person assistance, online application support, and multilingual family support as needed. Rooted will also ensure that recruitment materials are culturally responsive, easy to understand, and distributed through channels families already use. These will include printed flyers, social media campaigns, community bulletin boards, and outreach through partner organizations. Rooted will maintain a consistent communication calendar during the pre-opening year to ensure families receive timely information about application deadlines, lottery procedures if necessary, and next steps for enrollment confirmation.

Once operational, Rooted will sustain enrollment through a combination of ongoing recruitment, strong family satisfaction, and retention-focused strategies. Rooted recognizes that the most effective recruitment strategy is a strong school experience that families trust and recommend. Rooted will prioritize high-quality academics, strong student supports, and consistent family partnership practices so that enrolled families become long-term advocates for the school. Rooted will maintain year-round recruitment efforts, including seasonal enrollment events, family referral initiatives, and ongoing outreach to local early childhood programs and community partners. Rooted will also develop a consistent re-enrollment process that begins early each spring to ensure families remain engaged and to identify potential retention risks before students withdraw.

Rooted will use data to evaluate the effectiveness of recruitment strategies and ensure enrollment targets are met equitably. The school will monitor application trends, enrollment yields, waitlist patterns, and demographic representation to ensure that outreach efforts are reaching the intended target community. Rooted will also track grade-level enrollment stability, sibling enrollment rates, and student mobility trends. These metrics will allow Rooted to adjust recruitment tactics in real time, strengthen outreach in underrepresented neighborhoods, and ensure that recruitment efforts align with Rooted's mission to serve Indianapolis's most financially insecure students.

Rooted's recruitment strategy will also be aligned to the school's phased growth plan. Because Rooted will open grade 6 in 2028 and expand into K–3 beginning in 2030, Rooted will tailor outreach efforts to the specific grades being launched each year. For example, recruitment for grade 6 will focus on families seeking a strong transition into middle grades and a clear pathway into Rooted's secondary program, while recruitment for kindergarten and early elementary grades will focus on families seeking strong foundational literacy and math instruction, wraparound supports, and long-term K–12 stability. Rooted will ensure that all outreach clearly communicates the long-term pathway so families understand how students will progress through the model over time.

In summary, Rooted School Indianapolis K–6 will meet enrollment targets through a proactive, relationship-based recruitment strategy that leverages Rooted’s existing community presence, trusted partnerships, and neighborhood location. Rooted will combine targeted community outreach, accessible enrollment support, and consistent communication with a retention-focused strategy rooted in strong school quality and family partnership. By maintaining recruitment efforts both before opening and once operational, Rooted will ensure that families in the target community are aware of the opportunity, able to access it equitably, and supported in enrolling and remaining at Rooted as part of a coherent K–12 pathway toward Rooted’s mission of financial freedom.

3. Outline the proposed school’s approach to future gathering and use of input from families, students, staff, and the community.

Rooted School Indianapolis K–6 will gather and use input from families, students, staff, and the broader community through a structured engagement system that includes formal leadership roles for families, consistent communication routines, and multiple feedback channels throughout the school year. Rooted’s approach is grounded in the belief that sustainable school improvement requires deep partnership and shared ownership. Because Rooted’s mission is centered on disrupting generational poverty and expanding opportunity for Indianapolis’ most financially insecure students, Rooted will ensure that families and community members are not only informed, but actively involved in shaping school culture, strengthening student supports, and improving academic outcomes over time.

A primary structure for family voice and partnership will be Rooted’s Family Leadership Council. The Family Leadership Council will serve as a representative body of caregivers who meet monthly with school leadership to provide input on school priorities, culture, family engagement systems, and program design. These meetings will be structured to ensure families have meaningful opportunities to raise concerns, propose solutions, and partner with Rooted in continuous improvement. Rooted will intentionally recruit a diverse group of family leaders, including families of students with disabilities, multilingual learners, and families representing different grade levels, ensuring the council reflects the broader community. Rooted will use this council both as a listening structure and as a collaborative problem-solving body, strengthening trust and ensuring school decisions are informed by lived family experience.

In addition to the Family Leadership Council, Rooted will gather input through consistent family engagement routines embedded into the school calendar. Rooted will host monthly family meetings and town halls where school leaders share updates on academic progress, school culture, upcoming events, and key decisions. These meetings will also provide structured opportunities for caregivers to ask questions, provide feedback, and engage in dialogue with staff. Rooted will also use advisory conferences and student-led conferences as regular touchpoints where families receive detailed information about student progress and contribute to goal setting and support planning. These conferences will ensure families are not only informed of academic performance but are engaged as partners in supporting literacy, math growth, attendance, and learning habits at home.

Rooted will maintain consistent, accessible communication with families through newsletters, digital messaging platforms, and regular school updates. Rooted will provide weekly or biweekly newsletters that include academic updates, upcoming events, family resources, and celebrations of student learning. Communication will be designed to be clear, culturally responsive, and accessible, including translation and interpretation support when needed. Rooted will also use consistent classroom-level communication from teachers, ensuring families understand what students are learning, how they are progressing, and how caregivers can support learning at home. These communication systems ensure that family input is informed and that caregivers have the information needed to engage meaningfully in school partnership.

Rooted will also gather family and student input through surveys administered multiple times per year. Rooted will use beginning-of-year, mid-year, and end-of-year surveys to measure family satisfaction, communication effectiveness, school climate, and trust. Rooted will also administer developmentally appropriate student surveys to measure belonging, safety, engagement, and perceptions of learning. Survey data will be reviewed by school leadership teams and disaggregated to ensure Rooted is hearing from all groups, including special populations. Rooted will use this data to identify trends, address concerns, and refine school practices. Importantly, Rooted will close the feedback loop by

sharing key findings and planned action steps with families and staff, ensuring stakeholders see that their input results in tangible improvements.

Rooted will also ensure that student voice is embedded into the daily life of the school through advisory and restorative practices. Rooted's advisory structure will provide students with consistent access to an adult advocate and a community space where students can share experiences, set goals, reflect on learning, and build social-emotional skills. Advisory will also serve as a mechanism for gathering ongoing student feedback on school culture, engagement, and supports. Through restorative circles and classroom community routines, students will have regular opportunities to express concerns, contribute ideas, and strengthen peer relationships. This ensures that student input is not limited to surveys but is embedded into the school's culture and decision-making processes in developmentally appropriate ways.

Finally, Rooted will involve the broader community through partnerships and advisory structures connected to the school's location and mission. Rooted's campus on the Eastern Star Church property and within The ROCK Initiative's community ecosystem provides ongoing opportunities for collaboration with local organizations, faith-based partners, and neighborhood leaders. Rooted will engage community partners through events, family workshops, and volunteer opportunities, ensuring the school remains connected to the needs and strengths of the community it serves. As Rooted expands, the school will also maintain alignment with regional workforce and postsecondary partners, ensuring the long-term K-12 pathway remains connected to real opportunities for students and families.

Through the Family Leadership Council, monthly meetings, advisory structures, newsletters, surveys, and community partnerships, Rooted K-6 will maintain a consistent and responsive system for gathering and using stakeholder input. This approach ensures that Rooted's school model remains grounded in community needs, strengthens trust and partnership, and supports continuous improvement toward Rooted's mission of preparing students for long-term success and financial freedom.

4. Briefly describe the desired or current facility(ies), including location, size, and amenities. Include facility needs based on the educational program and projected enrollment. Provide the current status of any facilities search, if started.

Rooted School Indianapolis currently operates on the Eastern Star Church (ESC) campus on the East Side of Indianapolis, providing a community-embedded facility solution that aligns directly with the school's mission and target population. The school occupies dedicated instructional space within the ESC campus, which supports classrooms, small-group learning, and administrative functions appropriate for its current middle and high school enrollment. In addition, Rooted leverages the nearby ROCK Community Center, also part of the Eastern Star Church ecosystem, to deliver critical student and family support, enrichment programming, mentoring, and community-based services. This integrated campus model allows Rooted to meet both academic and non-academic needs without requiring students to travel off-site, addressing access barriers common for East Side families. As enrollment grows, Rooted's facility needs will continue to center on additional classroom space, small-group and intervention rooms, and flexible areas that support its career-connected, project-based educational model. At this time, Rooted is not pursuing a separate facilities search; instead, the school is operating successfully within the ESC and ROCK campus partnership while planning for scalable use of space to meet projected enrollment and programmatic demands.

Rooted School Indianapolis (RSI) operates within a co-located campus model in partnership with Eastern Star Church (ESC). The campus consists of two primary facilities that function as a unified learning environment for our students:

1. **Dedicated Instructional Wing (5750 E. 30th St):** Currently houses our Grade 7-12 classrooms, administrative offices, and high school specialized labs.
2. **The ROCK Community Center (Across 30th St):** This 60,000-square-foot facility serves as our "Student Success Hub." It provides the amenities necessary for a holistic educational program, including a gymnasium, cafeteria, performing arts spaces, and dedicated areas for our Work-Based Learning and CTE partnerships (such as Code Black Indy and Next Gen).

For the K-6 expansion, RSI will utilize a phased "Internal Expansion" strategy. RSI is working in close coordination with ESC leadership to identify and dedicate additional instructional suites within the existing campus footprint at the ROCK center. This

expansion strategy focuses on repurposing available, high-quality space to create an environment tailored to the developmental needs of elementary learners. By utilizing the existing campus infrastructure, RSI ensures that K–6 students have immediate access to established amenities—including the gymnasium, cafeteria, and specialized enrichment spaces at the ROCK Community Center—while maintaining a safe, cohesive K–12 learning community. This approach allows for a scalable growth model where classroom blocks are activated in alignment with our phased enrollment increases. By leveraging existing church infrastructure, we avoid the capital risk of new construction while remaining embedded in the 46218 community.

5. Explain the contingency plan if a facility is not acquired in time, or if construction timelines delay the completion of the facility plan.

While we are confident in the "Internal Expansion" within the Eastern Star Church main building, in the event additional space is needed, RSI will utilize the multi-purpose educational rooms within The ROCK Community Center across the street. These spaces are already permitted for youth programming and can serve as high-quality, temporary classrooms.

6. Describe the proposed school's transportation plan

Rooted School Indianapolis K–6 will implement a transportation plan designed to ensure equitable access for families on Indianapolis's far eastside and to remove transportation as a barrier to enrollment, attendance, and long-term student success. Rooted recognizes that transportation is a critical need in the target community, particularly for families experiencing financial insecurity, limited access to reliable vehicles, and work schedules that make commuting across the city difficult. Because Rooted's mission is rooted in expanding opportunity, the school's transportation strategy is intentionally designed to support consistent attendance and to ensure that families are able to access the school regardless of household transportation resources.

Rooted currently partners with Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS) to provide student transportation, and this partnership will remain the foundation of Rooted's transportation plan as the K–6 program launches. Rooted will continue to coordinate closely with IPS to ensure that eligible students receive bus service in alignment with district requirements and that transportation routes support the school's enrollment area. This partnership provides an established infrastructure that supports safe, reliable transportation for families and ensures compliance with transportation expectations for public school students.

At the same time, Rooted is actively exploring a return to operating school-managed transportation in order to increase flexibility, improve reliability, and better meet family needs as the school expands. Rooted has access to and ownership of three buses that the school has successfully operated in the past. Rooted's prior experience managing transportation provides the school with operational knowledge and capacity to expand transportation services if needed. As Rooted grows, particularly with the addition of younger students in K–6, the school will evaluate whether a hybrid transportation model—combining IPS-provided busing with Rooted-operated routes—would best meet the needs of families, increase on-time attendance, and reduce barriers for students living in high-need areas.

Rooted's transportation planning will be guided by family input, enrollment patterns, and attendance data. Rooted will use pre-opening and ongoing family surveys to identify transportation needs, preferred pick-up locations, and barriers to consistent attendance. The school will also use daily attendance monitoring to identify whether transportation challenges are contributing to chronic absenteeism, and Rooted will adjust transportation supports accordingly. Rooted will ensure that transportation communication is clear and accessible, including timely route information, contact procedures for delays, and multilingual support when needed.

Overall, Rooted's transportation plan reflects a commitment to ensuring that the school's location and model are accessible to the community it is designed to serve. By continuing its partnership with IPS while also evaluating the option to operate its own buses, supported by Rooted's existing fleet and prior operational experience, Rooted will ensure that transportation remains reliable, responsive, and aligned to the school's mission of expanding opportunity for Indianapolis students and families.

### 3.3 Policies and Assurances

#### Meets Standard Expectation

- The founding team is aware of and is devoting staff capacity to ensure adherence to laws applicable to charter schools, including those related to governing a public organization and protecting the rights of all students, including students with disabilities and English learners.
- The founding team provides approved organizational and school policies or drafts/plans to develop such policies related to organizational founding, conflicts of interest and code of ethics, school discipline, school safety, and commitments to serving and ensuring access for all students.

1. Identify any existing relationships that could pose actual or perceived conflicts if the application is approved; discuss specific steps the board will take to prevent any actual conflicts and mitigate perceived conflicts.

N/A

### 3.4 Financial Plan

#### Meets Standard Expectation

- The budget is realistic, viable, and aligned with the educational model and execution plan.
- The financial plan includes the resources, fiscal planning, and expertise necessary to carry out effective budgeting, financial management, and oversight, and achieve the school's mission and intended outcomes.
- The proposed school is likely to be financially viable.
- The contingency plan ensures and includes services to all students consistent with the school's mission, key design elements, and execution plan.

1. Present the start-up and five-year budget projections, including start-up and Year 1 cash flow projections, using the authorizer-provided templates and/or workbooks. Include assumptions and metrics used to project revenues and expenditures.

The budget projections were built beginning with the planned launch strategy and funding timeline, starting with the application for \$2,000,000 in Charter School Program (CSP) funding in 2028 to support start-up and early implementation costs. The model assumes the school opens in 2028 with an initial expansion to include 6th grade, and the Year 1 operating budget reflects this first year of instruction with staffing and program expenses aligned to the opening enrollment. Start-up costs supported by CSP are intentionally separated from recurring operating expenses to ensure the school's financial plan demonstrates sustainability beyond grant funding. CSP funds are used for time-limited start-up needs such as curriculum and assessment purchases, technology, pre-opening staffing, professional development, and initial operational systems, while ongoing staffing and core operating costs are supported through per-pupil revenue and other predictable public funding streams.

The five-year budget projections were developed using a grade-by-grade growth model, with revenues and expenditures increasing as the school expands enrollment and adds grade levels over time. Revenue projections are driven primarily by student enrollment and per-pupil funding assumptions, including modest annual increases in state and local funding. Enrollment projections are built by cohort and grade level, reflecting planned grade additions and anticipated enrollment growth as the school's program expands. The model assumes expenditures scale based on staffing ratios and programmatic requirements rather than simple percentage increases, ensuring that costs reflect the actual instructional and operational needs of each phase of growth. Staffing costs are the primary expenditure driver and are projected using student-to-teacher ratios, required administrative and operational positions, and mandated student services, including special education and student support staffing that grows with enrollment.

The model also reflects a significant expansion phase in 2030 with the addition of grades K–3, which requires a different staffing structure, additional classroom sections, and increased instructional and student support resources. This expansion is reflected in the budget through planned increases in elementary staffing, curriculum materials, and

operational costs associated with serving younger students. As the school continues expanding toward a full secondary model, the budget incorporates additional staffing needed for departmentalized instruction, electives and career-connected programming, graduation supports, and expanded student services. By the end of the projection period, the budget reflects the transition into a full 7–12 school model, with revenues and expenditures aligned to the enrollment capacity and program design required for a complete middle and high school continuum.

Year 1 cash flow projections were built to demonstrate the timing of revenues and expenditures across the fiscal year, recognizing that public per-pupil revenues are typically received in scheduled payments while payroll and operational costs occur consistently throughout the year. Cash flow assumptions include the timing of state payments, grant reimbursements, and start-up expenditures to ensure the school maintains sufficient liquidity during the first year of operations. Across all years, the budget includes clear assumptions and metrics used to project revenues and expenditures, including per-pupil funding rates, annual funding growth assumptions, enrollment growth by grade, staffing ratios, salary and benefits assumptions, inflation factors for non-personnel costs, and planned facility and operational cost increases as the school expands.

2. Describe the school's approach to meeting its financial needs and ensuring its success, consistent with the mission and key design elements, if enrollment/revenues are lower than anticipated or unanticipated costs occur.

The school ensures financial stability through a coordinated, multi-layered financial management structure that emphasizes oversight, transparency, and proactive planning. The Executive Director works closely and meets regularly with the Board Finance Committee to review financial reports, monitor budget performance, assess risks, and make strategic decisions aligned to the school's mission and long-term sustainability. This ongoing collaboration ensures that the board maintains strong fiscal oversight while remaining informed and responsive to changing financial conditions.

On the operational side, the Executive Director partners with the Operations Manager and AT Financial to manage day-to-day financial execution, including purchasing, payroll coordination, expense monitoring, and internal controls. In addition, the school engages a third-party finance support team to provide professional accounting services, financial reporting, compliance support, and grant management. This team supports accurate bookkeeping, timely reporting, audit preparation, and responsible stewardship of public and grant funds.

To further strengthen financial planning and strategic decision-making, the school also works with MAZE Education, a strategic consulting firm that provides finance-focused guidance, long-term forecasting, and sustainability planning. Together, this integrated approach, combining internal leadership, board oversight, external financial expertise, and strategic consulting, positions the school to respond effectively to enrollment fluctuations or unanticipated costs while protecting core programming and ensuring alignment with the school's mission and key design elements.

3. Describe how the school will approach the development of financial policies and systems. Include any financial services expected to be contracted for by the school; describe the selection process and the criteria to select and evaluate these contractors. Or, if financial management will be handled by in-house staff, describe the qualifications of key internal finance staff and the hiring plan.

The school has already developed and implemented financial policies, systems, and internal controls as part of its operational launch and ongoing operation. Because the school is currently open, its approach to financial management is not theoretical; it is grounded in established practices designed to ensure fiscal responsibility, compliance, transparency, and long-term sustainability. These systems include clear budgeting procedures, purchasing and approval protocols, separation of duties, monthly financial reporting, and routine cash flow monitoring to ensure the school can meet obligations while protecting program quality.

Financial management is supported through a combination of internal leadership and contracted expertise. The Executive Director and Operations Manager oversee day-to-day financial systems, ensure adherence to financial policies and procedures, and monitor spending against the board-approved budget. To strengthen accuracy,

compliance, and capacity, the school contracts with a third-party finance support team for accounting services, financial reporting, grant management, and audit preparation. In addition, the school partners with MAZE Education for strategic financial consulting, including long-term forecasting, sustainability planning, and budget refinement aligned to enrollment and program priorities.

Contracted financial service providers are selected based on demonstrated experience supporting charter schools, knowledge of Indiana school finance and compliance requirements, capacity to provide timely reporting and responsive support, and a proven track record of strong internal controls and audit readiness. Contractors are evaluated through ongoing performance monitoring, including timeliness and accuracy of reports, compliance with deadlines, responsiveness to leadership and board requests, and the school's overall financial health. Through these established systems and partnerships, the school maintains strong financial controls and ensures that financial decision-making remains aligned to the mission and key design elements as shown through clean audits.

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

Each year, the school engages an independent, licensed external auditing firm to complete a full financial and administrative audit in accordance with all applicable federal and state requirements. The audit includes a review of financial statements, internal controls, cash management, purchasing and payroll practices, grant compliance, and adherence to the school's financial policies and procedures.

The Executive Director and Financial Accountants coordinate the audit preparation process, working closely with the school's third-party finance support team to ensure all documentation is complete, accurate, and organized prior to fieldwork. This includes compiling general ledger records, bank reconciliations, payroll documentation, accounts payable/receivable records, grant reports, board meeting minutes, and evidence of internal approval processes. The school's finance support team assists with audit readiness, including pre-audit checklists, compliance reviews, and ensuring timely completion of all reporting requirements.

Once the audit is completed, the auditor presents findings to the Executive team which reports to the full board. The board reviews the final audit report, management letter and any recommendations for strengthening internal controls or procedures. If corrective actions are identified, school leadership develops a written response and implementation plan, which is monitored by the Finance Committee to ensure timely follow-through. This process ensures the school maintains fiscal integrity, continuous improvement, and accountability to stakeholders.

## Section IV: Performance Evaluation Information

This section applies only to pre-existing schools or applicants partnering with an established EMO or CMO. Education One will heavily weigh the historical performance of the operator or management organization in determining whether to advance the application. Applicants must provide information about all schools currently or previously operated by the organization or its partner. Education One reserves the right to request additional documentation throughout the review process.

1. Provide an analysis of your school or organization’s academic performance, highlighting both areas of consistent success and areas of challenge. Describe the key factors that have contributed to strong student outcomes and sustained performance as well as contributing causes of any persistent academic struggles. Discuss how the organization has responded to both types of outcomes, including what lessons have been learned, what strategies have been scaled or abandoned, and how these insights are shaping the approach moving forward. Analysis should be consistent with the Historical Performance Workbook.

Category	Metric	2022	2023	2024	2025
<b>Demographics</b>	Free and Reduced Lunch	100%	100%	100%	100%
	Special Education (SPED)	N/A	16%	20%	15%
	English Language Learners (ELL)	N/A	3%	8%	12%
	Black / African American	N/A	95.4%	95.4%	84%
<b>Achievement</b>	ILEARN ELA Proficiency (7-8)	N/A	6.3%	15.4%	25.6%
	ILEARN Math Proficiency (7-8)	N/A	9.4%	5.8%	12.5%
	Biology ECA Proficiency	N/A	0.0%	21.4%	18.2%
	HS GPA > 2.5	N/A	N/A	40.0%	58.3%

	(% Students)				
	Graduation Rate	N/A	N/A	100%	100%
<b>MS Subgroups</b>	SPED ELA Proficiency	0%	0%	0%	0%
	ELL ELA Proficiency	N/A	N/A	N/A	40.0%
	SPED Math Proficiency	0%	N/A	N/A	0%
	ELL Math Proficiency	0%	N/A	N/A	12.5%
<b>Growth (HS Math)</b>	9th Grade PSAT Math Benchmark	N/A	8%	0%	4%
	10th Grade PSAT Math Benchmark	N/A	8%	0%	0%
	11th Grade PSAT Math Benchmark	N/A	0%	11%	16%
<b>Growth (HS ERW)</b>	9th Grade PSAT ERW Benchmark	N/A	0%	31%	24%
	10th Grade PSAT ERW Benchmark	N/A	9%	35%	10%
	11th Grade SAT ERW Benchmark	N/A	8%	11%	22%

**Academic Performance Analysis**

**I. Consistent Success: Literacy and Subgroup Growth**

Our primary area of consistent success is literacy acceleration. By shifting from traditional grade-level instruction to a skill-based, hybrid rotation model, we have seen exponential growth in ELA proficiency and college readiness.

- **ELA Growth:** Our middle school ELA proficiency increased from 6.3% in 2023 to 25.6% in 2025. This 400% increase is a direct result of our Learning Acceleration Block (LAB), which provides students with targeted direct instruction and personalized adaptive practice.
- **Subgroup Breakthroughs:** In 2025, our English Language Learner (ELL) population achieved 40% proficiency in ELA, notably exceeding the schoolwide average. This was accomplished by embedding language scaffolds directly into our small-group instruction and increasing instructional minutes through the Indy Summer Learning Lab (ISLL).
- **Secondary Benchmarks:** The percentage of 11th graders meeting the SAT Evidence-Based Reading and Writing (ERW) benchmark nearly tripled, rising from 8% to 22% in two years.

## II. Persistent Challenges: Mathematics Recovery

While literacy surged, Mathematics remained a persistent area of challenge. After a proficiency decline to 5.8% in 2024, we identified that our previous math instructional model relied too heavily on grade-level pacing rather than foundational mastery.

- **The Pivot:** In 2025, we redesigned our math program to mirror our successful ELA hybrid model. We increased small-group blocks and assigned personalized pathways via IXL Diagnostics.
- **Early Results:** This shift led to a rebound in 2025 to 12.5% proficiency, our highest math performance to date. We have learned that foundational numeracy cannot be bypassed for "pacing"; students must master prerequisites before moving to complex standards.

### Factors Contributing to Performance & Lessons Learned

Contributing Factor	Impact on Student Outcomes	Strategic Response
<b>Data-Driven Grouping</b>	Allows for high-dosage tutoring and "just-in-time" remediation.	<b>Scale:</b> This is the core of our K–6 expansion through the use of i-Ready and Amplify mCLASS.
<b>Extended Learning Time</b>	Winter/Spring Intersessions and ISLL reduced the "summer slide."	<b>Scale:</b> Mandatory participation for students below benchmark is now a permanent policy.
<b>Traditional Pacing (Math)</b>	Led to learning gaps and student frustration.	<b>Abandon:</b> We have abandoned strict pacing guides in favor of a "Mastery Pacing" model.
<b>Language Scaffolding</b>	Drove ELL students to outperform the general population.	<b>Scale:</b> Culturally responsive scaffolding is being integrated into the <b>EL Education K–6</b> curriculum.

### Shaping the K–6 Approach

These insights are directly shaping our K–6 model. We are not waiting until 7th grade to address gaps; instead, we are implementing EL Education (ELA) and EnVision Mathematics—both "All-Green" EdReports curricula—to build foundational mastery from day one. We will continue to utilize Indiana Learns grants to provide \$1,000 in additional tutoring for eligible students, ensuring that the high-dosage support that worked in our high school is available to our 3rd–6th graders. By scaling our data-driven LAB model into the elementary years, we aim to ensure that 95% of our 3rd graders pass the I-READ 3 assessment, entering our 7–12 program ready for acceleration rather than remediation.

2. 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

3. List any and all charter revocations, non-renewals, shortened or conditional renewals, or withdrawals /non-openings of schools operated by the organization and provide an explanation.

N/A

4. 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.

#### Rooted Enrollment

The original budgeted enrollment figures for FY24 and FY25 were based on historical trends, application interest, and strategic growth plans anticipating year-over-year increases as Rooted gained visibility and demonstrated strong student outcomes.

Rooted's original FY25 budget was built around a projected enrollment of **177 students**. This figure reflected an **ambitious but optimistic target** based on several assumptions: steady year-over-year growth, successful early recruitment campaigns, increased brand awareness, and continued positive outcomes for scholars. These projections also assumed an upward trend in interest and conversion rates coming out of the 2022–23 school year.

However, actual enrollment for FY25 finalized at **158 students** — 19 students below projections. Several external factors contributed to this variance, including increased competition, family mobility, transportation limitations, and community skepticism following recent school closures in the area. While Rooted experienced strong family interest and application numbers, conversion to actual enrollment was impacted by these broader dynamics.

However, actual enrollment was lower than projected due to the recruitment and re-enrollment challenges described above. In response, Rooted leadership took immediate steps to protect the school's financial health:

- **Revised and realigned the budget** based on actual enrollment and Average Daily Membership (ADM), ensuring that expenditures reflected updated revenue projections.
- **Adjusting staffing plans and operational expenses** to match the reduced per-pupil funding without compromising essential student supports.
- **Delaying or phasing in non-essential expenditures**, including certain materials, contracted services, and facility upgrades.
- **Secured alternative revenue streams**, including grants, philanthropic donations, and in-kind partnerships to close funding gaps.
- **Tightening budget assumptions** and applying a more conservative forecasting model for cash flow and revenue projections.
- **Maintaining adequate cash reserves and liquidity ratios**, even with the revised enrollment, to ensure compliance with OEI financial indicators.

This realignment allowed Rooted to maintain a **balanced, responsible budget** at 158 students while continuing to meet core academic, operational, and financial goals. Looking ahead, the school has committed to improved enrollment tracking, stronger community partnerships, and year-round recruitment efforts to both stabilize and grow enrollment, but will now **budget based on verified data and historical trends rather than optimistic growth assumptions alone**.

As a result of these measures, **Rooted met or remained on track to meet all key OEI financial indicators**, including:

- Positive net income margins
- Adequate cash on hand
- Debt service coverage ratio
- Timely submission of financial reporting and audits

Going forward, Rooted has adopted a more conservative enrollment forecasting model, launched a year-round recruitment strategy, and developed a robust data dashboard to monitor family engagement, applications, and conversion rates. These measures will ensure Rooted can meet enrollment variance expectations while remaining financially sustainable.

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

See Attachment 22.