



## DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY EDUCATION

# 2021 Open-Enrollment Public Charter School Application

**IDEA Public Schools Arkansas**

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Name of Proposed Charter

- Initial Application - Deadline June 1, 2021 at 5:00 p.m.**  
Applications will not be accepted after this time.
  
- Final Application - Deadline July 15, 2021 at 5:00 p.m.**  
Applications will not be accepted after this time.

Any application that is substantially incomplete will not be forwarded to the authorizer for consideration. An application will be considered substantially incomplete if it does not provide enough information to enable staff at the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education to provide a meaningful review.

Division of Elementary and Secondary Education  
Charter School Office  
Four Capitol Mall

Little Rock, AR 72201  
501-683-5312

## APPLICANT INFORMATION

<b>Name of Proposed Charter:</b>	<b>IDEA Public Schools Arkansas</b>
<b>Primary Contact for Application:</b>	<b>Daniel Fishman, Sr. Vice President of Growth</b>
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**Name of sponsoring entity:**

IDEA Public Schools Arkansas
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**The sponsoring entity is eligible to apply for a public school charter under the following category:**

- A public institution of higher education
- A private nonsectarian institution of higher education
- A governmental entity
- An organization that is nonsectarian in its programs and operations and is, or will be, exempt from taxation under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

**Name of Charter Management Organization:**

IPS Enterprises, Inc.
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**Other Schools Managed by the CMO:**

School Name	Address	Academic Year Founded
IDEA Bridge Academy	1500 N Airway Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70815	2018-2019
IDEA Bridge College Preparatory	1500 N Airway Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70815	2018-2019
IDEA Innovation Academy	7800 Innovation Park Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70820	2018-2019
IDEA Innovation College Preparatory	7800 Innovation Park Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70820	2018-2019
IDEA Oscar Dunn Academy	12000 Hayne Blvd, New Orleans, LA 70128	2019-2020
IDEA Oscar Dunn College Preparatory	12000 Hayne Blvd, New Orleans, LA 70128	2020-2021
IDEA Victory	11612 N Nebraska Ave, Tampa, FL 33612	2021-2022
IDEA Hope	5050 E 10th Ave, Tampa, FL 33619	2021-2022
IDEA University Prep Academy	7802 Howell Blvd, Baton Rouge, LA 70807	2021-2022
IDEA University Prep College Prep	7802 Howell Blvd, Baton Rouge, LA 70807	2021-2022

**1. Describe the public hearing which was held for the purpose of assessing support for the establishment of this public charter school. Include the number of attendees and the feedback and/or public comments that were received.**

IDEA Public Schools held a publicly noticed hearing on Friday, May 7 after posting notice in the *Arkansas Democrat Gazette* for three consecutive weeks. While there were two attendees at this meeting, those two attendees shared a general enthusiasm for IDEA’s program model and our plans to launch schools in the greater Little Rock area. No additional public comment was received, outside of this enthusiastic support for our academic program and participation in the hearing. IDEA has met with numerous leaders in central Arkansas, and is confident that there is robust interest in, and support for, IDEA’s program and academic model.

**2. Describe the educational need for the charter in the geographical area to be served. Include quantitative data related to academic achievement.**

IDEA has tremendous respect for the work of our peer educators in Central Arkansas. We put significant thought into the need for IDEA in the area and did not decide lightly to focus on central Arkansas. After a thorough analysis of academic data, some of which is included here, we ultimately decided that IDEA schools in central Arkansas could provide a boost to the region’s school performance and an option for families who live far from a school achieving at least 50% student proficiency on ACT Aspire-tested subjects.

In order to understand educational need in central Arkansas, IDEA started with the data. Using the ADE’s “My School Info” portal to access and compare data across

schools, districts, and years, IDEA pieced together illustrative information about performance. Most of this data comes from School Years 2017-2019 – the last years ADE collected and published reliable data, before Covid disrupted K-12 education and assessments.

We looked first at graduation rates across central Arkansas. IDEA found that the graduation rates were below the state average across all the districts we studied: Pulaski County Special, Little Rock, North Little Rock, and Pine Bluff. In North Little Rock, Little Rock, and Pine Bluff, respectively, the graduation rates for low-income students were 78%, 77%, and 72%. This is well below the 100% graduation rate IDEA strives for, and the 98.8% graduation rate (99.9% when continuations are included) [IDEA achieved](#) across Texas in SY19-20.

IDEA then looked at overall achievement across four core tested subject areas: literacy, reading, math, and science. Among economically disadvantaged and English Learner students – two populations IDEA predominantly serves in Texas, and seeks to serve in Arkansas – significant gaps stood out. Looking at reading proficiency, for example, only about one in four North Little Rock low-income students met the bar, as did just one in five Little Rock students. Among English language learners in both districts, the rate was about 27% proficient in these same districts. These rates fall to 14% and just 5% -- 1 in 20 – in Pine Bluff. This pattern continues across all tested subject areas. The data made clear to IDEA that there are many students in each of these three districts where attending, and possibly even graduating from, a local school does not consistently mean preparedness for college or career.

Group		State of AR	Pulaski Co. Special SD	Little Rock SD	North Little Rock SD	Pine Bluff SD
<b>Enrollment</b>	Total Enrollment (Final)		11,709	21,202	7,986	2,865
<b>Overall College Going Rate</b>	Overall College Going Rate	51.50%	49.07 %	43.22 %	40.69 %	41.05 %
<b>Graduation Rates</b>	Economically Disadvantaged	84.80%	82.89 %	77.00 %	78.19 %	71.78 %
	All Students Combined	87.56%	85.21 %	78.38 %	82.53 %	71.28 %
<b>Literacy: ACT Aspire % Meets/Exceeds - All Grades</b>	Economically Disadvantaged	34.72 %	29.95 %	23.17 %	29.18 %	16.36 %
	English Learners	32.23 %	32.86 %	27.44 %	26.28 %	9.52 %
	Students with Disabilities	10.77 %	9.96 %	9.19 %	12.17 %	15.63 %
	All Students Combined	44.59 %	41.12 %	34.20 %	35.18 %	16.35 %
<b>Math: ACT Aspire % Meets/Exceeds - All Grades</b>	Economically Disadvantaged	37.93 %	29.70 %	24.97 %	27.94 %	15.35 %
	English Learners	38.52 %	38.21 %	31.98 %	26.05 %	19.05 %
	Students with Disabilities	13.13 %	11.95 %	9.91 %	8.76 %	3.73 %
	All Students Combined	47.18 %	39.82 %	35.46 %	31.95 %	15.35 %
<b>Science: ACT Aspire % Meets/Exceeds - All Grades</b>	Economically Disadvantaged	30.43 %	25.43 %	18.83 %	23.04 %	11.03 %
	English Learners	27.40 %	31.67 %	25.72 %	21.86 %	19.05 %
	Students with Disabilities	10.88 %	11.13 %	8.83 %	7.99 %	4.89 %
	All Students Combined	40.09 %	35.91 %	29.31 %	28.39 %	11.03 %
<b>Reading: ACT Aspire % Meets/Exceeds - All Grades</b>	Economically Disadvantaged	32.20 %	28.10 %	21.84 %	27.17 %	14.02 %
	English Learners	28.94 %	31.71 %	26.95 %	26.35 %	5.00 %
	Students with Disabilities	9.08 %	6.85 %	7.22 %	8.83 %	0.96 %
	All Students Combined	41.27 %	38.36 %	32.16 %	32.20 %	14.02 %

IDEA also seeks to understand achievement gaps among groups. In Central Arkansas, poverty rates correspond closely with race and ethnicity. Comparing the overall achievement of all Caucasian students (economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged) with the overall achievement of Economically Disadvantaged students reveals a significant gap. Using the data below, we see that the achievement gap in reading, for example, is 17% across the state between all Caucasian and Economically Disadvantaged students. This already sizable gap nearly doubles in North Little Rock School District (30%) and almost

triples to 46% in Little Rock School District. Both districts outperform the state with Caucasian students, and underperform the state with Economically Disadvantaged students. Pine Bluff has a minimal gap between these groups, but that owes to the fact that all groups fall within 1% of each other in Pine Bluff – and 18 to 39 points behind the state average. In short, low-income students are not excelling in these subjects.

Category	Group	Element	2018-2019 State of AR	2018-2019 Pulaski Co. SSD	2018-2019 Little Rock SD	2018-2019 North LRSD	2018-2019 Pine Bluff SD
Achievement	ACT Aspire - Literacy All Grades:	Caucasian	52.62 %	55.39 %	72.44 %	62.83 %	19.23 %
Achievement	ACT Aspire - Literacy All Grades:	Economically Disadvantaged	34.72 %	29.95 %	23.17 %	29.18 %	16.36 %
Achievement	ACT Aspire - Literacy All Grades:	Combined Population	44.59 %	41.12 %	34.20 %	35.18 %	16.35 %
		<b>Average EcoDis to White Gap</b>	<b>17.90%</b>	<b>25.44%</b>	<b>49.27%</b>	<b>33.65%</b>	<b>2.87%</b>
Achievement	ACT Aspire - Math All Grades: Pe	Caucasian	55.42 %	53.16 %	72.80 %	59.09 %	26.92 %
Achievement	ACT Aspire - Math All Grades: Pe	Economically Disadvantaged	37.93 %	29.70 %	24.97 %	27.94 %	15.35 %
Achievement	ACT Aspire - Math All Grades: Pe	Combined Population	47.18 %	39.82 %	35.46 %	31.95 %	15.35 %
		<b>Average EcoDis to White Gap</b>	<b>17.49%</b>	<b>23.46%</b>	<b>47.83%</b>	<b>31.15%</b>	<b>11.57%</b>
Achievement	ACT Aspire - Science All Grades:	Caucasian	48.95 %	50.39 %	66.67 %	55.86 %	18.52 %
Achievement	ACT Aspire - Science All Grades:	Economically Disadvantaged	30.43 %	25.43 %	18.83 %	23.04 %	11.03 %
Achievement	ACT Aspire - Science All Grades:	Combined Population	40.09 %	35.91 %	29.31 %	28.39 %	11.03 %
		<b>Average EcoDis to White Gap</b>	<b>18.52%</b>	<b>24.96%</b>	<b>47.84%</b>	<b>32.82%</b>	<b>7.49%</b>
Achievement	ACT Aspire - Reading All Grades:	Caucasian	49.17 %	51.91 %	68.14 %	58.13 %	13.04 %
Achievement	ACT Aspire - Reading All Grades:	Economically Disadvantaged	32.20 %	28.10 %	21.84 %	27.17 %	14.02 %
Achievement	ACT Aspire - Reading All Grades:	Combined Population	41.27 %	38.36 %	32.16 %	32.20 %	14.02 %
		<b>Average EcoDis to White Gap</b>	<b>16.97%</b>	<b>23.81%</b>	<b>46.30%</b>	<b>30.96%</b>	<b>-0.98%</b>

IDEA then used a combination of 2018-2021 data to build an understanding of performance in specific areas of the city. We started in southwest Little Rock, within LRSD. We selected an assortment of schools in geographic proximity to understand performance, as seen in the data below. Our first sampling included Romine Elementary, J.A. Fair Prep, Dodd Elementary, Bale Elementary, and Western Hills Elementary. The data below illustrates a significant need for improved academic scores. Take reading as an example: proficiency rates for economically disadvantaged students across all grades ranged from 8% to 21%. This means that at the highest performing school in the sample, only 1 in 5 students could read on grade level. Performance was similar across all four of the tested subject areas we compared, with no school rising above 31% proficiency (fewer than 1 in 3).

Group	Element	Romine Elem	J.A. Fair	Dodd Elem	Bale Eleme	W Hills Elem.
Enrollment by Grade & Race	Total	227	684	226	384	274
Attendance Rates	Economically Disadvantaged	93.16 %	83.94 %	94.15 %	90.56 %	92.65 %
Demographics Percentage	Black/African American	74.89 %	83.19 %	54.87 %	75.26 %	68.25 %
	Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.00 %	0.00 %	0.44 %	0.00 %	0.00 %
	Hispanic/Latino	22.03 %	12.28 %	36.73 %	16.67 %	25.55 %
	Students with Disabilities	0.88 %	5.12 %	1.77 %	1.56 %	0.73 %
	English Learners	20.70 %	9.36 %	33.63 %	15.36 %	25.18 %
Special Education	22.03 %	16.52 %	15.04 %	20.31 %	18.61 %	
Free/Reduced Paid Lunch Per	Percent Free/Reduced (Fina	94.27 %	84.94 %	87.17 %	90.10 %	90.88 %
ACT Aspire - Literacy All Grades: Percent	Economically Disadvantaged	15.75 %	8.58 %	19.00 %	17.88 %	19.17 %
	Combined Population	16.54 %	8.36 %	22.76 %	17.26 %	20.61 %
ACT Aspire - Math All Grades: Percent	Economically Disadvantaged	30.71 %	4.30 %	29.00 %	26.82 %	29.51 %
	Combined Population	30.83 %	4.34 %	31.71 %	27.41 %	32.33 %
ACT Aspire - Science All Grades: Percent	Economically Disadvantaged	17.32 %	5.70 %	18.00 %	19.44 %	16.39 %
	Combined Population	18.05 %	5.59 %	19.51 %	18.69 %	18.05 %
ACT Aspire - Reading All Grades: Percent	Economically Disadvantaged	18.11 %	8.22 %	21.00 %	19.55 %	16.67 %
	Combined Population	18.80 %	7.88 %	24.39 %	19.29 %	17.56 %

Next, we used the ADE data below to understand need in the North Little Rock School District. We sampled five schools in reasonable proximity to get an understanding of performance across grades. This included Boone Park Elementary, Ridge Road Elementary, Glenview Elementary, North Little Rock Middle, and North Little Rock High. Looking again at the foundational subject of reading, low-income student proficiency across all grades ranged from 11% to 24%. Other subject areas were similar, with no school exceeding 28% proficiency among low-income students. North Little Rock High School – that terminal point of K-12 from which students springboard to success or become mired in challenges – achieved

a low-income reading proficiency rate of 16%, a science proficiency of 12%, a math proficiency of 11%, and a literacy proficiency of 21%. The data would indicate that fewer than 1 in 5 students will enter adulthood at a bare-minimum bar of proficiency, as set by the state.

Group	Element	Boone Park El	North LR High	Ridge Rd. Elem	N LR Middle	Glenview Elem
Enrollment by Grade & Race	Total	312	2146	570	1153	294
Attendance Rates	Economically Disadvantaged	92.95 %	96.05 %	92.92 %	92.24 %	92.08 %
Demographics Percentage	Black/African American	87.50 %	59.04 %	55.09 %	59.76 %	85.37 %
	Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.00 %	0.05 %	0.00 %	0.17 %	0.00 %
	Hispanic/Latino	5.13 %	8.62 %	24.56 %	9.80 %	6.80 %
	Students with Disabilities	4.17 %	5.22 %	2.63 %	6.24 %	4.76 %
	English Learners	5.77 %	6.01 %	23.86 %	6.24 %	4.42 %
Free/Reduced Paid Lunch	Special Education	17.95 %	10.21 %	14.91 %	10.75 %	19.39 %
	Percent Free/Reduced (Final)	97.12 %	70.27 %	91.93 %	74.85 %	97.96 %
ACT Aspire - Literacy All Grades: Percent	Economically Disadvantaged	17.90 %	20.57 %	21.35 %	24.47 %	19.29 %
	Combined Population	17.90 %	32.92 %	21.35 %	36.36 %	19.29 %
ACT Aspire - Math All Grades: Percent	Economically Disadvantaged	27.78 %	11.44 %	27.30 %	20.17 %	20.00 %
	Combined Population	27.78 %	19.92 %	27.30 %	31.64 %	20.00 %
ACT Aspire - Science All Grades: Percent	Economically Disadvantaged	19.14 %	12.41 %	19.50 %	20.50 %	12.86 %
	Combined Population	19.14 %	22.21 %	19.50 %	32.06 %	12.86 %
ACT Aspire - Reading All Grades: Percent	Economically Disadvantaged	18.24 %	15.89 %	23.74 %	24.27 %	11.11 %
	Combined Population	18.24 %	26.50 %	23.74 %	34.95 %	11.11 %

It would not be fair to reduce the performance of districts or whole schools down to these data tables. We know that there are great things happening in every building in each of these districts. We also know that every student, regardless of birth circumstance or zip code, can achieve great things, including a college degree. Therefore, IDEA believes there that its presence in the greater Little Rock area can provide students and families with access to a very high-quality educational model that launches them successfully towards college and citizenship.

IDEA is aware that there are other charters serving students in Little Rock and Northwest Little Rock. IDEA differentiates itself through a relentless focus on college preparedness, college completion, and academic results for all students, regardless of birth circumstance of zip code. For the past 15 years, 100% of IDEA's seniors have been accepted into college, and 99.85% of them have matriculated to college on Day 1 (IDEA makes exceptions for military service, mission trips, and some special education students).. These results are unique among charter, traditional district, and even private schools. IDEA's model, which works from kindergarten to prepare students for the rigors of AP coursework and college, is also an uncommon combination of equity and rigor. While our college prep model may not sound altogether different from some others, our consistent execution and 20-year track record of success for our students is what truly differentiates us, and what stands apart from almost any other public school in the nation. Of our over 1400 seniors in the class of 2021, 100% of whom were admitted to college, over 70% will be the first in their family to attend college. This group of seniors has earned over \$73 million in grant and scholarship offers. As a charter school network, IDEA has earned numerous accolades. For 13 years, IDEA has been ranked on the prestigious US News and World Report's Best High Schools in America list. This year, 15 of IDEA's high schools earned a spot on this list, with 87% of our ranked high schools in the top 5% or higher. As such, IDEA sets itself apart with its students' strong academic results, year over year, for the past 20 years.

**3. Describe in general terms, the area within the boundaries of the school district where the applicant intends to obtain a facility to be used for the open-**

**enrollment public charter school.**

IDEA is seeking to secure one facility in North Little Rock, and one in southwest Little Rock. IDEA may also elect to operate two campuses in Little Rock, if securing a facility in the highest-needs area of North Little Rock isn't feasible.

Currently, IDEA is considering sites within the Little Rock and North Little Rock school districts. The geographic boundaries of IDEA's search mirrors the boundaries of these districts.

## SCHOOL INFORMATION

	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027
<b>Grades to be Offered</b>	N/A	K, 1, 2, 6	K-3, 6-7	K-4, 6-8	K-9
<b>Enrollment Cap</b>	N/A	1000	1500	2000	2600

<b>Charter Site Address:</b>	Exact location TBD
<b>City:</b>	Exact location TBD
<b>Chief Operating Officer:</b>	
<b>Phone:</b>	956-377-8000
<b>School District Where Charter Will be Located:</b>	Locations to be shared with ADE by August 4, 2021
<b>List the districts from which the charter school expects to draw students:</b>	Little Rock School District North Little Rock School District Pulaski County Special School District Jacksonville-North Pulaski School District

**4. What type of educational model will the school follow?**

- Traditional
- 100% Virtual
- College Prep
- Credit Recovery/ALE
- 

Other:

**5. Provide the mission statement of the proposed charter school:**

IDEA prepares students from under-served communities for success in college and citizenship.
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**6. Provide a list and brief description of the programmatic features that the school will implement in order to accomplish the mission.**

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IDEA's goal is to develop and provide educational opportunities to a diverse student body prepared for, accepted to, enrolled in, and ultimately graduated from college. IDEA's K-12 program model moves students to on-grade level performance and beyond to ensure college preparedness. Every child receives individualized instruction that prepares them academically for IDEA's rigorous college-preparatory environment.

Achieving the ambitious outcomes we set for our scholars requires a holistic approach to curriculum that provides a continuum of learning from kindergarten to college graduation. In K-2, the Reading Mastery Transformations program provides an individualized approach to building foundational literacy. Students build numeracy and foundational math skills through the Eureka Math program. In grades 3-5, mathematical thinking is developed through IDEA's math program, which utilizes Eureka Math. Throughout the K-5 Academy program, students engage with Wit and Wisdom. IDEA is also rolling out a comprehensive science and social studies program across these grades, starting this academic year. In middle school, a rigorous Pre-Advanced Placement (AP) curriculum combined with differentiated intervention prepares students for pre-college work. The AP for All program begins in ninth grade and ensures that students are prepared for college through a core program of AP courses. All students take at least 11 AP courses, with the opportunity to take more.

IDEA uses a variety of curricula. Our model relies almost entirely on IDEA-driven instruction, provided by on-site IDEA educators. IDEA regularly reassesses program and curricula to ensure that the best tools are being used to help our students achieve strong academic results. We will perform a thorough assessment of these tools as we enter Arkansas, and before we fully commit to any program.

High school graduation is not the end of IDEA students' educational careers. Our college success team is responsible for working with IDEA alumni to help them complete their degrees. This includes supporting alumni as they navigate scheduling, adapt to campus life, receive grants through IDEA's internal employee giving program, and build connections with fellow IDEA alumni on the same campus.

IDEA has a clearly defined program model for K-12. Some key facets of this model, relevant to the five-year term of this charter, are as follows:

### **Academy (K-5) Curriculum**

The vision for literacy at IDEA is to provide students with a foundation that prepares them to be literate thinkers in school, college, and beyond. Today's scholars must be able to engage with complex texts independently, read for knowledge, and respond to texts through written and oral communication. Additionally, they must be able to navigate the wide range of texts available through online media, discern audience and purpose, seek evidence, and appreciate a range of cultures and perspectives.

In grades K-2, the primary objective is to close achievement gaps for students so that by the end of second grade they are reading on or above grade level. K-2 students participate in the Reading Mastery Transformations program, which meets students where they are performing academically and works to quickly close their individual gaps while teaching to mastery. This approach brings students up to grade level. This program results in fewer K-2 students requiring intervention services.

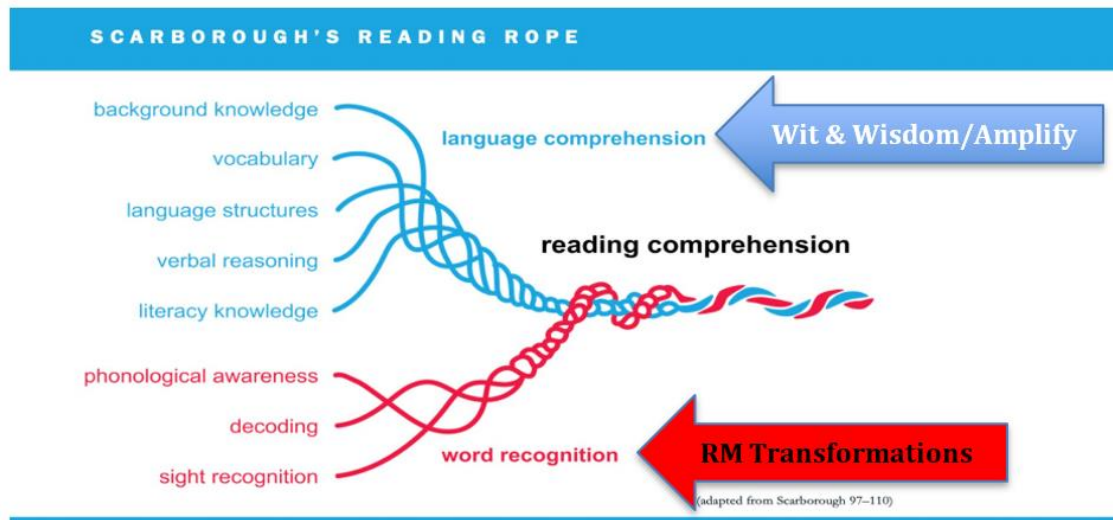
Reading Mastery Transformations (RMT) and Wit & Wisdom are the foundations of IDEA's K-2 literacy program. RMT is a model that emphasizes carefully planned lessons focused on learning in small increments. More than 40 years of research prove the efficacy of this style of direct instruction, particularly for at-risk learners and students from minority groups. RMT teachers use clear instruction and always teach to mastery. Groups are organized by level, so that every student can learn at their own pace. The goal is for each student to be on-level across all subjects. No student is left behind. Students are expected to score 90% or higher on daily and weekly assessments. Skills are taught in a way that enables students to build upon previous learning. Nearly every lesson incorporates and reviews previously taught skills so that children continue to build upon and incorporate key concepts they've already learned.

Students advance through the program only after they have demonstrated mastery of each concept. Students who show exceptional progress can progress faster through lessons if they show continued mastery. Students are also tested individually every five to ten lessons, and their progress is effectively tracked by the teacher. It is not uncommon to find a 1<sup>st</sup> grade student, for example, working with a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade group, if the data indicates that they have made accelerated progress. By and large, our 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students reach their reading goals by the end of this grade.

IDEA organizes each Reading Mastery Transformations class with two instructors: one teacher and one co-teacher. Students spend time

in small groups learning from one of these two teachers, who utilize a substantively scripted curriculum. Students rotate as a group into supervised individual learning time, where they practice the skills their teacher has just imparted. This model allows for new and seasoned teachers to work effectively and seamlessly together, and for each child to receive small group instruction for the duration of the day.

IDEA also utilizes Wit and Wisdom to advance our K-2 students. Students practice reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language in an integrated way, with every strand of the standards woven throughout each module. This integrated approach enables students to be more successful as they activate and build on their developing background and vocabulary knowledge of the module topic while learning skills in other areas throughout each Wit & Wisdom module. Wit & Wisdom complements the work of RMT, according to the following graphic:



Grades 3-5 comprise IDEA's Upper Academy. In these grades, IDEA utilizes Wit & Wisdom, a high-quality integrated English Language Arts curriculum developed by curriculum nonprofit organization Great Minds. Wit & Wisdom for grades 3-5 fully meets EdReports.org's expectations of indicators for Gateways 1, 2 and 3 – Text Quality, Building Knowledge and Usability. With this curriculum, IDEA students are provided more time and opportunity for creative growth, taking on a wide variety of individual and collaborative assignments. During these grades, teachers place more responsibility on students as they work to demonstrate mastery and excellence.

In IDEA's Upper Academy grades, students are given greater responsibility for their learning and measuring their progress.

Teachers hold students responsible for knowing where they stand in preparation for mastery exams via trackers. Students keep track of each skill they are responsible for knowing by the end of the year in their binders. When students demonstrate mastery of a concept, they meet with the teacher to document this. For example, if a student gets a 100% on a metaphor versus simile center game, they can place one sticker on the row, “Figurative Language: Student Distinguishes Simile from Metaphor.”

This type of student-centered classroom builds leaders who take initiative for themselves. Walk into an IDEA Academy classroom and one will see students in action, grappling with concepts and actively participating in a lesson while the teacher facilitates and pushes each student’s thinking. Students learn best when they learn by doing and can leverage opportunities to practice and repeat specific skills.

### **Grades K-5 Math**

At IDEA, excellent math instruction means teaching with a balanced approach to rigor. Teachers utilize open-ended assessment items to build AP-level skills and see students’ problem-solving, and utilize the calculator to build conceptual understanding, not sidestep content knowledge.

In grades K-5, IDEA utilizes Eureka Math – another curriculum developed by Great Minds – which sequences mathematical progressions to ensure student mastery from Pre-K through Pre-Calculus. Eureka Math is regarded by many non-profits and states to be best-in-class, and the K-5 curriculum fully meets EdReports.org’s expectations of indicators for Gateways 1, 2 and 3 – Text Quality, Building Knowledge and Usability.

IDEA also utilizes online learning tools for students to practice math skills in an individualized, self-paced manner. iLearning Hotspots on each campus allow students to work with adaptive math software that uses algorithms to develop a unique learning path and pace tailored to each student. An adult is always present to assist students and maintain a healthy learning environment.

### **Grades 2-8 ELA**

Wit & Wisdom is a comprehensive ELA curriculum used by IDEA Public Schools for second to sixth grade students. The program inspires curiosity and takes students on a journey through authentic literature and discussion of big topics like the Great Depression, ancient and modern mythology, and courageous people throughout history. Using this distinct program, students can engage in deep study of important topics through reading complex texts while taking ownership of their own learning and deepening their knowledge

of the world.

Wit & Wisdom consists of modules of study designed to help students develop habits that are common for strong readers and writers. Each module develops around complex texts and includes essential questions, reading, writing, exploration of language conventions and vocabulary study and discussion and concludes with an end-of-module task.

The Wit & Wisdom approach helps students and teachers celebrate the joy of reading and writing. By reading challenging books, students develop the knowledge and skills they need to be successful readers, critical thinkers, and effective communicators who love to learn and can succeed in college and careers.

Teachers in elementary school also utilize the “Being a Writer” curriculum, which teaches the writing process through a workshop model.

IDEA provides students with individualized, blended learning opportunities in ELA, as well. Accelerated Reader (AR) Zones are spaces on each campus that promote a culture of reading to help students equip themselves for a lifetime of reading. Using the AR computer program, teachers manage and monitor children’s independent reading practice. The software allows children to choose books at their reading level and then pace themselves in pursuit of their reading goals.

### **Grades 6-8: College Prep Program**

When opening new schools, sixth grade is an entry point for new students to IDEA. In alignment with our mission, we often serve students who are multiple grade levels behind. As a result, new sixth graders frequently enter IDEA classrooms 2-3 grade levels behind. To meet the needs of students at a wide range of learning levels while maintaining a high level of rigor, IDEA developed a hybrid schedule for middle school, which allows us to prioritize closing gaps in core content. The hybrid program for IDEA middle schools means they get more just-right practice in reading and math. This can include remediation, reinforcement, or acceleration, depending on an individual student’s needs.

Grades 6-8 continue to emphasize gains in ELA & math. Students begin to develop more autonomy and focus their efforts on reading, writing, and independent work so that teachers can provide on-the-spot coaching. Students also participate in science and humanities courses. The overall curriculum and intervention methodology enables students to achieve the level of skills needed to be successful in high-school grades and beyond. This means that IDEA’s middle school program is tailor-made to ensure preparedness for a rigorous AP for All program in high school.

IDEA also operates a program called Critical Student Intervention (CSI) during these grades. CSI provides additional reading and math instructional time using an evidence-based intervention. Students are supported to achieve gains by receiving double-blocks of math, reading, or both every day. In the 2020-2021 school year alone, nearly 2,000 students closed their two-year gap in reading thanks to the CSI program.

IDEA will consider additional, or other, curricula and programs, based on unique needs and requirements in Arkansas.

Several programmatic features of IDEA's model are key to this work:

**Staff Development:**

- **Principal and Teacher Preparation:** New IDEA schools begin with extensive planning in the 24 months before a school opens. This includes hiring high-potential school leaders who will train as Principals-in-Residence (PIR) at existing, high-performing IDEA schools for two years before they launch campuses in Arkansas. Principals-in-Residence are only given a principalship if they demonstrate mastery of key leadership competencies. This program ensures that new IDEA schools have the greatest possible opportunity to start strong. In addition to this extensive training, IDEA prepares a founding cohort of teachers through the Founding Teacher Fellowship. This program allows founding grade team members from each of IDEA Arkansas' first schools to work in an existing IDEA school for one year before launching IDEA schools in Arkansas. These individuals help transfer strong school culture and IDEA systems, ensuring that schools start off on strong footing.
- **Teacher evaluation and systems.** We understand that teachers are the most important factor in student success, and we are fully committed to ensuring that every classroom has a highly effective teacher. IDEA applies a rigorous vetting and hiring process for all instructional personnel, which includes sample teaching and roleplays to determine an instructor's pedagogical skill and ability to improve their practice based on coaching and feedback. IDEA emphasizes a candidate's ability to offer a clear and structured lesson, gauge the effectiveness of their teaching, and continuously improve based on coaching and feedback.

Once hired, instructional personnel are evaluated based on their performance, as determined by the Teacher Career Pathway (TCP). The TCP is an integral part of IDEA's work to constantly help instructors grow and improve in their craft, and to retain and reward IDEA's highest-performing teachers. All teachers are placed on the TCP, earning a level between a 1 (brand new teachers to IDEA) and a 5 (master teachers who exemplify instructional excellence). The TCP and its corresponding rubric also provide a common language across IDEA to facilitate strong teacher professional development and individualized support.

### **Campus Structure:**

- **Enrollment model:** Each IDEA campus opens with two schools on a site. In a campus' first year, students enroll in grades K, 1, 2 (Academy), and 6 (College Prep). Each of these schools will grow by one grade level each subsequent year until a campus is fully enrolled (K-12). This enrollment and growth approach allows IDEA to create a strong school culture and ensures that every child receives individualized instruction that prepares them academically for IDEA's rigorous secondary-level college-preparatory environment. Academic success in a rigorous environment is a necessary goal. IDEA has found that the number one factor that will determine whether IDEA graduates make it through college is their level of academic preparation.
- **Appropriate Class Sizes:** IDEA's learning environments are responsive to the stages of education and development students are in. Class size varies by curriculum delivery method, content, and grade level. For example, in Direct Instruction classrooms in grades K-2, students work in small group rotations, typically no larger than 12 students. In the middle and high school grades, class sizes are larger but only slightly above Arkansas' student to teacher ratios. Teachers receive targeted training and coaching to ensure their pedagogy matches their class model and size.
- **Small Cohorts:** IDEA's cohort size of approximately 120 students per grade serves to create a safe, close-knit community. Student culture reflects this at every level, from kindergarten to senior year. Students

generally know their peers in each class, as well as every teacher and administrator. In middle school, homeroom cohorts often travel together from class to class during the day. This small cohort size, and deliberate model, makes for a welcoming, nurturing, accountable, and safe atmosphere.

### **Learning Philosophy and Tools:**

- **Direct Instruction (DI):** Direct Instruction powers IDEA's core reading and language curriculum in the grades K-2. DI is a model that emphasizes carefully planned lessons focused on learning in small increments. It also focuses instruction around clearly defined teacher and student tasks. DI is based on the theory that by using clear instruction and teaching to mastery, teachers can accelerate learning for all students – high performers as well students with learning disabilities. Using the DI approach, students are placed in flexible, homogeneous groups for reading and language. Students are expected to score 90% or higher on daily and weekly assessments. Skills are taught in a way that builds upon previous learning; 85% of each lesson reviews or applies previously taught skills and 15% of instruction is new skills. Students advance through the program only after they have demonstrated mastery of the concepts. Students who show exceptional progress can fast-cycle through lessons if they show continued mastery of concepts. Students are individually assessed every five to 10 lessons, and their progress is meticulously tracked by the teacher.
- **Hybrid Learning:** A key component of our program consists of two elements focused on delivering a rigorous individualized learning experience for each student. Our iLearning program allows students to work with adaptive math software that uses algorithms to develop a unique learning path and pace tailored to each student's math level. Our Accelerated Reader (AR) program promotes a culture of reading to help our students equip themselves for a lifetime of learning and enjoyment. Using the AR computer program, teachers manage and monitor students' independent reading practice. The software allows students to choose books at their reading level and then pace themselves in pursuit of their reading goals.



- **Increasing Student Responsibility:** IDEA strives to ensure all students graduate prepared to thrive independently in college. Therefore, students are expected to take on greater responsibility as they progress throughout their K-12 education. In lower grades where students may need more foundational academic support, small group rotations allow for teachers to provide targeted support and more accurately monitor student progress throughout the school year. In the middle grades, programs like iLearning Hotspot and AR Zone empower students to take ownership of their learning by proceeding through work at a pace that is appropriate for them based on skill level. IDEA's highly trained teachers offer constant support, monitor student progress, and direct students toward advanced-level coursework when they are ready. Responsibilities increase significantly as students begin coursework in grades 6-8, and advance toward a full load of AP classes in grades 9-12. They are also enrolled in Road to College courses, which focus on building independence and organizational skills. IDEA high school students also participate in ACT prep courses, which are provided by the school.

#### **Academic Program:**

- **English Language Arts:** IDEA prioritizes phonics and early literacy through a rigorous implementation of the Direct Instruction (DI) reading and language program in K-1. As students continue with the DI reading curriculum, they also engage with Wit and Wisdom, a nationally recognized knowledge-building literacy program approved as a Science of Reading Curriculum by DESE. Wit and Wisdom forms the core basis of our reading and writing program through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Every Wit and Wisdom module, in each grade, focuses on a topic essential for building background knowledge, vocabulary, and writing skills. Whether students are learning about the seasons, the American Revolution, or space exploration they are exposed to works of literature, informational text, and art of the highest quality.
- **Math:** IDEA's Math curriculum is designed to prepare students for college-level math courses without the need for any remediation. In grades K-6, students engage with Eureka Math, a nationally-recognized mathematics curriculum that prioritizes true math fluency, knowledge-building and problem solving. In some states, IDEA students are expected to earn a

high school credit in middle school by taking Algebra 1 in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Students master state mathematics standards in pre-algebra through pre-calculus and study college-level math courses through the AP or international baccalaureate (IB) program.

- **Science:** Beginning in 2021, IDEA will implement the Amplify science curriculum in grades K-2. The science program for grades 3-8 is derived from multiple science curricula in preparation for AP science work in high school. IDEA's Science curriculum is designed to teach students a variety of critical thinking skills they will use throughout their primary, secondary, and post-secondary careers. Students will master state standards in a variety of science disciplines, including life science, earth science, biology, chemistry, and physics. While mastering these standards, students perform laboratory experiments, read, write, and solve problems. Upon graduation, students not only have a strong grasp of basic science knowledge, but also a core set of skills they can apply in college and beyond.
- **Humanities:** IDEA's Humanities curriculum is designed to teach students a variety of reading, writing, and critical thinking skills they will use throughout K-12, college, and beyond, including graduate school and their professional careers. Beginning in 2021, IDEA will begin using Insight Humanities as the curriculum for K-5<sup>th</sup> grades. Students master state standards in a variety of social science disciplines, such as world cultures, geography, history, government, and economics. While mastering these standards, students read primary documents, conduct research, and write analytical and research essays.
- **Spanish:** IDEA's Spanish curriculum is designed to teach students a variety of Spanish skills they will use throughout their secondary and post-secondary careers. Students master standards focusing on the four major skills: reading, speaking, listening, and writing. Students learn to answer document-based questions that integrate the four basic skills, write analytical essays, and engage in fluent conversations. IDEA students in some states earn a high school credit in 8<sup>th</sup> grade by completing Spanish 1.
- **Advanced Placement (AP):** IDEA has adopted an AP For All approach that ensures all students take at least 11 AP courses by the time they graduate. IDEA focuses on AP for All because peer-reviewed research by the Educational Testing Service, The College Board, the U.S. Department of Education, and [other researchers](#) all show strong evidence that participation in AP strongly correlates with student achievement, college readiness, and college completion. Studies show that students who take AP courses and exams are

more likely to enroll in four-year colleges, earn higher grade point averages, obtain a post-secondary degree, and earn higher incomes than students who do not. IDEA also focuses on AP courses in order to ensure graduates stand out in college admission, skip introductory courses, and earn college credits at a lower cost. The universality of AP at IDEA creates a mindset that AP is for all students and that all students can succeed in AP courses. It also ensures that every high school teacher at IDEA embraces the mindset of rigor and high expectations for all students, not just the “high performing” ones. The goal is that all students strive to become AP Scholars—a College Board designation that recognizes students who pass three or more exams with a score of three or higher. IDEA’s class of 2020 achieved an unprecedented 30% AP Scholar rate among seniors. This means 400+ of IDEA’s seniors earned AP Scholar. For comparison, just under 2097 of Arkansas’s nearly 33,799 seniors earned AP Scholar – just over 6%. While Arkansas does not publish the economic status of students who earn AP Scholar, it is true across the country that low-income students are underrepresented in this cohort – but not at IDEA.

- **Critical Student Intervention (CSI):** This time-tested IDEA intervention program provides additional reading and math instructional time using an evidence-based intervention during Blended Learning time or elective periods. Students are supported to achieve these gains by receiving double-blocks of math, reading, or both every day. This time is tightly guarded, and every effort is made to ensure nothing takes IDEA’s neediest students out of this crucial class time. To date, over 3,000 students with gaps of two or more years have closed that gap in one school year through this program. Each campus has a named CSI point person who leads this work. IDEA’s network-wide goal is for 50% of students in CSI Reading and 60% of students in CSI Math to grow two years or end the year on/above grade level. Progress is measured by interim assessments taken throughout the year, as well as by the cumulative exams at the end of the year. During the 2018-19 school year, 47% and 62% of our students made at least two years of academic gains in Reading and Math, respectively.
- **Differentiated blocks:** In addition to CSI, students in middle school have a 45-minute block that is individualized to meet their academic need. For students performing at or above grade level, this is a dedicated time for advanced coursework to support their progress and academic engagement. For students performing below grade level, this time is utilized for scaffolded academic support to help them catch up to their peers and close academic gaps at an accelerated speed.

IDEA’s instructors and courses are supported by a research and analysis team that constantly collects data and uses frequent student assessments (formal and informal) to determine progress towards mastery. As such, IDEA ensures that every school, class, and student is tracking towards successful completion of each course. As such, IDEA has a clear line-of-site on subject matter competency.

It is worth noting that IDEA's program model is well-tested. IDEA has operated since 2000, and has had 15 graduating classes in that time. Each one of those 15 senior classes has achieved 100% college acceptance (IDEA makes exceptions for military service, mission trips, and some special education students). During that same period, IDEA alumni – thanks in part to the tireless work of college counselors, families, and school staff – has achieved a 99.85% matriculation rate to college. IDEA's consistent performance has earned it a place on the *U.S. News and World Report* Best High Schools in the Nation list for each of the last 13 years. This year, 15 IDEA schools ranked among the best in the nation, with 87% of these eligible high schools ranking in the top 5% nationally. IDEA is extremely proud of the fact that our student body, which is 93% Black and Hispanic, and 86% eligible for free and reduced-price lunch, has consistently outperformed their peer group average on college graduation rates – typically by 4-5x.

**7. Establish performance criteria that will be used to measure the school's progress in improving student learning and meeting or exceeding the state educational goals. The mission of the school should be reflected in the performance criteria.**

IDEA uses a slate of performance metrics to ensure healthy academic, financial, personnel, and alumni outcomes. This list includes metrics that will not be applicable to IDEA Arkansas the year schools launch, but may be over time. Note that IDEA will adapt goals that rely on a state rating or assessment instrument, such ACT Aspire, to Arkansas. Other goals encompass all schools and regions served by IPS Enterprises/IDEA Public Schools, and thus will include IDEA Arkansas. A number of the goals included below extend past IDEA Arkansas's first five years and are to indicate the sorts of goals schools will strive towards from Day 1. Goals with three red asterisks next to them indicate applicability in the first 5 years of operations.

# 2020–21 ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS



MEASURE	Measuring Instrument	2020-21 GOAL
<b>Students Graduate College Ready</b>		
% of Graduates Matriculate to a College or University	Confirmed with alumni + National Student Clearing House data	100%
% of Graduates Matriculate to a Tier I/II College or University	Barron's college rankings + National Student Clearing House data	25%
% of Seniors Accepted to a College or University	Letters of Acceptance	100%
% of Seniors Named AP/IB Scholars	College Board/ International Baccalaureate	30%   25%
Earned State Rating/Internal District Rating ***	State Education Agency	A
% Basic   % Mastery   % Advanced on LEAP or Similar Internal Assessment ***	State Assessment	82%   14%   11%
% Approaches   % Meets   % Masters on STAAR/EOC or Similar Internal Assessment ***	State Assessment	90%   60%   30%
% of PreK-2nd Grade Students End the Year On/Above Grade Level in Reading   Language   Math (Year 1 Campuses) ***	Direct Instruction and internal metrics	80%   80%   90%
% of 2nd Grade Students End Year On/Above Grade Level in Reading (Year 2 Campuses) ***	Direct Instruction and internal metrics	90%
% of Students in CSI Achieve 2 Years Growth in Reading   Math (measured by Ren STAAR) ***	Ren STAAR	50%   60%
Average ACT Score (Class of 2021)	ACT Exam	21
% 4   % 6 Year College Graduation	National Student Clearing House	25%   55%
<b>Build a Strong &amp; Sustainable Organization</b>		
% Teacher Retention   % Employee Retention ***	Internal metrics	85%   85%
80% composite score on GPTW ***	Great Places to Work survey	80%
% Average Daily Attendance   # Average Daily Attendance ***	Internal/reported attendance	97.60%   63,780
% Student Persistence ***	Internal retention data	90%
Operating Income ***	Internal metrics & financial audit	\$127MM
FIRST Rating	State Rating	A
<b>Achieve Mission at Scale</b>		
% of Students with Low Socioeconomic Status ***	Student data + reporting	80%
Enrollment ***	Internal/reported attendance	80,352
Schools in Operation ***	State reporting	152
Total Funds Raised (Millions) ***	Internal metrics	\$51MM

## CURRICULUM

**8. Will the school provide the required courses as outlined in the Standards for Accreditation and the 38 Required High School Course Offerings? If not, explain what changes will be made. What additional electives will be offered?**

IDEA is requesting a waiver for the 38 Required High School Course Offerings. IDEA will, of course, comply with Arkansas' credit requirements for high school graduation. IDEA is seeking a waiver because, as a high school with fewer than 500 students, each IDEA College Prep program will not have the resources to offer this full complement of 38 courses annually. IDEA's national team supports and develops a detailed, robust, and easily accessible slate of resources to support 26 high school courses. Regions develop, gather, or purchase additional resources to support other courses, as well. As such, IDEA will offer a well-rounded college preparatory education for all high school students, rooted in an AP curriculum that ensures every student take at least 11 AP courses. IDEA's holistic education model also ensures students have access to rigorous, far-ranging elective courses, typically including STEM and performing arts electives.

Elective offerings vary by IDEA campus, based on the preferences of students and the expertise of staff. While not all of these electives will be offered in every school or region, the following is a sample of electives offered at schools across IDEA (note that any individual school will only offer a limited selection of the courses listed below, which are gathered from across the 120 schools in the IDEA network):

- Broadcast Journalism Advanced
- Yearbook
- Aerospace Engineering
- Audio/Video Production
- Biomedical Innovation (PLTW)
- Commercial Photography C
- Concepts of Engineering and Technology
- Creative Writing
- Debate
- Digital Communications in the 21st Century
- Engineering Design and Problem Solving
- Fundamentals of Computer Science
- Intro Engineering Design
- Journalism
- Medical Terminology
- Money Matters
- Personal Financial Literacy
- Pharmacology
- Photojournalism

- Practical Writing Skills
- Business Marketing and Finance
- Principles of Engineering
- Principles of Health Science
- Professional Communications
- Research/Technical Writing
- Robotics
- Social Studies Research Method-
- Engineering Design & Development (PLTW)
- Human Body Systems (PLTW)
- Medical Interventions (PLTW)
- Principles of Biomedical Science (PLTW)
- Yoga
- AP Comparative Government and Politics
- AP Computer Science Principles
- AP European History
- AP Psychology
- AP Seminar
- AP Research
- AP Drawing
- AP History of Art
- AP Computer Science A
- AP English Language and Composition

IDEA Arkansas schools will have the ability to add specific elective offerings based on academic need, student demand, and community desires. By the time full enrollment is reached, all IDEA high schools offer a variety of AP and non-AP electives.

**9. Describe the process that will be used to ensure all curriculum materials used in the educational program are aligned with the Arkansas Academic Standards?**

IDEA's Academic Services Team is responsible for curriculum selection, design, and evaluation. The Curriculum Managers on the Academic Services Team will have content knowledge expertise, as well as experience teaching and leading in schools. IDEA will also leverage best-in-class resources and experts, including the Arkansas Public School Resource Center and DESE, to provide insight into widely-used curricula in the state.

IDEA will ensure that its curriculum and materials are fully aligned with Arkansas Academic Standards. For each state IDEA operates in, it adapts to the legally required curriculum and standards. IDEA uses the state standards to develop or purchase rigorous curricula, materials, and products that prepare students for success with state standards, AP tests, and college-level work. IDEA will ensure that all curriculum and assessments align to both Arkansas and AP standards.

IDEA's curriculum is developed or selected centrally by IDEA curriculum managers who are

trained and knowledgeable on Arkansas-specific requirements and standards. In addition to state-alignment, the goal of curriculum managers is to define rigorous student outcomes and provide a clear roadmap to help teachers get their students to achieve mastery. Curriculum managers apply content expertise and subject-specific experience to create, select, and/or amend high-quality curriculum documents that form the foundation of IDEA instruction.

IDEA has successfully met other states' requirements. For example, as IDEA expanded from Texas to serve families in Louisiana and Florida, the network adapted its curriculum to meet each state's standards while also maintaining a high level of rigor. As we prepare to open schools in Arkansas, IDEA is conducting a thorough evaluation of curricular requirements, programs and products to determine which are best aligned with Arkansas' K-12 standards. IDEA prioritizes resources that help all students to meet and exceed their goals, and which provide a high level of rigor.

To ensure this outcome, IDEA is in the process of, and will: 1) deeply study the Arkansas state standards to develop a clear understanding of requirements and how best to achieve student outcomes; 2) assess curricula used at other IDEA schools to determine fit with the Arkansas state standards; and 3) select, curate, and/or design a curricula that fully aligns with the Arkansas state standards and IDEA's vision of all children college ready. IDEA will assess whether curricula used in other states, particularly Wit & Wisdom and Eureka Math, will support students in Arkansas to meet and exceed expectations, and prepare students for the rigor of AP coursework. As such, IDEA may develop or select new or amended curricula to meet standards in Arkansas.



## STUDENT SERVICES

### 10. Describe how the school will provide guidance and counseling services for all students.

IDEA places a premium on ensuring that every student has ready access to both social/emotional and academic counseling throughout their time at IDEA. This includes access to a range of professionals, including a School Counselors, College Counselors, and Social Workers, among others.

To ensure the social and emotional health of every student, each IDEA campus will employ at least one social worker. Social workers partner directly with our at-risk scholars to ensure that they graduate from IDEA and make it to and through college by providing them individualized emotional, behavioral and mental health support. Their goal is to work with a group of at-risk scholars and have them independently master coping skills to address and overcome mental, behavioral, and academic challenges. At IDEA, social workers schedule individualized and reoccurring sessions to address mental health needs; establish individualized counseling goals for scholars; use knowledge and understanding of the reciprocal influences of home, school, and community to intervene for scholar success; when appropriate pursue practices such as crisis intervention, home visits, conflict resolution, individual and group counseling, consultation, program development, dropout prevention, and coordination of school and community services; inform IDEA's school leadership team when there is a potential persistence concern; communicate with family to figure out root cause and develop solutions to address concerns; collaborate with lead team to create a joyful, respectful school culture where scholars want to come to school; assist with campus joy factor, events and celebrations; collaborate with teachers of concern to develop a plan to address failing grades concerns; and communicate with families regarding weekly progress, as needed.

IDEA Arkansas will also employ licensed school psychologist(s) who hold the required School Psychology Specialist (SPS) certification from ADE. The school psychologist demonstrates knowledge and skill in assessments, special education eligibility, academic and behavioral interventions, state and federal legal frameworks for special education, and compliance with all facets of special education. Each school psychologist will help a portfolio of campuses, where they support students and parents through problem-solving interventions. They also provide direct student behavioral supports and track student progress towards IEP goals.

IDEA maintains a robust academic and college counseling force. In a campus' first year, it will employ one school counselor who serves both schools on a single campus; by the second year, each school will employ its own school counselor. IDEA School Counselors (SCs) support three main work streams: family engagement, social emotional support, and to a lesser extent, testing. SCs take on numerous

responsibilities, as they collaborate with school leaders and teachers to reach school goals; coordinate all standardized testing and district-wide assessments; empower students to build emotional intelligence; identify and proactively work with truant and other at-risk students; identify students at risk of leaving IDEA and lead prevention strategies; and facilitate family involvement. IDEA will ensure that testing support responsibilities meet the state's 90/10 time requirements for counselors.

IDEA College Counselors educate students and parents about the benefits of post-secondary education. They are also responsible for administering all aspects of the college search and admissions process and ensuring all students are on track for graduation. College counselors also teach college readiness classes. They join the College Prep team when 9<sup>th</sup> grade is added to a campus. They take on numerous responsibilities to: ensure all students are on-track to graduate from high school; guide students and parents through the college search, admissions, and financial aid processes; support teachers in planning college field lessons and scheduling college visits to IDEA; teach Road To and Through College (RTTC) classes to 9-12<sup>th</sup> graders; create the school's master class schedule and schedule all students; establish and maintain a cooperative working relationship with students and families based on trust, understanding and respect for the communities in which they identify; and participate in regular parent meetings and parent information sessions.

IDEA Directors of College Counseling (DCC) oversee the college admissions and financial aid application process for 12<sup>th</sup> grade students at an IDEA College Preparatory school (Grades 6-12) in order to ensure 100% of high school graduates enroll at and set foot on a four-year college or university. The DCC manages the Counseling team. They educate students and parents about the benefits of post-secondary education. They guide students in their college search and selection and ensure all students are on track for graduation. Directors of College Counseling may also teach college readiness lessons.

By the time an IDEA college prep school has a senior class, each school has a college counseling staff of three, including a director of college counseling, for a senior class of roughly 100 students. This makes for a consistently small student-to-counselor ratio, allowing ample time to be spent with each student to ensure they are submitting their strongest possible application to their best-fit schools, and negotiating hard for the most favorable financial arrangements for each student. Counselors also spend a large amount of time ensuring recent graduates matriculate to college and have the resources they need to persist and succeed in school. A low counselor-to-student ratio helps make this possible.

## **11. Describe how the school will provide library media services for all students.**

IDEA provides a number of library media services across numerous programs and

locations on an IDEA campus. IDEA is seeking a waiver from library media services requirements. IDEA will meet these library media academic standards through instruction and support in other core academic courses, including English language arts and social studies. IDEA will work with DESE to ensure that its plan to cover content standards in other courses is acceptable.

In elementary and middle school, students participate in the Accelerated Reader (AR) Zone Program. In the AR Zone, students choose books at their independent reading level to develop fluency, comprehension and a love of reading. AR Zone couples reading materials with adult support and individualized assessments to ensure a student comprehends the material they have chosen. The AR Zone is staffed with a facilitator who can provide students with support in selecting reading materials and assessments. IDEA does not plan to hire a licensed library media specialist (see waivers).

The AR Zone is supplemental core ELA instruction. The AR Zone reflects our belief in the importance of independent reading to develop essential reading skills. The AR Zone is designed around the Accelerated Reader (AR) Program from Renaissance Learning; this computer-based system assesses each individual student's skill, places them at a reading level, and identifies books within that level for independent practice. When students finish reading a book, they take a comprehension quiz in the Renaissance online program. All students in grades 1st–7th grade rotate through the AR Zone to check out books for reading throughout the school day and at home. Students in 8<sup>th</sup> grade also check out books for interest and/or research from the AR Zone. In this way, the AR Zone is a combination classroom and library.

The purpose of the AR Zone is to reinforce our belief in the joy of reading as fundamental to a literate adulthood and to give each student regular and sustained opportunities to read books of their choice, thereby building their fluency, stamina, and comprehension. Student reading in the AR Zone (and outside of the space through book check outs) leads to increases in individual independent reading levels, fosters independent inquiry and comprehension, and emphasizes the joy of being part of a community of readers. We know that students grow as readers from ample opportunities to read independently. We also know that independent reading practice yields the best results when the following tenets are in place:

1. The reading is on students' "just right level", meaning that each student is reading within their zone of proximal development to support increasing their fluency.
2. Reading occurs frequently and for sustained amounts of time throughout the school day and at home for at least one hour per day.
3. Reading is enjoyable enough for students to persist through appropriate amounts of challenge.

Founded on these three principles, the AR Zone develops students who are prepared to joyfully take on the volume and rigor of college reading. Students have clear and specific goals that align with this volume & rigor. AR goals for students are 1) they become Word Masters by reading a set number of words for their grade level, and 2)

having an average accuracy score of at least an 80% on the AR comprehension quizzes. These goals serve a larger purpose: for students to read more challenging books over the course of the year and ultimately end the year at a higher reading level than they began the year.

High school students have a number of routes to access library media services. Currently, every student is issued his/her own tablet or laptop through IDEA's 1:1 initiative. The purpose of the 1:1 initiative is to provide students with numerous opportunities to access, engage, and pursue mastery of new material. College Prep students in 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade have a subscription to an online e-book program called myON, so that they may check out books of interest and those related to specific areas of study.

High school classroom libraries and textbook sets also play an integral part in ensuring all secondary students at IDEA have ample access to reading materials. IDEA also provides all books that are required as part of high school course work, which equates to dozens of books that students can annotate and keep over the course of high school. These carefully selected books become a part of a student's growing personal library as they head off to college. Additionally, some IDEA campuses have a Reading and Research Center (RRC) on their College Prep campus, allowing secondary students access to a space purpose-built for reading and research, similar to a library on a college campus.

Per library media standards, IDEA will maintain an appropriate balance of print, non-print, and electronic media that is adequate in quality and quantity to meet the academic standards for all students.

## **12. Describe how the school will provide special education services for all students.**

IDEA accepts all students through an open-enrollment lottery process and welcomes every student, regardless of emotional/physical/learning disability or linguistic need. IDEA's philosophy is to provide the level of individualized support that each student needs in order to achieve success. IDEA will fully comply with its Child Find obligations under federal law. IDEA also provides transportation services as required by a student's IEP, ensuring that transportation for a student with an IEP needing transportation is never a barrier to attend IDEA. Special education students with 504 plans will receive the required Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) as outlined in federal and state law. Note that IDEA has operated as its own Local Education Agency (LEA) in Texas for 20 years and, over that time, has been responsible for understanding, implementing

and complying with the rules and regulations in the Individual with Disabilities Education Act.

IDEA offers a comprehensive special education program, providing the full continuum of placements and services that meet the needs of and serve K-12 students through developmentally appropriate and inclusive instructional groups, accommodations, and services. All of this is done in accordance with FAPE and student's Individual Education Plans (IEPs). IEP decisions are made by a team that includes all required IEP team members, inclusive of a parent. IDEA serves students with a wide variety of special education needs and disabilities – ranging from speech-language challenges to autism to cerebral palsy, among other needs – and provides instruction in the least restrictive environment (LRE). Support services and placements are offered along the full continuum, from being fully mainstreamed into general education classrooms to attending a self-contained classroom with low student/teacher ratio, based on each student's individual needs or other specific placement needs per the student's IEP. IDEA trains staff regularly on FAPE, Child Find, LRE and special education legal requirements and best practices, to ensure comprehension and adherence to all legal requirements and best practices.

All IDEA special education teachers will hold valid special education teaching licenses. All Arkansas special education class sizes and teaching load requirements under state law or in a student's IEP will be followed by IDEA Arkansas.

The vast majority of IDEA students with special needs learn in an integrated classroom setting. In instances where an IEP calls for it, special education teachers provide pull-out services to supplement classroom learning with small group and one-on-one tutoring. When a student's IEP calls for an alternative assessment, and/or an alternative curriculum pathway, teachers may need to educate a student outside of an inclusion setting. This is done when required by an individual student's needs and IEP. Note that special education services are typically offered in the same building as all other education services, unless a student's specific services or placement requires otherwise.

IDEA will contract or employ licensed therapists and specialists in the areas of speech-language, occupational, and physical therapy. IDEA will also contract or employ psychologists, counselors, therapists, and providers required to deliver specific services for a student, as required under their IEP, at no cost to families.

Students with significant special education needs may also participate in the RISE (Reaching Independence through Support and Education) program, which seeks to provide services that empower students to become active

members of society based on their individual strengths and abilities. These occur in a separate, specifically designed classrooms with very low student-to-teacher ratios. Note that IDEA's RISE program is distinct from the state of Arkansas' RISE program, though the two share a common name.

To support all students to meet their goals, the district-wide Special Programs Team provides resources, training, and support for all schools. The Special Programs Team provides guidance, resources, and supports for serving students who have Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and/or receive 504, homebound, dyslexia, or special education services in accordance with state, federal, and local policies and procedures. The Special Programs Team also works with campus staff and parents to ensure that all students receiving special services are fully included in their school's instructional and extracurricular programs, in accordance with least restrictive environment. The special education teachers at each school collaborate with Academic and Social Counselors, who provide individualized interventions and supports for students with learning, emotional and behavioral disorders. IEPs are reviewed regularly to ensure that students are receiving the supports they need, and to ensure that each student's individual plan still matches their current needs.

IDEA takes continuous improvement with special student populations just as seriously as it does with the rest of its program. IDEA focuses on frequent data collection via various types of assessments to determine if sufficient progress is being made with special student populations. If students are in standard classrooms, this responsibility falls to instructors as it would in every other case, as well as a special education teacher, if applicable; if this is in a RISE classroom, the RISE instructor(s) are responsible for ensuring and tracking progress. If students are not making adequate progress, their instructor will receive support from an assistant principal of instruction and/or principal, as well as special education support staff, to plan improvements to instruction; receive feedback on implementation; and assess effectiveness. This occurs on the same cycle as the rest of the school.

IDEA recognizes that early and frequent communication with families is essential to recruiting, retaining and serving students with special needs. Marketing and communications materials developed for recruiting purposes (i.e., billboards, advertisements, household mailings, social media, websites, etc.) regularly include information about IDEA's ability to serve students with special needs. Staff members involved in recruiting students at in-person events are also equipped to share this information with interested families. IDEA is proud to report that the fastest-growing segment of its student population are students with special needs, fueled largely by word-of-mouth.

Special Education teachers also meet with incoming students and their

families to share additional information about how IDEA supports students with a variety of disabilities. The parents of students receiving life skills support have become vocal advocates for the IDEA special education program and communicate with new RISE parents at Welcome to IDEA events, report card nights, and other school gatherings, creating a strong community within IDEA.

Academic and Social Counselors are also trained to identify students who may be struggling with homelessness or other out-of-school challenges. Counselors offer high-touch support services to connect these students and their families with community resources that can help with emergency housing and other needs. IDEA addresses the food insecurity that many of IDEA's homeless and low-income students face through the district's robust Child Nutrition Program (CNP). In addition to offering free nutritious breakfast and lunch daily, some campuses offer a free supper program for at-risk students and their families, providing an additional meal each day around 4:30 pm, as part of after-school programming. Some IDEA schools partner with community non-profits, such as Communities in Schools, in order to provide further support for students and their families. IDEA will work with local non-profits in central Arkansas in order to ensure that IDEA students receive the wraparound supports that parents have come to expect in their public schools.

**13. Describe how the school will provide dyslexia screening and services for all students.**

IDEA will comply with ADE's requirements and guidance for identifying and serving students with dyslexia, including ADE's Dyslexia Resource Guide as amended, and ADE's Commissioner Rules Governing How to Meet the Needs of Children with Dyslexia. All students are given DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) assessments in PK-2 at the beginning, middle and end of each school year. DIBELS allows IDEA staff to use a uniform, nationally normed, quick assessment to identify students' literacy strengths and areas for growth. DIBELS scores will be used to identify students who need further assessment and support for challenges including dyslexia. Parents are informed in writing following the initial DIBELS assessment with information about their student's score, and if the score indicates a need for further collaboration to determine if the student has dyslexia.

IDEA seeks to understand as much about our students as possible before the start of the academic year. We assess all IDEA students in grades 3-8 using the

Renaissance STAR Reading & Math program to determine if any student needs intervention services. Renaissance STAR is a national, norm-referenced assessment. When a student falls below grade level on this assessment, we give them a placement test for our Critical Student Intervention program (CSI). When this assessment reveals signs of dyslexia, we commence a Response to Intervention (RTI) process that provides a student with the support they need to become a strong reader. If a student was identified by their previous school as having dyslexia, that student is automatically placed in a small group for CSI. They work on Direct Instruction decoding using research-based strategies that IDEA and numerous other school systems have used to great success. Provided it is warranted, IDEA works with a student and their family or guardian to develop an IEP or 504 Plan. That student is given the services their IEP calls for, with a goal of mitigating dyslexia and ensuring the student is ready to succeed in a college classroom, as a college-level reader, by the time they graduate from IDEA. IDEA employs dyslexia trained staff to serve these students. All new 9-12 students are assessed in a similar fashion. For high school students who have been with IDEA for years, dyslexia screenings come either via referrals from teachers, parents, or staff members, or based on a persistent inability to progress in subjects where dyslexia could prove to hamper a student's abilities.

The table below outlines the 6 key dyslexia descriptors and their appropriate definitions as they pertain to students with dyslexia. Beside the definition, the table lists IDEA's approved dyslexia program, Reading Mastery Signature Edition, and Corrective Reading. The specific skills that address the related descriptors are noted, as is the order in which they are taught.

The next table outlines the descriptors for an effective dyslexia program. Alongside these descriptors is IDEA's approved dyslexia program and specific details outlining the Reading Mastery program that correlate with these descriptors.

Dyslexia Descriptors	Definition	Reading Mastery Signature Edition	Corrective Reading: Decoding
Phonological Awareness	<i>Phonological awareness</i> is a meta-cognitive skill (i.e., an <i>awareness</i> /ability to think about one's own thinking) for the sound structures of language. <i>Phonological awareness</i> allows one to attend to, discriminate, remember, and manipulate sounds at the sentence, word, syllable, and phoneme (sound) level.	<b>RMSE K</b> Sound Pronunciation and Oral blending Phoneme Stretching Rhyming Segmentation Saying sounds in words <b>RMSE 1</b> Segmentation Blending sounds into words	<b>DECODING A:</b> Students are taught to identify sounds that compose words orally. Students practice listening and repeating spoken words. Students learn to manipulate sounds in words to produce different words. <b>DECODING B:</b>



	Phonological awareness includes awareness of phonemes (the smallest parts of spoken language) and the ability to telescope, segment and rhyming sounds of speech.		Students are introduced to new words and word types, phonemic relationships, long and short vowel sounds, sound combinations. Students read stories with increasing length and complex syntax. Students answer comprehension questions.
Syllabication  Sound – Symbol Association	<p><b>Letter Sound Plan</b> <b>Syllabication</b> is the art of forming or dividing words into syllables. Syllables are single speech parts that are made up of a vowel <b>sound</b> with or without a closely combined consonant <b>sound</b></p> <p>The alphabetic principle is composed of two parts: Alphabetic Understanding: Words are composed of letters that represent <b>sounds</b>. Phonological Recoding: Using systematic relationships between letters and phonemes (letter-<b>sound correspondence</b>) to retrieve the pronunciation of an unknown printed string or to spell words</p>	<p><b>RMSE K</b> Letter sound correspondence Print orientation from left to right; top to bottom Letter tracing/Sound Writing Letter sound/Picture Discrimination Sound Identification Identifying sequence of sounds and blending sounds into words Sequencing letters by copying text</p> <p><b>RMSE 1</b> Letter sound correspondence/sound combinations Blending sounds Reading words: regular, irregular, words with suffixes, contractions Vocabulary development Reading words review Blending sounds into words Onset Rhyme Sentence Copying Segmentation Review Spell by letter name Writing sentences</p>	<p><b>DECODING A:</b> Students learn sound-out strategy by first identifying sounds in words and blending sounds into a word. Students learn to spell and read irregularly spelled words.</p> <p><b>DECODING B:</b> Students learn pronunciation, sounds of letters, and letter combinations, structural analysis of word parts and endings, critical word discrimination including VCe and CVCe words.</p>

<p>Orthography Morphology Syntax</p>	<p><b>Morphology:</b> Study of the units of meaning in language such as suffixes and prefixes  <b>Syntax:</b> Grammar, the rules that determine word order  <b>Semantics:</b> Word meaning, deals with multiple meanings and figurative language.  <b>Pragmatics:</b> the use of language in a particular context</p> <p>An <i>orthography</i> is a set of conventions for writing a language. It includes norms of spelling, hyphenation, capitalization, word breaks, emphasis, and punctuation.</p>	<p><b>RMSE 1</b>  Connected Text increasing in complexity  Oral and written comprehension  Answering questions involving discriminations such as what, who, when, why, and how  Basic deductions  Sentence Copying  Writing Sentences</p>	<p><b>DECODING C</b>  Structural analysis of words, multisyllabic words, prefixes, suffixes, irregular words.  Read increasingly complex sentence syntax.  Story grammar features.  Sequencing, cause and effect, compare and contrast in passages.</p>
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<p>Reading Comprehension</p> <p>Reading Fluency</p>	<p><b>Reading comprehension</b> is defined as the level of understanding of a text. This understanding comes from the interaction between the words that are written and how they trigger knowledge outside the text.</p> <p><b>Reading fluency</b> is the ability to <b>read</b> accurately, smoothly and with expression. <b>Fluent readers</b> recognize words automatically, without struggling over decoding issues. ... <b>Fluency</b> is important because it bridges between word recognition and comprehension. It allows students time to focus on what the text is saying.</p>	<p><b>RMSE K</b></p> <p><b>Fluency</b> Say it fast/ Fluency Encoding through segmenting words and writing sounds in the words</p> <p><b>Comprehension</b> Teacher Models Reading Connected Text Visual Discrimination Picture Comprehension Sequencing Picture Inference: Note details Make predictions: Prior Knowledge: Infer Feeling Predict/Confirm Predictions Make Connections Metacognitive Skills</p> <p><b>RMSE 1</b> Reading words/ Fluency Repeated reading/Rate and accuracy</p> <p><b>Spelling:</b> Phonograms Segmentation Writing sounds Writing words Spell by letter name Spelling words Identifying spelled words Phonemic Segmentation</p> <p><b>Fluency:</b> Reading words Repeated Reading</p> <p><b>Comprehension:</b> Following directions Note details Visualize Determine character emotions Make judgments Make deductions Drawing inferences Predictions Cause and Effect Rule Introduction Rule Review Answering Literal questions about a text Interpreting a character's feelings</p>	<p><b>DECODING A:</b> Encoding: Students learn to spell sounds and words from dictation.</p> <p>Students read sentences and passages with fluency.</p> <p>Students respond orally and in writing to reading comprehension questions.</p> <p><b>DECODING B</b> Students increase passage reading fluency; understand literal and inferential comprehension questions.</p> <p><b>DECODING C:</b> Students learn meaning of 600 vocabulary words, read narrative and expository passages, introduces a range of sentence types and conventions typical of textbook material. Students develop vocabulary, word reading accuracy, passage reading fluency, ability to respond to literal and inferential comprehension questions</p> <p><b>Comprehension skills taught in Decoding C include:</b></p>
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			Summarizing Character, setting, plot, solutions Main idea Cause & effect Compare & contrast Sequencing
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<b>Descriptors For an Effective Dyslexia</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>IDEA's Reading Program</b>
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Program		
Explicit Direct Instruction	<p>Systematic, Sequential, Cumulative, No assumptions of prior skills</p> <p>System of teach that is Systematic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scientific</li> <li>• Structured</li> <li>• Logical</li> <li>• Integrated</li> <li>• Designed specifically for students with difficulties in reading</li> </ul> <p>Sequential Presentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simple to complex</li> <li>• Frequent to Infrequent</li> <li>• Reliable to less reliable</li> <li>• Letters-Syllables-Words- Sentences</li> </ul> <p>Cumulative Instruction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small increments of new learning</li> <li>• Controlled Materials</li> <li>• Consistent Systematic Repetition</li> <li>• Application of Basic Concepts Learned</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Validated by extensive and exhaustive research</li> <li>• Proven to work in a wide range of classrooms, schools, and districts</li> <li>• Systematic, explicit instruction for heightened academic achievement</li> <li>• Skills and processes are clearly linked, within as well as across, each strand</li> </ul> <p><b>Strategy-based instruction</b> allows students to learn new information in a more efficient way:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complex tasks are analyzed and broken into component parts</li> <li>• Each part is taught in a logical progression</li> <li>• The amount of new information is controlled and connected to prior learning</li> <li>• Ample practice opportunities ensure mastery<sup>[SEP]</sup></li> </ul>
Individualized	Research-based instruction that matches the INDIVIDUAL student's needs	<p><b>Continuous informal tests and curriculum-based assessments</b> help:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor and report student progress</li> <li>• Determine areas that need attention<sup>[L]</sup></li> <li>• Guide placement and movement through the program</li> </ul>
Intensive	<p>Maximizes student engagement</p> <p>Uses specialized methods and materials</p> <p>Produces results</p> <p>Contains all the components of instruction</p>	<p><b>Intensive, explicit, systematic instruction</b> helps students use skills<sup>[SEP]</sup> and processes with a high rate of success, because<sup>[SEP]</sup>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whatever is presented is <b>taught</b>, clearly and directly<sup>[SEP]</sup></li> <li>• Whatever is taught is actively <b>practiced</b>, multiple times</li> </ul>

<p>Meaning Based</p>	<p>Instructional goals that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate accuracy and fluency</li> <li>• Emphasize comprehension and composition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addresses all five essential components of reading as identified by Reading First: Phonemic awareness, phonics and word analysis, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension</li> <li>• Provides spelling instruction to enable students to make the connection between decoding and spelling patterns</li> <li>• Develops student decoding and word recognition skills that transfer to other subject areas</li> <li>• Teaches the oral language skills necessary to understand what is spoken, written, and read in the classroom</li> <li>• Develops the ability to use writing strategies and writing process successfully</li> </ul>
<p>Multisensory</p>	<p>The term multisensory has been used to refer to an learning that includes the use of two or more sensory modalities simultaneously to take in or express information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visual</li> <li>• Oral</li> <li>• Auditory</li> </ul>

**14. Describe how the school will provide screening and instruction for English Language Learners.**

IDEA’s national English Language Learner (ELL) population is around 36%—significantly higher than Arkansas’ statewide ELL rate of 8%. IDEA identifies students with limited English proficiency shortly after their entry into school. IDEA screens according to state law. In Texas, for example, every student is screened for English proficiency via the TELPAS assessment. In Louisiana we use ELPT. In Arkansas, we will utilize the ELPA21, or another state-mandated assessment, as directed. We will work with DESE and ADE guidance, resources, and rules where applicable to meet ELL needs. Arkansas’s Home Language Usage Survey is another helpful tool to

assess English language learner status. Additionally, IDEA will also utilize Ren STAR assessment data, and/or assessment data from the previous year's state assessment, to determine students who are struggling with English proficiency and require additional screening.

When IDEA identifies that a student is an ELL, we develop individualized plans to provide the type of instructional supports that the state education department recommends for their particular level of English language acquisition. We identify and support students who are English learners within 20 days of entry into our schools. We then offer targeted language acquisition support programs such as Imagine Learning, Español to English, and Direct Instruction for Spoken English. We can also offer Rosetta Stone for our students during their intervention block.

Español to English is a program IDEA utilizes with students in PK-2, which provides intensive instruction in English to quickly transition young learners from speaking only Spanish to learning in English across subjects at IDEA. Español to English teaches the skills Spanish-speaking students need to gradually transition fully to English. The language exercises emphasize oral expression and teach the basic skills and concepts of oral language that are critical for students' success in school. The program provides the building blocks of listening and reading comprehension by teaching word knowledge, common information, concepts, sentence forms, classification, and problem solving. It is most typically used with young children who speak little to no English or with older students who have recently come from Spanish-speaking countries

From 3<sup>rd</sup> grade through high school, IDEA offers Direct Instruction for Spoken English (DISE). DISE helps non-English speaking students who have at least a third-grade knowledge of their native language to achieve a functional mastery of the English language in one year or less. The program features an explicit, systematic instructional model that supports ELLs. DISE only teaches spoken English -- not reading or writing skills. All lessons are presented in English, and the teacher does not need to know the students' native language. Students are taught both social and academic vocabulary.

The program has two levels. Level I consists of one hundred, 90-minute lessons. Students who have no knowledge of the English language will need between 140 and 170 days to complete the hundred lessons in Level I of the program. Level II is a continuation of Level I and consists of 80 lessons. Students will need 100-120 school days to complete all 80 lessons. Lessons in Level II require 50 minutes versus the 90 minutes required per lesson in Level I. DISE is supported through the National Institute for Direct Instruction.

To further assist ELL students in the same rigorous, college-preparatory classroom environment as non-ELLs, IDEA has undertaken a district-wide initiative to provide Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) training for two teachers per grade level in grades 2-12 on every IDEA campus. The SIOP Model offers an empirically

validated approach to teaching that helps prepare all students—especially English learners—to become college and career ready. The SIOP Model supports teachers in planning and delivering high-quality instruction for all students.

**15. Describe how the school will address the needs of gifted and talented students.**

IDEA has opted to offer a rigorous, college-preparatory program to all students that, in most public schools across America, would in fact be considered a gifted and talented program. IDEA routes *all* students towards this “gifted and talented” path. As such, IDEA is seeking a waiver from the G&T requirements so that we can continue this program as is, open to all students. For example, IDEA does not wish to establish criteria for admittance to a gifted and talented program, as this is antithetical to our belief that every student at IDEA should have access to these courses, as they are foundational for success in top-tier colleges.

In most American schools, the curriculum and program IDEA provides every single student would be reserved for only the highest achieving, most “gifted and talented” students. IDEA’s model insists that every student receive these opportunities. This universal rigor of IDEA’s program is most evident in high school, but is woven throughout K-12. Direct Instruction math and reading groups in grades K-2 enable students to make progress at their own pace. As part of this curriculum, teachers evaluate student data on a weekly basis to determine how to provide on-level instruction, and how to group students appropriately. For instance, if a kindergarten student demonstrates advanced reading aptitude, they can pursue more challenging instruction with first- or second-grade students the following week. Students are accelerated through the program at the fastest rate appropriate to that individual. Individualized learning programs such as iLearning and AR Zone allow advanced students to progress at their own pace, well ahead of their grade level if appropriate.

In middle school, IDEA offers a 45-minute block each day for differentiated instruction. GT students can use this block for accelerated courses of study. Students take courses that prepare them for the rigors of AP in high school (IDEA is aware that College Board is changing the pre-AP program in 2022). In high school, IDEA’s AP for All model requires that all students take a minimum of 11 AP courses. This means that every student will receive opportunities typically reserved for “gifted and talented” students, and will be supported to successfully complete these courses. On top of this requirement, interested students may have the flexibility to pursue additional AP electives, ranging from AP Computer Science to AP Studio Art, once a campus offers



them.

We do not track students, so in most cases, students receiving special education services participate in the same AP courses. IDEA does make accommodations to ensure all instruction meets the needs of a student, per their IEP. For example, if a student's IEP demonstrates that AP assessments are too anxiety-inducing, a student may not sit for the AP exam. Students in the RISE program are on an alternative graduation plan, so the AP for All expectations do not apply to them. Some students with special needs may receive supplemental AP instruction or repeat instruction in content mastery courses, in order to help them be more successful. This pre-teach strategy is intended to help students with special needs to be comfortable and prepared when taught in their AP class by a content expert. We also conduct training with staff around AP-related accommodations that we can offer students.

**16. Describe how the school will address the needs of students who meet the criteria for an alternative learning environment.**

IDEA does not operate stand-alone alternative learning environments (ALE) and requests a waiver of this requirement. Provided we can secure a waiver, we will not operate a stand-alone alternative learning environment in Arkansas, either. This is because IDEA will offer a number of supports and services to students who might otherwise be referred to ALE programs. These are intended to prevent the sorts of behaviors or circumstances that might require a student to enter a traditional district's ALE program, and to support students who demonstrate these behaviors while at IDEA.

IDEA's program has demonstrated notable success in serving students who would otherwise be placed in a stand-alone ALE. IDEA uses a model called Response to Intervention (RTI) to match instructional, behavioral, and other supports to students' individual needs. RTI is defined as "the change in behavior or performance as a function of an intervention." We use the RTI model to provide high-quality intervention matched to student needs, learning rate, and level of performance. These factors also inform educational and behavioral decisions for each individual. This means that RTI is not a model for use only with students with an identified special education need, but with all students. See IDEA's RTI Framework below.

IDEA's RTI process involves a series of interventions, often determined in cooperation with a student's family or guardian, that we put in place within our classrooms and school buildings in order to set a student up for success. The

interventions in the classroom depend heavily on the student and their specific needs. In all cases, we focus on developing clear expectations and procedures with, and for, an individual student. We differentiate these strategies for students. For example, one student might need a special seating assignment that gives them much more space than is typically required. Another student may need a behavior management plan that involves easy-to-use, color-coded behavior indicators, or incentives for positive behavior. A student, family, teachers, and school leadership go through multiple rounds of this RTI process, in the spirit of giving every student the maximum number of opportunities to thrive.

IDEA provides these differentiated supports in consultation with special education staff members. If a student has a 504 Plan or an IEP, they will be served according to their 504 Plan or IEP. Academic counselors or social worker on each campus will meet regularly (sometimes multiple times a day) with students demonstrating acute need. These individuals will also work proactively to meet with students and provide encouragement, support, and services when a student is on-track.

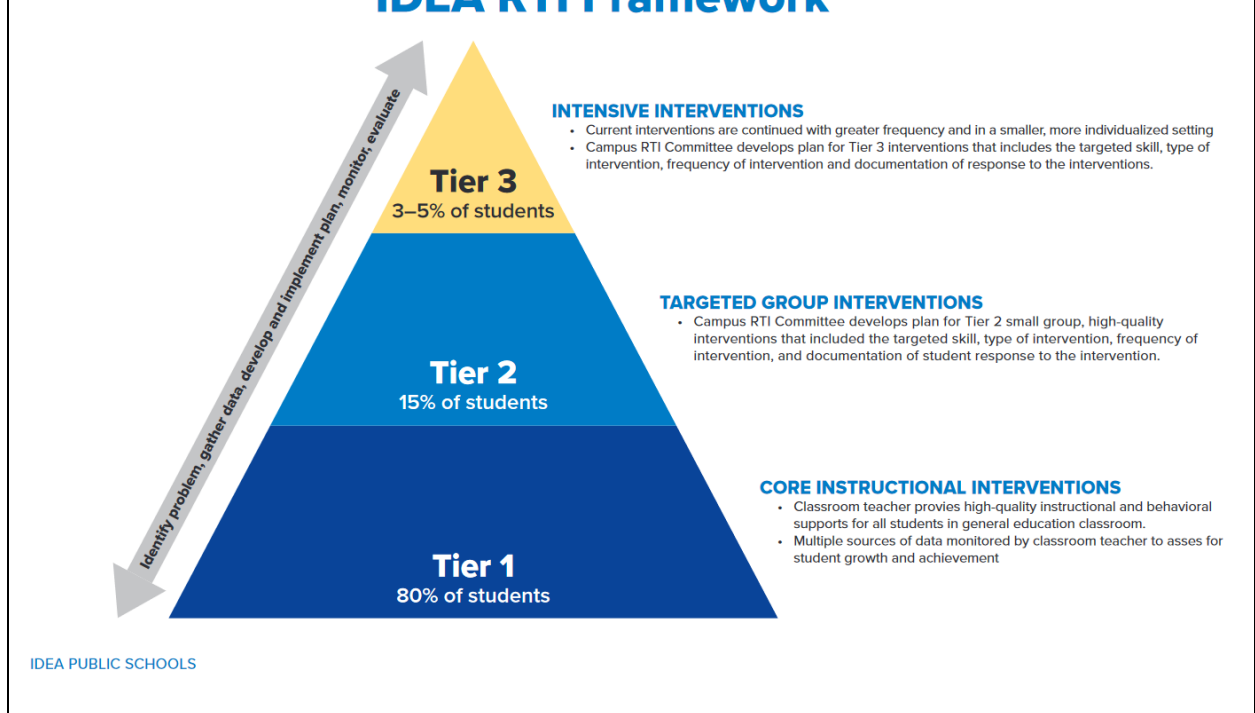
RTI efforts are a school-wide approach to supporting a student. These efforts involve multiple adults in an effort to ensure clear, consistent expectations and supports. As such, IDEA schools do their best not to pull students out of classrooms, as we know that this typically leads to significant learning loss and the downward spiral that so often accompanies academic distress.

IDEA implements the RTI process with fidelity to ensure that students are provided with timely and appropriate interventions and referrals. It is important to note that IDEA does not arbitrarily delay or deny referrals for evaluations related to special education services or Section 504 plans, but instead is guided by the data and driven by student need. IDEA's Child Find process under 504 or Special Education law are not replaced or delayed by RTI, but may happen concurrently as per a student's needs.

To further ensure that students who might be placed in an ALE at another school system are served well at IDEA, we employ Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA), Registered Behavioral Technicians (RBT), and other behavioral support personnel. These individuals are tasked with helping to coach and manage around high needs behavioral issues. Every school will also employ counselors who are on campus full-time to support students with personal and behavioral needs. Further, SPSs can support with behavior needs and provide counseling.

IDEA also employs at least one social worker at each campus. These individuals maintain warm relationships with, and will coordinate services through, a number of support service organizations that students who might otherwise attend an ALE would benefit from. IDEA's social workers provide a bevy of referrals and resources to students and families to help support them in meeting their basic needs, be it housing, food, clothing, or something else. Social workers will, to the extent allowable by confidentiality, ensure adult leaders in the school are also informed and able to support students and families who might benefit from these services.

IDEA's RTI framework, included below, explains our tiered system. Many of the students who would otherwise attend an ALE fall into Tier 3:



### 17. Describe the transportation services that will be provided by the school.

In order to ensure that every child has access, IDEA will provide free bus transportation in Central Arkansas throughout the school year. Typically, IDEA secures a fleet of school buses sufficient to serve the number of student riders, which IDEA then maintains and operates with IDEA personnel. This is IDEA's current plan for Central Arkansas, though IDEA will also consider contracted transportation services or joining a transportation consortium with other school entities and/or non-profits.

Currently, IDEA anticipates that it will provide bus transportation to over half of Central Arkansas students. Given this high ridership rate, IDEA will likely not provide door-to-door busing, but rather gathering-spot-to-school transportation. IDEA uses highly effective route planning software, student information, and conversations with families and local leaders to determine the right gathering points for student pickups. IDEA adjusts these as necessary to ensure students have safe, proximate, four-season access to transportation.

IDEA also provides, or ensures the provision of, transportation for any student with mobility challenges necessitating special transportation, or other transportation required in an IEP. This transportation is provided at no cost to the student, on an as-needed basis, and offers a low student-to-adult ratio.

**18. Describe how parents and guardians will have opportunities to engage with school staff regarding school operations and the progress of their child.**

IDEA works to involve families in their child's school and education from the outset. For families new to IDEA, they can expect communication and invitations to participate in numerous events. These include recruitment events, open houses, Welcome to IDEA events, registration, summer engagement events, New Family and Student Orientation, and Back to School / Meet the Teacher events. These events are geared toward helping families transition into IDEA. Events emphasize IDEA's academic model, culture, and the partnership between home and school. IDEA works to ensure that every family is onboarded, meaning they attend registration and a Welcome to IDEA session. While this event is highly recommended, it is not required of parents or students – children are never denied their seat, nor are offers rescinded, due to lack of attendance. In instances where parents have not filled out registration paperwork by the first day of school, IDEA does not turn away students.

Once students are enrolled at an IDEA school, the distribution of information is paramount. IDEA staff believes that it is crucial for students to have families that are well-informed and engaged. IDEA accomplishes this through several avenues, ensuring that staff can share information in a way that reaches the families. IDEA school staff release a Parent Weekly newsletter that is available both in print and online. IDEA also utilizes numerous social media outlets, including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, to reach families. These communications vehicles are all delivered in both English and Spanish.

Principals and teachers work to ensure that parents receive a home visit from at least one school staff member. This effort demonstrates IDEA's commitment to meet families where they are and to learn from parents about the goals they have for their children. IDEA staff are also encouraged to send regular communications, often by text message or the Remind platform, to parents. These communications frequently emphasize a student's success, in order to help parents buy in to their students' learning and see IDEA as partners, rather than fixate on misbehavior or failure.

In every IDEA region, parents can also participate in initiatives like the Family Advisory Council, family engagement events, and town hall meetings. Family

Advisory Councils ensure that a community of parents and/or guardians can share their feedback and suggestions with IDEA and be part of decision-making around certain topics. Each campus sends up to four representatives to a region's council, which is managed by the executive director. Family Advisory Councils typically meet three times a year. These meetings offer a venue to give input, learn about upcoming events and initiatives being considered by IDEA, and engage in discussions about concerns and issues. These Councils also provide helpful guidance around how IDEA should interact with families. For example, through these meetings, IDEA learned that many parents are interested in learning much more nuanced information about the curriculum IDEA utilizes in schools; IDEA has responded accordingly.

Additional events are held on campus throughout the year to encourage parents and families to interact with campus leadership, including report card pick-up night, parent walk-throughs, and volunteer programs. Many campuses also offer town hall meetings throughout the year to get feedback from parents and families. IDEA's website, [www.ideapublicschools.org](http://www.ideapublicschools.org), is also a great resource for parents and community members and has information such as academic calendars, student handbooks, cafeteria menus, and school policies.

In terms of active engagement in student learning, parents are asked to participate in several ways, if they are able. Parents are asked to support the daily and summer reading of younger students. They are also asked to check homework completion. Students receive a notebook where they write down their assignments, and their accomplishments; parents are asked to sign this regularly, ensuring that students have shared their progress and are also being held accountable at home for homework and daily reading. IDEA has found that, given a clear rationale for this partnership between home and school, the vast majority of parents are excited to participate. As part of IDEA's spirit of transparency and inclusion, parents and guardians are welcome to visit the schools regularly (this has not been the case during Covid, but will be again post-Covid), participate in scheduled events, and observe their child's class.

Additionally, IDEA utilizes various direct teacher-to-parent and school-to-parent communication tools to ensure a vibrant two-way conversation is possible. While every parent has access to student learning data via an online portal, direct communication is often conducted via cell phone, either through an app, text message, or a call. Some IDEA principals require teachers to send a certain number of messages to parents daily or weekly, with an emphasis on sharing student progress and success with parents.

Parent complaints are taken seriously. Complaints often land with teachers or assistant principals, whom IDEA empowers to solve challenges. Issues that cannot be addressed quickly or sufficiently without the involvement of school leadership are brought to the attention of the principal. The principal will typically ask to meet with a parent in order to hear their concern and address it swiftly. In rare instances where

the principal does not feel equipped to address the issue, they may involve the vice president for schools or the region's executive director. Parents are provided with clear information, both in print and online, about whom to contact if they disagree with a decision or want to appeal a decision. Expulsions are exceedingly rare. The vast majority of complaints and issues are resolved at the school level.

## **19. Describe how food services will be provided for students.**

IDEA provides nutritious meals for students across each of its campuses. In many instances, meals are free to all students, provided a student or school meets the Free and Reduced-Price Lunch program requirements. IDEA serves breakfast, lunch, and in many cases, supper, at each campus. Meals are produced in-house by an IDEA team.

Food services are provided by IDEA's Child Nutrition Program (CNP). CNP's mission is to ensure that students receive the best nutrition to fuel their minds and bodies, making them ready to learn. CNP's vision is to have a best-in-class program that encourages student participation by producing the best-tasting and most nutritious menu. CNP carries out this vision while also maintaining compliance, developing team members, improving operational efficiency, and exceeding expectations.

IDEA's CNP program is part of a larger, organization-wide effort. IDEA organizes health and wellness efforts through an initiative called Healthy Kids Here (HKH). HKH seeks to make IDEA Public Schools the healthiest school district in the nation by focusing on the 3 F's: Food, Fitness, and Forever. To accomplish this, IDEA invests in supplying cafeterias with fresh fruits and vegetables grown at IDEA's school-based farms (where/when possible), revitalizing physical education programs, and engaging families in community-health initiatives to create life-long interest in healthy lifestyles. IDEA will work to bring numerous elements of this program to Arkansas as it launches schools in the state.

HKH's emphasis on healthy food includes not only providing healthy options in cafeterias and adopting a district-wide smart-snack policy but also providing health education and outdoor learning opportunities. IDEA will partner with the Arkansas Department of Agriculture and local healthy food initiatives to continue this work. Some of HKH's food programs include:

- A United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)-funded meal program for students receiving free and reduced meals. The CNP aims to lower fat

content, increasing wholegrain and fresh fruits and vegetables in breakfast and lunch options while raising nutritional content. IDEA cafeterias have been able to replace foods like white rice and ranch dressing with more nutritious alternatives, such as quinoa and hummus, in an effort to increase the healthy eating index set forth by the USDA. The Healthy Eating Index (HEI) is a measure of diet quality used to assess how well a set of foods aligns with key recommendations of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

- Junior Master Gardener curriculum, offered to grades 5-8, where students grow food for the school cafeteria.
- Farm-to-Table Demonstration space for students to see sustainability in action, in alignment with the sustainable development goals.
- Collaboration with groups including Baylor's Texas Hunger Initiative, Texas Agri-life extension, and the Healthy South Texas coalition to combat childhood obesity and diabetes through wellness programs such as the Teen Cuisine curriculum, showcasing student artwork and student-led community projects.
- Operation of five school farms that use organic growing methods. Each farm grows over 3,400 pounds of produce and is distributed amongst 10 different IDEA cafeterias. Students are the driving force of the farms, learning about nutrition while actively growing food themselves. IDEA will strongly consider having at least one farm in Arkansas.

IDEA has worked hard over the past few years to become "the healthiest school system in America". Last year, 59 IDEA schools were among the 517 schools nationwide to earn a spot on the Alliance for a Healthier Generation's 2020 list of "America's Healthiest Schools" for their commitment to promoting quality nutrition, regular physical activity, and strong wellness policies. IDEA placed more schools on this list than any other school system.

## SCHOOL GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONS

### **20. Describe the governing structure of the open-enrollment charter school including board composition, selection process, length of term, and responsibilities.**

IDEA's charter holder boards are typically composed of individuals who possess a variety of skills, experiences, and backgrounds. IDEA Arkansas will create an Arkansas based-board that enshrines the practices of successful governance. IDEA Arkansas' board, as well as its positions, offices, powers, duties and other terms, are described in its bylaws and include the following and other officer positions:

- **Chair:** The Chair presides over all meetings of the Board of Directors. The Board Chair is responsible for ensuring that both the full Board and all Board Committees fulfill their responsibilities.
- **Secretary:** The Secretary approves the minutes of all Board meetings. This individual also acts as the custodian of all non-financial records and serves notices on behalf of the organization.
- **Treasurer:** The Treasurer of the Board has overarching oversight responsibilities for IDEA Arkansas' financial affairs. The treasurer should have regular contact with both the ED, Director of Finance, and CFO, and preside over regular budget and finance meetings, once appropriate.

IDEA actively recruits board members who bring a diverse skill set and background to the board. This work is typically led by the regional executive director, who will spend months developing relationships with prominent community leaders in order to identify, meet, and recruit individuals to join the board. Board members are typically selected because they possess deep knowledge and connections in one or more of the following areas:

- Education/Schools
- Philanthropy
- Finance/Budgeting
- Real Estate/Development
- Media/Communications/Marketing
- HR/Management
- Government Relations

While board committees will vary based on need and ultimately be determined by the IDEA Arkansas Board, the following committees are planned: executive, academic, governance, and finance



committees. These committees work to ensure strong oversight and efficient operations. IDEA Arkansas' Board anticipates filling out similar committees.

Currently, there are 3 directors on the IDEA Public Schools Arkansas governing board. None of the directors on this fiduciary and governing board are employees of IDEA Public Schools, IDEA Public Schools Arkansas, or IPS Enterprises, nor will IDEA Public Schools Arkansas ever add board members who are employees. We will strictly comply with conflict of interest laws and best practices to ensure the IDEA Arkansas board is well equipped to meet the governance needs of the schools. Over the next 12 to 18 months, IDEA will work to build and grow this governing board for Arkansas. New IDEA board members will provide the local context needed for IDEA to be impactful in central Arkansas. The IDEA Arkansas governing board will include representatives from Arkansas and those with deep ties to Arkansas, and members will have a wide range of expertise in academics, education policy, finance, law, management and operations, fundraising, and community engagement.

Each board member should strongly align with the mission, vision, and educational philosophy of IDEA. As such, IDEA has developed a set of requirements for all board members:

- Believe that all children can and will succeed in school, college, and beyond, regardless of race, socio-economic status, or zip code
- Dedicate their efforts to advance the vision and mission of IDEA Public Schools
- Contribute their experience and knowledge to the governance of IDEA
- Serve on one or more board committees, if applicable, and contribute the appropriate time and energy necessary to accomplish all stated organizational goals

IDEA will select individuals who possess an intimate knowledge of various communities, and who bring expertise and relationships. The board will reflect the community served, with careful attention given to the ethnic, geographic, and gender makeup of the board, among other factors. IDEA also places a particular focus on recruiting Board members who:

- Bring experience operating and growing institutions. IDEA needs help ensuring that IDEA schools operate effectively and have the proper systems and supports in place to scale with quality
- Bring thought leadership and influence. IDEA needs help from seasoned leaders to continuously improve and to meet the needs of the community. IDEA also needs board members capable of helping IDEA, and other high-performing public charter schools,

be seen as vital components of a healthy education system.

- Communicate and Connect. IDEA needs well-connected individuals who can facilitate introductions and aid its effort to find champions in every realm in every community
- Can help fundraise. IDEA needs a few individuals on the board who can support IDEA's efforts through fundraising, be it five dollars or five-figure donations.

IDEA Arkansas and its governing board will comply with state law around governance, conflicts, duties and fiduciary responsibilities. IDEA will operate all Arkansas schools under one board, as allowed by law. Note that all governing board members will participate in board training and comply with all Arkansas non-profit board requirements. In addition to training around a board member's legal responsibilities and duties, all board members will participate in a full orientation around IDEA's organizational beliefs, history, mechanisms, and policies. IDEA will also encourage board members to participate in its annual board summit, a multiday event that includes board training, informational sessions, and best practices shared across other IDEA governing boards.

The initial slate of board members will hold terms that may end before IDEA's launching campuses commence operations as active schools, but it is possible that their terms may be extended. Therefore, terms for inaugural members will depend on when they join and whether their term is extended. IDEA will quickly work to transition its founding board towards highly representative, local membership. This initial board will include three individuals, though this number will grow in the coming year. The initial founding board members will serve a term of at least 12 months. IDEA Arkansas expects that most board members will serve multiple, consecutive terms. Terms will be staggered to allow more continuity of board membership as the board is filled out

**21. Identify the positions that will have final decision-making authority for the school in the areas of (1) finance and purchasing; (2) student discipline; (3) hiring and firing of staff; and (4) hiring and firing of the school director or superintendent.**

1) Finance and purchasing

The Director of Finance (DOF) of IPS Enterprises (the CMO) will lead day-to-day work around finance and purchasing approval. The DOF will possess sufficient professional experience and demonstrate mastery of control- and compliance-related functions. The framework for compliance, which stems from IDEA's existing practices, will be implemented by the DOF. These policies can be reviewed at any time, by any interested individual, by visiting the "Fiscal Policies" section of [IDEA's website](#). These existing policies will be amended to meet the state of Arkansas' specific requirements and implement best practices of financial management which is of utmost importance to all IDEA boards and schools. The DOF is responsible for managing IDEA Arkansas's business office and producing monthly financial reporting. They are also responsible for accounts payable and purchasing, which they manage through a business clerk.

To ensure the DOF is supported and held accountable, IDEA Public Schools' vice president for financial planning holds a weekly check-in meeting with the DOF. In addition to these weekly check-ins, the DOF and financial reporting related to Arkansas will be reviewed monthly by IDEA's chief financial officer. IDEA Public Schools' CFO will have a monthly meeting to review all financial reporting and budgets related to Arkansas. These reports and budgets will be reviewed regularly with the IDEA Arkansas board's finance committee. Additionally, above a certain threshold or frequency/duration, any expense must receive approval from the governing board, which has final authority. The internal audit of the IDEA network will also independently review and report issues to the Board as appropriate.

## 2) Student discipline

Student discipline is governed by IDEA's student code of conduct, which is approved by the relevant IDEA governing board (in this case, IDEA Arkansas' Board will approve the code of conduct each school year). Utilizing this code, principals are ultimately responsible for ensuring student discipline is fair, consistent, and beneficial to both students and school. IDEA prides itself on its inclusive environment and high student retention and, as such, expulsions are extremely rare.

## 3) Hiring and firing of staff

School-level personnel decisions are typically the purview of the school's principal. The principal is supported by a regional director of human resources, who partners with the principal around staffing issues. Principals are also supported by IDEA's centralized national human resources and talent acquisition team, which works to collect and vet candidates that are sent to schools. All principals are expected to have schools 100% staffed well

before the start of the school year, and constantly work to ensure they are developing novice teachers and retaining their highest performers. IDEA has a process in place which principals must follow to place underperformers on a performance improvement plan and to exit them from IDEA if they are not able to improve. The principal works with IDEA's human resources team, often via the in-region HR team member, to ensure personnel decisions comply with all state and federal requirements.

The school's principal reports to either the vice president for schools or the executive director. Hiring and firing decisions related to school principals are made by the region's executive director, with support from the HR team.

IDEA's chief financial officer and chief human assets officer share responsibility for ensuring compliance around financial and legal obligations. As such, every school, and every headquarters team, has procedures in place to report and share issues related to compliance. As the region builds out, a regional director of human resources is also hired. This individual is responsible for ensuring systems are in place, and individuals are complying, in each region.

#### 4) Hiring and firing of the superintendent

The region's executive director reports to the Chief Schools Officer or a deputy and can be hired or fired by the CMO. The CMO will have a contractual agreement with the IDEA Arkansas board and, as such, the IDEA Arkansas board can provide direct input about management and regional leadership, with ultimate authority over the approval of any management agreements.

## **22. How will the charter ensure that there is a separation of power between the sponsoring entity, charter management organization, school board and superintendent?**

IDEA Public Schools Arkansas (501c3 sponsoring entity) will be governed by the Board of Directors (school board) with powers and duties as described in its articles/certificate of formation and bylaws. IDEA Arkansas will enter into arms-length contractual agreements with IPS Enterprises, Inc. (IDEA's nonprofit charter management organization) to provide specific services and management of school operations. On-the-ground leadership will be provided by IDEA Arkansas's executive director (superintendent), who is an IPS employee.

IDEA Public Schools Arkansas is a 501c3 organization, established in Arkansas, for the purpose of supporting high-quality, free, public charter schools with a college-for-all mission. This 501c3 will have a governing board composed of individuals with expertise in various areas (namely, in good governance, finance, budget, human resources, real estate, K-12 education, higher education, law, philanthropy, community organizations, or politics). This group will oversee IDEA Public Schools Arkansas in order to ensure sound and compliant financials, educational offerings and outcomes, accessibility, and all other requirements of an Arkansas non-profit and school board. This board will be independent of both the IDEA Public Schools, Inc. board and the IPS Enterprises, Inc. board, both of which are mirrored boards and based in Texas. While these entities will have a cordial and productive relationship, governance of IDEA Arkansas schools rests solely in the hands of the IDEA Public Schools Arkansas board. The members of the IDEA Arkansas Board are self-perpetuating but are subject to certain rights and powers of IDEA USA, the sole member entity that ensures governance integrity and mission alignment. The board will receive significant input from the Arkansas ED, local supporters, stakeholders and community members.

As an example of the separation between the school board and CMO, consider IDEA Arkansas' budget. The IDEA Public Schools Arkansas board will need to approve the budget for IDEA Arkansas, with technical assistance from IPS Enterprises (CMO). The region's approved operating budget is reviewed and approved by the Arkansas board. The IDEA Arkansas board will work with IPS Enterprises' finance team, including the IPS director of finance who supports IDEA Arkansas, to fully understand the region's revenues, expenses, and financial model. While the IDEA Arkansas board may ask the CMO for help with financial data, models, and budgeting expertise, only the IDEA Arkansas board has final authority to approve the budget.

IDEA Arkansas' superintendent is known as Executive Director (ED) in IDEA parlance. The IDEA Arkansas ED has control over principal hiring/firing, regional staff hiring/firing, site selection (with approval), enhancements or additions to the core academic model (with approval), discretionary budget, changing staff and assignments at schools to improve quality and outcomes, and grade level configuration (with approval). This is not an exhaustive list but covers many of the major areas of executive director autonomy. Those items noted as requiring approval are typically a decision made in partnership between the ED and various leaders at the charter management organization. While the IDEA Arkansas board does not hire or fire the ED, they have significant influence via the contractual relationship between IDEA Arkansas and IPS Enterprises, and via the policies and procedures the board must approve.

### **23. Explain the charter's conflict of interest policy and identification procedures.**

IDEA Arkansas will commence operations with the same robust conflict of interest policy as IDEA Public Schools and IPS Enterprises, updated to suit Arkansas state statute. This recently revised, robust conflict of interest policy contains numerous safeguards against real and perceived conflicts. The full “Ethics, Conflict of Interest, and Nepotism Policy” can be found on [this publicly available webpage](#) of IDEA Public Schools. A similar policy will be implemented for IDEA Arkansas meeting any state specific requirements.

Conflicts of interest are identified for IDEA directors, officers, employees, and agents. This is inclusive of board members, volunteers, chief-level leadership (i.e. CEO, COO), headquarters leadership (vice presidents, directors, etc.), school leadership (principals, assistant principals, etc.), business managers, and certain volunteers. Employees at the director level and above, as well as board members, fill out annual surveys to understand any potential conflicts of interest.

For the governing board, conflicts of interest are identified as such: If a director or officer has a substantial interest in a business entity or in real property, the director or officer shall file, before a vote, decision, or other action on any matter involving the business entity or the real property, an affidavit stating the nature and extent of the interest, and shall abstain from further participation in the matter: In the case of a substantial interest in a business entity, the vote, decision, or other action on the matter will have a special economic effect on the business entity that is distinguishable from the effect on the public; or in the case of a substantial interest in real property, it is reasonably foreseeable that a vote, decision, or other action on the matter will have a special economic effect on the value of the property, distinguishable from its effect on the public. The affidavit described above is filed with the Secretary of the Board of Directors. The director or officer filing the affidavit shall abstain from further participation in the matter requiring the affidavit. A director or officer filing the affidavit shall abstain from further participation in the matter requiring the affidavit unless a majority of the Board is composed of persons who are likewise required to file, and who do file affidavits of similar interests on the same official action.

A director or officer may not hire, select, appoint, confirm the appointment of, or vote for the hiring, selection, appointment, or confirmation of an individual to a charter position in which the individual’s services are under the director or officer’s direction or control if: the person is related to another director or officer within the prohibited degree; and the appointment would be carried out, in whole or in partial consideration for the other director or officer’s hiring, selecting, appointing, confirming, or voting for an individual who is related to the first director or officer within a prohibited degree.

A director or officer is considered to have a substantial interest if a person related to the Director or Officer within the third degree by consanguinity or the third degree by affinity has a substantial interest. Family means a disqualified person’s spouse, siblings, spouses of siblings, ancestors, children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and spouses of children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

Conflicts are also identified for “interested persons” as follows: any director or officer, employee, or member of a committee with powers delegated by the Board who has a direct or indirect interest, as defined below, is an “Interested Person.” A person has an “Interest” if the person has, directly or indirectly, through business, investment, or Family: an ownership or investment interest, directly or indirectly, in any entity with which IDEA Public Schools has a transaction or arrangement; a compensation arrangement with IDEA Public Schools, or with any entity or individual with which IDEA Public Schools has a transaction or arrangement; or potential ownership or investment interest in, or compensation arrangement with, any entity or individual with which IDEA Public Schools is negotiating a transaction or arrangement.

“Compensation” is defined to include direct and indirect remuneration, as well as gifts or favors that are not insubstantial. A person has an “Interest” if the person has a substantial interest in a business entity or a substantial interest in real property as described above.

In connection with any actual or potential conflict of interest, an Interested Person shall disclose the existence of the Interest in writing to the Board as soon as he or she has knowledge of it, and the Board shall give such Interested Person the opportunity to disclose all material facts related thereto to the Board or designated committee considering the proposed transaction or arrangement. Such written disclosure shall be made part of and set forth in the Board minutes. In any event, the disclosure of any actual or potential conflict of interest by an Interested Person should occur prior to any consideration of the proposed transaction by the Board.

In terms of preventing conflicts of interest, we identify “Related Party” as a party with a current or former board member, administrator, or officer who is: a board member, administrator, or officer of IDEA; or related within the third degree of consanguinity or affinity to a board member, administrator, or officer IDEA; IDEA Public Schools’ related organizations, joint ventures, and jointly governed organizations; IDEA Public Schools’ board members, administrators, or officers or a person related to a board member, administrator, or officer within the third degree of consanguinity or affinity; and any other disqualified person, as that term is defined by 26 U.S.C. Section 4958(f). A person is a former board member, administrator, or officer if the person served in that capacity within one year of the date on which a financial transaction between the charter holder and a related party occurred. IDEA shall notify the Commissioner of Education or state Secretary of Education that the school intends to enter into a transaction with a related party and provide an appraisal from a certified appraiser to the state Department of Education. Annual audit reports shall separately disclose all financial transactions between the open-enrollment charter school and any related party, separately stating the principal, interest, and lease payments, and the total compensation and benefits provided by the school and any related party for each member of the governing body and each officer and administrator of the school and the related party. The Commissioner or state Secretary of Education has authority to review, reject or order restructuring of any covered transaction with a related party and IDEA shall comply with any Commissioner or state Secretary of Education decision or directive

IDEA Arkansas, and IPS Enterprises as CMO, will follow all applicable state statutes and Arkansas Department of Education rules concerning ethics, conflicts of interest, and transactions concerning related parties. IDEA will also comply with applicable IRS guidelines and requirements for conflicts, interested party transactions and when dealing with other “disqualified persons” under the Internal Revenue Code.

**24. Describe the student recruitment process and timeline that will provide an equal opportunity for all parents and students to learn about and apply for admission to the proposed public charter school.**

IDEA's mission necessitates that we proactively and regularly reach out to the community and inform as many families as possible about IDEA, opportunities to attend our school, and our very simple application process. IDEA's Marketing, Communications and Enrollment teams have a scaffolded recruitment plan for new community entry. This effort begins 2+ years before schools open in new regions. New community entry is a combination of identity-building, public relations, research, brand-building, and gathering interest from prospective students and staff. New regions are defined as geographic locations where IDEA campuses do not currently operate.

Below is a timeline for IDEA's recruitment plan to open schools in Arkansas in 2023.

**Two Years Before School Launch—2021**

IDEA builds context within the new region to understand what's important to parents and community members. IDEA conducts early meetings with parents and community leaders to understand the educational and community context in communities around Central Arkansas and begins to build lasting relationships. This will also help IDEA garner support for coming to Arkansas. Alongside these organic efforts, IDEA holds focus groups to gather candid, targeted input from local residents. Focus groups consist of 40-50 families representing mixed-income households and school-aged children. Focus groups help IDEA staff learn about the local perception of charter schools, mindsets around education options, and awareness of IDEA Public Schools. Results from these groups are shared with local IDEA leaders, who use this information to guide marketing and recruitment practices.

IDEA also collects secondary research such as media consumption, public education surveys, and local advertising campaigns to gain a better understanding of how to reach parent audiences and effectively communicate IDEA's mission and plan for school openings.

**One Year Before School Launch—2022**

IDEA recruitment for new schools starts September 1 of the year prior to



opening. For Arkansas, this will be September 1, 2022. New community entry efforts will launch in February 2022, over half a year before the launch of the student application.

Typically, IDEA recruits students within a 3-5-mile radius of the school's location. This is where initial research and results from focus groups are also leveraged. The recruitment focus area can vary based on local factors such as access to reliable public transportation and the number of households in the neighborhood. For example, in regions where a majority of students choose to walk to school, IDEA will recruit primarily within 1-2 miles of the school. In regions where residents are accustomed to lengthy commutes, or where transportation will be provided, IDEA can expand recruitment zones. This is the case in Arkansas, though IDEA still prioritizes neighborhood recruitment first.

Recruitment is accomplished principally through door knocking, social media, and community organization partnerships. IDEA will divide up areas of a neighborhood and systematically knock on each door over a specific time period to ensure families are aware of IDEA and understand their options. Recruitment also includes tabling at community centers, apartments and other community-centric businesses, attending local events, and hosting open house events. Recruiters track which locations generated the most student applications, which is maintained for future recruiting and engagement events. This helps IDEA understand where potential families live and spend time in the community. Beyond recruitment, the school leaders leverage this information when planning additional events such as town halls.

### **Six Months Before School Launch—March 2023**

The six-month period before a school opens involves a concentrated recruitment effort, led by a Regional Director of Operations (RDO). The RDO's primary responsibility is to lead community engagement and recruitment efforts in the region before the first day of school. The RDO develops relationships with local service partners like Boys & Girls Clubs and YMCA chapters to learn and share information about IDEA. Eighty percent of their time is spent in the field meeting families, developing local partnerships, and recruiting students. About a year prior to school launch, additional operational staff join the team. Recruitment is their top priority, with 80% of their time dedicated to recruitment.

**25. Describe the procedures for conducting the annual single lottery enrollment process, including how students will be placed on waiting lists and how parents will be notified about each child's selection or order on the waiting list.**

IDEA is an open-enrollment public charter school. Prospective families apply to IDEA through a free online application, or via a paper application. Applications are available in English and Spanish. On-site assistance is available at in-person events. If needed, IDEA ensures applications are shared with non-English, non-Spanish speaking families in a comprehensible way.

If a campus receives more applications than available seats, a random lottery will be held. The lottery is an blind-random selection process in which students are sorted by grade level, randomly selected, and then offered a seat at an IDEA school. IDEA conducts a lottery system in compliance with charter laws, affording all families a fair opportunity to attend one of IDEA's schools. The lottery is typically held in February, six months before the new school year begins. IDEA will maintain this same process in Arkansas.

IDEA runs the lottery to fill all open seats and students are placed on a waitlist until all students offered a seat accept or decline. Waitlisted students are then offered available seats. Students and families can apply to multiple IDEA campuses but will only be offered one seat at one campus. When applying to multiple campuses, families also rank IDEA schools in order of preference. While siblings are not guaranteed a seat if one child receives an offer, the likelihood is high. Siblings may be offered a seat at another IDEA campus and have the right to decline the offer to the second campus and remain on the first campus' waitlist to see if a spot opens. The lottery process will comply with all applicable Arkansas laws and rules.

Families receive notification of their offer online and via phone call from an IDEA staff member. Announcements regarding lottery results are posted throughout IDEA's website and social media accounts, utilizing every outlet to inform families to log into the application site and check their status. Families receive a welcome packet and instructions on how to confirm their child's enrollment at IDEA. Staff is available online, via phone, and on campus to answer questions and help guide families through the process, ensuring families understand the enrollment and registration processes. Assistance is provided in English and Spanish to accommodate families. There is no hard deadline to accept a seat, and IDEA staff will conduct at least five attempts to contact a family before rescinding an offer. Each point of outreach is tracked with a 24-hour wait period before following up, giving parents ample time to respond. If no response is received by the given after five-plus outreach attempts, the spot is offered to another prospective student on the waitlist.

## **26. Will any of the enrollment preferences outlined in Ark. Code Ann. § 6-23-**

**306(14)(C), will be utilized by the charter school. This includes children of founding members of the charter and siblings of enrolled students. If so, please explain the policy.**

IDEA will utilize the enrollment preferences outlined in the abovementioned Arkansas code. Children of founding members (not to exceed 10% of the total number of students enrolled) and siblings of students currently enrolled in the open-enrollment public charter school will have preference.

IDEA's policy is to prioritize enrollment of siblings of students and children of founding members. Once these seats are offered to the appropriate individuals (via lottery, if necessary), the remainder of the seats are issued via blind lottery per the process explained in Question 25.

**27. Explain how students leaving the charter during the school year will impact students on the waiting list.**

IDEA is committed to helping students find a way to stay within our schools. Our principals work diligently to problem-solve with families and ensure that parents and students see themselves continuing with, and graduating from, IDEA. As students move, we seek to help them transfer within IDEA schools, when possible. To this end, across the IDEA network, IDEA has frequently been able to achieve our goal of 90% student persistence year-over-year.

IDEA schools backfill seats, enrolling students if possible and in accordance with law. IDEA at all times follows applicable open-enrollment legal requirements. In grades 10-12, IDEA does hold a conversation with any student seeking to enroll in grades 10-12, as well as their parent or guardian, to discuss IDEA's high school course and graduation requirements. The reason we do this is not to exclude families. It has been our experience that if someone joins IDEA later in high school, they may need extra time to complete their education and earn their high school degree, depending on their level of preparedness and course completions upon enrolling. We want to ensure that each student and family understand that IDEA's high school program is rigorous and academically demanding, and that this can mean extra time required to complete courses and achieve mastery, if a student enters late in high school and when a student needs more remedial support.

In the case of mid-year seat openings, vacancies may be filled based on the capacity of the grade level, the capacity of the building, the capacity of staff, and the waitlist for that grade.

IDEA fills seats based on its waitlist. Students and families are notified at the beginning of the year if they are on the waitlist and, if so, in what order. When seats

become available, IDEA offers these seats based on waitlist order

**28. Provide a list of staff positions that will be employed in the school business office. Include the responsibilities of each position.**

Every IDEA campus employs a full-time business clerk, who joins the year prior to school launch. This allows the business clerk ample time to familiarize themselves with IDEA's systems and practices, as well as the culture, leadership, and financials of their specific school. Business clerks serve as financial steward for their campus. This includes managing two Principal budgets, procurement through purchase orders and leader purchase cards, school-based activity accounts central to local fundraising, supporting student recruitment, enrollment and average daily attendance. Business clerks are essential to ensuring students and staff have the resources they need to accomplish our ambitious student achievement goals. A business clerk maintains a set of important responsibilities at each campus. In advance of the school's launch, he or she:

- Develops and executes student recruitment efforts that target families with school-aged children immediately surrounding each school
- Leads team to recruit new families with specific applicant goals per grade level
- Ensures all new families are effectively onboarded and persist through their first year
- Complies with all federal, state, and organizational student registration requirements throughout the enrollment process (i.e. transfers, testing, etc.)
- Supports precise fundraising balance reporting by submitting accurate and complete cash receipt documentation for all campus and student activity fund deposits by the last day of the month.
- Enters 100% of local account requisitions within two business days of the initial request from campus staff.
- Assists school leaders in delivering training to campus staff regarding campus and student activity fund policies and procedures.
- Ensures all staff managing fundraising efforts have completed cash handling training.
- Locates and scans 100% of campus capital assets and 90% of inventory items by the provided deadline.
- Tags all new assets above a certain per unit cost with the correct label.

The business clerk is managed by the assistant principal of operations (APO). The APO is the building's top operational leader, with direct responsibility for most non-academic components of the campus. An APO manages campus operations for each IDEA site (two schools) and is responsible for achieving operational excellence across non-instructional areas, including front office management, student information systems, child nutrition, transportation, health services, business office, facility maintenance, new construction management, technology coordination, student recruitment and enrollment.

Each IDEA campus also employs a Student Information Systems (SIS) coordinator. The role of the SIS is to achieve 97.5% average daily attendance, 100% enrollment, maintain 100% data accuracy and 100% compliance with IDEA's attendance procedures. The SIS coordinator organizes all of the campus operation tasks with key stakeholders and executes campus operation processes that bind to our student information system. He or she:

- Achieves 97.50% ADA for Academy & College Prep
  - Works with students, staff and parents to ensure students attend school every day
  - Communicates attendance reporting to staff, including: chronic absenteeism, progress towards goal by day, and absence calculator
  - Documents all attendance changes and corrects attendance data within 24 hours
  - Ensures teacher attendance submission is in line with official attendance taking time
  - Ensures all paper rosters are signed and dated (if applicable)
  - Ensures all attendance report submissions are submitted on time
  - Paper attendance and student enrollment reconciliation processes solidified two weeks prior to school
  - Enrollment goal is consistently hit every week after the first week of school
  - Student records are requested timely from other districts
  - All records requests fulfilled within 10 days
  - All deadlines are met based on the SIS operating calendar
  - Grade Verification, Re-registration, End of Year tasks, PET/PID, School and Section Enrollment Audits, Transcripts are completed timely and accurately
  - Works closely with parents and business partners to ensure that parents are able to re-register through appropriate channels
  - Verify enrollment numbers prior to the daily enrollment call
  - If enrollment numbers are not met, create a plan to address the gap

While not a campus-based role, a purchasing clerk's goal is to provide and promote a sound and an effective procurement process that supports and advances the goals of IDEA. The vision is to create customer satisfaction by facilitating the efficient acquisition of goods and services in order to meet the needs of campuses and departments. The purchasing clerk, who is employed by IPS Enterprises, strives for integrity and continuous improvement in the procurement process and ensures we are in compliance, as outlined by each state's education agency. Responsibilities of the purchasing clerk include:

- Ensure that 100% of requisitions are approved within 2 business days
- Monitor and minimize after the fact requisitions and purchase orders

- Ensure that 100% of receiving is being verified on a daily basis in order to process vendor payments
- Ensure that 100% of all vendors have required conflict disclosures, criminal history compliance, other state specific requirements, and W9 information in Munis
- Ensure that all vendors are TIN matched
- Ensure that 100% of vendors are verified for debarment on [www.Sam.gov](http://www.Sam.gov) and authorized to conduct business in Arkansas
- New vendors are added to Munis within 1 business day of receiving a request
- Appropriate vendors are inactivated biannually as part of vendor maintenance
- Emergency checks requested by 1:30 pm, on check run dates are processed the same day
- Ensure that 100% of account coding on purchase orders follows state education agency guidelines
- Ensure that all expenses are allowable under state education agency guidelines
- Ensure that 100% of vendors are coded correctly for 1099 filing status
- Correct 95% of any 1099 errors indicated by the IRS within 3 months of notice

A staff accountant's mission is to provide accurate and timely month-end reconciliations to the Director of Finance, as well as to ensure compliance with any federal and state financial reporting guidelines. The staff accountant, who is employed by IPS Enterprises and maintains a non-campus-based role, will be responsible for completing daily financial and business operations. Responsibilities include:

- Prepare and post journal entries associated with month-end close
- Properly record cash receipts and bank fees within 2 business days of posting to the Bank
- Review of operating expenses to ensure no prepaid expenses are being expensed to operating expense accounts by the 3rd business day
- Accrue contracted services revenue on white fleets, buildings, and school buses by the 6th business day
- Record management fee according to Management Services Agreement by the 6th business day
- Record and run depreciation in Fixed Asset Module by the 8th business day
- Complete Construction in Progress accruals, capitalize any projects if needed by the 9th business day
- Record and complete Equity roll forward by the 10th business day
- Review Due To/From reports upon Accounts Payable closing and properly record expenses for salaries and operating expenses on

Due To/From invoices by the 13th business day

- Reconcile and review expenses in IPS for Year -2 and Year -1 regions by the 13th business day
- Record journal entries in Quick Books by the 14th business day
- Keep current on new and upcoming standards related to Financial Reporting and Compliance.
- Attend continued professional education training related to Financial Reporting and Compliance.

Campuses are supported by in-region and headquarters-based business office staff. Day-to-day oversight over IDEA Arkansas' financials will be led by the Director of Finance/Controller for IPS Enterprises. This director's mission is to provide accurate and timely financial information to IDEA stakeholders as well as to ensure compliance with any federal and state financial reporting and compliance guidelines. The Director of Finance/Controller will play a critical role in ensuring that regions are equipped with the financial resources to ensure that all students learn, grow, and achieve transformative life outcomes. Responsibilities of this role include:

- Work with a budget to submit for Board approval an annual revenue and expense budget above required EDBIA targets
- Employ financial and accounting strategies in the utilization of philanthropic and federal funds to increase or decrease EBIDA
- Utilize the Accounts Payable P-card to pay vendors who accept credit cards beginning June 1 each year.
- Hold payments to vendors for those who do not accept payment via credit card for 30 days for invoices dated June 1 and after
- Drawdown on any state and federal grants
- Oversee preparation of all bidding documents, including notice and instructions to bidders, specifications, and form of proposal
- Oversee purchases of materials and equipment for the district by competitive bids, competitive sealed proposals, requests for proposals, government catalog contract purchases, informal quotations, and negotiations following established district criteria and state purchasing rules
- Approve purchase orders and monitor purchase requisitions to determine the correctness of the information, calculations, coding, etc.
- Approve invoices for payment
- Prepare, review and approve all journal entries.
- Prepare, review and approve all cash receipts.
- Prepare, review and approve Statement of Financial Position reconciliations on a monthly basis to ensure amounts comply with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles and Financial Accounting Standards Board. As well as to ensure that proper supporting documentation is provided.

- Review Statement of Activity on a monthly basis to determine the reasonableness of amounts, detect potential errors and analyze significant variances.
- Compile month-end financial reports to be distributed to management by the 10th business day.
- Compile internal, external, debt compliance, finance committee and regional financial statements by the 16th business day.
- Ensure trial balances are reasonably stated at June 30
- Financial statements are presented in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles for Not-for-Profit entities.
- Assist external accountants with the completion of the consolidated Form 990 by the federal deadline following the fiscal year-end for IDEA Arkansas
- Prepare financial information for donors, grantors and investors.
- Compile and maintain documented policies and procedures related to business functions and submit for Board approval.
- Guide managers regarding the execution of Management Services and Cooperatives/Shared Service Arrangement (SSA) contracts.
- Provide guidance related to internal controls and segregation of duties to managers implementing new business processes.
- Keep current on new and upcoming standards related to Financial Reporting and Compliance.
- Attend continued professional education training related to Financial Reporting and Compliance.
- Update local Financial Reporting Manual to document current processes and controls over financial reporting as well as Local and Federal Grant policies and procedures.
- Assist in the preparation of annual training over OMB A-133 compliance requirements to grant managers and other stakeholders within the organization.
- Assist in the performance of monthly audits to ensure federal and state grants comply with the OMB A-133.
- Communicate results of those audits to management and grant managers on a monthly basis using the Grant Compliance Dashboard.

IDEA's Chief Financial Officer (CFO) leads the financial vision and strategy for all entities of the organization, ensuring IDEA has the financial leadership and resources to readily support and accomplish its organizational mission of college for all children. The CFO serves as a key business partner to the chief executive officer, board of directors, and executive team, as well as external stakeholders. The CFO sets high standards for financial integrity and stewardship across the organization while overseeing the Business Office to execute financial operations with impeccable customer service, ensuring compliance with all regulatory and governance



requirements, and providing guidance to the internal audit function at IDEA. Among other responsibilities, the CFO will:

- Achieve annual operating goals to ensure long-term financial stability
- Monitor budget process to ensure it is aligned with strategy and fiscally conservative
- Make organization-wide financial decisions aligned with the long-term fiscal health of IDEA
- Monitor budget and year end projections monthly to ensure on track performance to achieve targets
- Ensure the organization adheres to the requirements of the Public Fund Investment Act
- Adopt processes to ensure for the most efficient utilization of technology and treasury management structures to yield cost savings
- Direct organizational structures needed to support entity expansion and establish all legal structures, including 501(c)3 designation
- Create and implement separate financial accounting and reporting systems, as needed
- Fully design, incorporate, and monitor financial and governance compliance, reporting, budgeting, workflow, and transactional interchanges between IPS and new entities into IDEA business office operating mechanisms
- Adhere to strong financial reporting and delivering financial results within 20 days of month-end and 90 days of year-end
- Ensure that no material weaknesses are reported as part of the annual external audit
- Maintain the highest levels of integrity and financial stewardship over all funds, both public and philanthropic, while providing the outstanding customer service and support to campuses and HQ teams
- Communicate clear expectations for adherence to policies
- Develop and manage internal mechanisms for oversight and accountability
- Build and improve the operating mechanisms to provide top notch customer support year around at campuses and HQ
- Invest in tools and processes to scale best practices, reduce costs in personnel and issue revisits, and track customer service fidelity over time

**29. Describe the plan for managing procurement activities. Specify the types of financial decisions to be made at the school level, board level and charter management organization level.**

The IDEA Arkansas board will manage a specific set of financial decisions. These include:

- signing of any contractual agreement that binds IDEA Arkansas to a financial charge, as laid out in the attached “Purchasing Policy” document

- approval of any expenses over a certain threshold as determined by the IDEA Arkansas Board, and based on Arkansas' procurement guidelines and applicable law.
- Other approvals required by Arkansas law

The CMO (IPS Enterprises) will determine procurement of many region-wide items. For example, decisions to purchase curricula and curricular resources that will impact the entire IDEA Arkansas region will be made at the CMO level. Other CMO-led decisions include:

- Information technology systems
- Information technology tools
- Child Nutrition Program equipment, systems, and tools
- Transportation equipment, systems, and tools

Several campus-related procurement activities are managed by IPS Enterprises in order to ensure the most cost-efficient arrangements for each site. Certain items are centrally procured. One goal of the central procurement process is to ensure campuses have everything they need to get through the first 6 weeks of school. For this reason, items meeting the following criteria are centrally procured:

- Required furniture for classrooms, offices, reception, breakroom, etc.
- Facilities heavy equipment, trashcans, starter supply kits, chemicals, gym floor coverings
- Textbooks, AR books, manipulatives, science equipment, PE equipment
- Computers, cell phones, projectors, ID printer, software licenses, desk phones
- Indoor and outdoor signage
- Cafeteria equipment, tables, small wares, etc.
- Classroom supplies, flags, magnets, posters, trackers, chairback buddies
- Clinic supplies
- Office supplies starter pack
- Poster printer, laminators, dye cutter
- Outdoor benches
- Safety equipment
- PPE and sneeze guards

Procurement of many other campus-specific items are determined by the school or campus. Some examples of these items include:

- Campus specific items – mascot, letterhead, business cards, etc.
- Equipment, tools, or consumables for campus-specific courses, clubs, activities, before/after school care
- Staff shirts or other “team pride” items
- Supplemental materials
- Tablets, monitors, peripherals, cables, printers
- Athletic equipment, uniforms, travel, stipends
- Decorative furniture, accessories, plants, knickknacks, holiday-themed paraphernal

- Signage beyond prescribed package
- Teacher specific thematic materials
- Artwork, décor, murals
- Toner and copier supplies
- Student incentives
- Classroom libraries
- Student uniforms

*Attachment: See "Purchasing Policy", approved June 2020.*

**30. Describe the process by which the school governance will adopt an annual budget.**

The IDEA Arkansas board will adopt an annual budget according to a thorough and reflective process rooted in conservative budgeting principles. The annual budgeting process begins with the identification of revenue streams and funding inflows for IDEA Arkansas schools. This will include all projected federal, state, local, philanthropic sources. These numbers are derived from published state information, as well as any state funding projections.

Alongside this clear appraisal of probable revenue, IDEA Arkansas will develop a full and exhaustive budget, inclusive of operating expenses and capital. IDEA Arkansas' initial budget will be based on actual expenses IDEA has incurred under similar circumstances across one or more of its launching regions. The IDEA Arkansas budget will be updated, amended, and/or refined based on actual expenses, once schools launch in Fall 2023. Note that all IDEA Arkansas budgets are based on regionally appropriate expense assumptions, such as teacher pay scales derived from local districts and facilities costs determined by prevailing costs in the area.

The IDEA Arkansas executive director is involved throughout the budgeting process in order to ensure projected expenses provide the region with what it needs to be successful. Once this budget is prepared and the ED feels confident in its contents, IPS Enterprises, Inc.'s team of seasoned financial leaders will review and, if necessary, improve the budget. This management review is typically overseen by the CFO, who is assisted by various members of the business office.

Once the CFO has signed off on the IDEA Arkansas budget, it will then go to the IDEA Arkansas finance committee for thorough review and comment. Once the finance committee is satisfied that the budget is sufficient, accurate, and reasonable, it will approve the budget and send it to the full

IDEA Arkansas board for approval. The board will then have an opportunity to review the budget and approve it, if it deems the budget appropriate.

**31. Describe the manner in which an annual audit of the financial and programmatic operations of the school will be conducted. If the school wishes to request that the authorizer allow a licensed accountant or licensed certified public accountant, rather than the Legislative Auditor, to perform the first-year audit, identify the accountant by name, firm, address, and phone number. The named accountant must meet the requirements of ADE Rules Governing Publicly Funded Educational Institution Audit Requirements, including the prohibition on auditors providing non-audit services (such as accounting or consulting services) to auditees. A school's preference as stated in this application may not be changed without prior approval of the authorizer.**

IDEA Arkansas wishes to request that the authorizer allow a licensed certified public accountant, rather than the Legislative Auditor, to perform the first-year audit.

As with other audits related to IDEA Public Schools and IPS Enterprises-supported charter schools, this audit will be conducted by an Arkansas-licensed CPA and/or firm. The IDEA Arkansas audit will be conducted in accordance with auditing standards as set forth by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants or other applicable audit standards, as determined by the IDEA Arkansas Board in compliance with ADE audit rules, and best practices for auditing a public charter school.

IDEA and the governing board expect and demand a full, thorough, expedient audit. Audit fieldwork is conducted for about 3 weeks, on average. Auditors will test a sample of our transactions, review our internal control environment, and ensure that our financial statements are prepared in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) for non-profits.

The board is actively engaged throughout the process. All audit findings will be presented to the finance committee of the IDEA Arkansas board. The auditors will be available for questions, and all relevant information set forth for review. Once the finance committee is satisfied, the audit will be reviewed for approval by the board. Once the board approves, the audit is submitted to the state.

IDEA Arkansas will work with Landmark CPAs for its audit needs. Landmark CPAs is a member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, Arkansas State Board of Public Accountancy, and numerous

other groups. Landmark CPAs has extensive experience with Arkansas education and non-profit audits.

Landmark CPAs

Randy Milligan, Co-Managing Member & CPA

201 East Markham, Ste. 500

Little Rock, AR 72201

501.375.2025

**32. If the facility to be used by the school has been identified, list the owner(s) of the facility and describe their relationship with employees or directors of the sponsoring entity or charter management organization**

Facilities have not yet been identified/secured. This will be updated when facilities are secured.

**33. If the facility to be used by the school is not currently in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), provide a list of items that will need to be addressed to bring the facility into compliance.**

Facilities have not yet been identified/secured. This will be updated when facilities are secured.

**34. Are there any alcohol sales within 1,000 feet of the facility?**

Facilities have not yet been identified/secured. This will be updated when facilities are secured. Note that IDEA's preference is to not have a facility located within 1000 feet of alcohol sales.

**35. Describe the potential impact of the proposed public charter school on the efforts of affected public school districts to comply with court orders and**

**statutory obligations to create and maintain a unitary system of desegregated public schools.**

This desegregation analysis is in support of IDEA Public Schools Arkansas's (IDEA) request to be granted a charter for an open-enrollment public charter school to be located at two (2) sites within Pulaski County. The sites will be located within the boundaries of either the Little Rock School District (LRSD); Pulaski County Special School District (PCSSD); North Little Rock School District (NLRSD); Jacksonville North Pulaski School District (JNPSD), or a combination of the above-listed school districts. Pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. §6-23-106, IDEA is required to carefully review the potential impact its operations would have upon the efforts of the LRSD, PCSSD, NLRSD, and JNPSD to comply with court orders and statutory obligations to create and maintain a unitary system of desegregated public schools. At full enrollment, IDEA will serve students in grades K-12 with a maximum enrollment cap of 3,400 students.

I. The Status of Pulaski County Desegregation Litigation

IDEA is providing this desegregation analysis in accordance with Ark. Code Ann. §6-23-106 to review the potential impact that its charter application would have upon the efforts of all four (4) of the Pulaski County school districts to comply with court orders and statutory obligations to create and maintain a unitary system of desegregated public schools. In conducting its review, IDEA has substantiated that the LRSD and the NLRSD have been declared unitary in all respects of their school operations. The Pulaski County desegregation litigation was first filed in 1982. Little Rock School District, et al v. Pulaski County Special School District, et al., Case No. 4:82:cv-00866-DPM. In 1989, the parties entered into a settlement agreement (the "1989 Settlement Agreement") under which the Arkansas Department of Education, the then-three (3) Pulaski County school districts and the intervenors agreed to the terms of state funding for desegregation obligations.

LRSD successfully completed its desegregation efforts in 2007 and was declared fully unitary by the federal court in 2007. Little Rock School District v. Pulaski County Special School District, Case No. 4:82-cv-0866 (E.D. Ark.), Order filed February 23, 2007. In 2010, LRSD filed a motion to enforce the 1989 Settlement Agreement. The motion contended that the operation of open-enrollment public charter schools within Pulaski County interfered with the "M-M Stipulation" and the "Magnet Stipulation." On January 17, 2013, Judge D.P. Marshall Jr. denied LRSD's motion, stating: "The cumulative effect of open-enrollment charter schools in Pulaski County on the stipulation magnet schools and M-to-M transfers has not, as a matter of law, substantially defeated the relevant purposes of the 1989 Settlement Agreement, the magnet stipulation, or the M-to-M stipulation."

Little Rock School District v. Pulaski County Special School District, Case No. 4:82-cv-0866 (E.D. Ark.), Order filed January 17, 2013. LRSD appealed to the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals.

One (1) year later, on January 13, 2014, Judge Marshall approved a Settlement

Agreement that included a provision stipulating the voluntary dismissal with prejudice of LRSD's pending appeal concerning the charter school issues. In light of LRSD's unitary status and the parties' 2014 Settlement Agreement, IDEA's requested charter cannot interfere with the purposes of the Pulaski County desegregation litigation, which has been fully concluded as to LRSD. After the dismissal and the settlement agreement, the case was completely concluded for all purposes as to LRSD, and the federal court terminated all jurisdiction in the matter. Because of that, there is no possibility that IDEA's requested charter could impact LRSD's unitary status. To be clear, IDEA's charter application cannot impact LRSD's unitary status because 1) there is no case in which LRSD's unitary status could be an issue; 2) LRSD made a claim regarding the operation of open-enrollment charter schools in federal court in 2010 and lost it; and 3) As a consequence of the 2014 Settlement Agreement, the LRSD released any claims it had concerning the charter school issues. On January 30, 2014, the Court also approved a stipulation among the parties that PCSSD is unitary in the areas of Assignment of Students and Advanced Placement, Gifted and Talented and Honors Programs. Based on the stipulation, the Court released PCSSD from supervision and monitoring in these areas. Thus, as of January 30, 2014, LRSD, NLRSD and PCSSD are unitary in the area of student assignments. On April 4, 2014, the court found that PCSSD is unitary in the areas of Special Education and Scholarships. Subsequently, PCSSD was also found to be unitary in the areas of Staff and Monitoring. PCSSD thus remains non-unitary in the following areas of its desegregation plan: 1) Discipline; 2) School Facilities; 3) Student Achievement, and 4) Monitoring. JNPSD is non-unitary in the areas: 1) Discipline; 2) School Facilities; 3) Staff; 4) Student Achievement, and 5) Monitoring.

IDEA is also aware of Federal court filings by both the PCSSD and JNPSD to be declared fully unitary. Upon review, IDEA believes that its request to obtain an open-enrollment public charter shall have no negative effects on the efforts of the PCSSD and JNPSD to attain unitary status.

## II. Data

According to the 2019-2020 enrollment figures as maintained by the ADE Data Center, LRSD had a student population of 21,472 students, of which approximately 60.4% were African American; 19.2% were White, and 15.9% were Hispanic. NLRSD's student population was 8,076 students, of which approximately 59.3% were African American; 28.1% were White, and 9.5% were Hispanic. PCSSD's student population was 11,801 students, of which approximately 42.9% were African American; 41.5% were White, and 9.7% were Hispanic. JNPSD's student population was 4,014 students, of which approximately 52.5 % were African American; 34.8% were White, and 7.8% were Hispanic. Under Ark. Code Ann. §6-23-306(6)(A), IDEA must be race-neutral and non-discriminatory in its student selection and admission process. While it is impossible to project its future racial composition accurately, IDEA will implement admissions policies that are consistent with state and federal laws, regulations, and/or guidelines applicable to charter schools.

In addition, Ark. Code Ann. §6-23-106 requires that IDEA's operation will not serve to hamper, delay, or in any manner negatively affect the desegregation efforts of a

public school district or districts within the state. As explained in more detail above, IDEA's careful review of the relevant statutes and court orders affecting the LRSD, NLRSD, PCSSD, and JNPSD and their student populations shows that such negative impact is not present here.

### III. Conclusion

IDEA submits that upon the basis of its review, neither any existing federal desegregation order affecting the PCSSD, LRSD, NLRSD, and JNPSD, nor the 1989 Settlement Agreement prohibit the State's charter school authorizer from granting its application to operate an open-enrollment public charter school within the geographic boundaries of the LRSD, NLRSD, PCSSD, JNPSD or a combination of those school districts.

### **36. List the services that the CMO will provide to the charter and the annual cost of the services.**

Numerous employees of IDEA Public Schools and IPS Enterprises provide, or will provide, services to IDEA schools in Arkansas through a management services agreement between IPS Enterprises as CMO and IDEA Arkansas. This allows continuity among IDEA regions, as many of the same staff members support the contracts IPS Enterprises has with IDEA's non-Texas charter holders. This includes dozens of members of various IDEA teams. Services that these team members may provide include:

- **Advancement:** fundraising, charter applications, support for governing and advisory boards, groundbreaking and ribbon-cutting events, community meetings
- **Marketing and Communications:** all marketing materials and collateral, focus groups, earned and paid media, press releases and statements, support for interviews, all branding materials and support, billboards
- **Enrollment:** recruitment strategy, recruitment events, "super-recruitment" days, recruitment operations, recruitment database, family communications, lottery, confirmation of offer acceptance and enrollment, family onboarding materials and events
- **Human Resources:** compensation scales, health insurance, workers compensation, unemployment insurance, compliance and oversight of worker-related regulations, oversight of hiring and dismissal processes
- **Human Assets:** organizational and staffing charts, hiring process design & management, greenlighting of positions, position descriptions, job postings, candidate intake, initial screening, interview structure + support + logistics, job offers, candidate intake, candidate onboarding, staff development cycle, professional development, personnel reviews, performance improvement plans
- **Business office:** Development of financial models, support and development of budgets, budget projections, budget actuals, oversight of expenditures, expense reports, purchase cards, facilities financing, processing of



philanthropic gifts, compliance with state and federal financial regulations

- Transportation: development of transportation routes, oversight of acquisition of fleet, support securing insurance, compliance with state and federal transportation laws
- Child Nutrition Program: development of menus, support for food services, compliance with all state and federal regulations
- Facilities: design of facilities, oversight of construction, oversight of permitting + zoning + other regulatory requirements, support of maintenance and operations, support of custodial services
- Information Technology: Development and use of proprietary IT systems and tools, various IDEA programs, establishment and support of technical systems, compliance with IT requirements
- Academic Services: assessment of curricular requirements, development of aligned scope and sequence, development of interim assessments, analysis of regular and interim data and assessments, academic coaching services, professional development services, special education training + support + compliance, social-emotional supports training + guidance + compliance

IPS Enterprises assess a 10% services fee for its services. This fee is based on the revenue the school receives, so in the first years of operations, the actual amount paid is smaller than in later years. This fee is also lower than many CMOs. Some of the responsibilities noted above are shared between IDEA Arkansas staff and IDEA Public Schools or IPS Enterprises staff. All costs and allocations are clearly and discretely recorded in the accounting records to ensure appropriate transparency. Direct costs associated with some of these supports (i.e., the cost to acquire school buses) are not included in the shared services fee and can be found in IDEA Arkansas' budget. IDEA operates a highly centralized model and, as such, provides regions with many services. The management services fee, and what IPS provides via this fee, greatly reduces the number of regional staff members IDEA Arkansas would otherwise need to directly employ, and allows for more efficient, seasoned personnel who are fully trained-up on IDEA's educational model and program support needs from Day 1.

## WAIVERS

Complete the following tables indicating all sections of Title 6 of the Arkansas Code Annotated, the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education rules, and the Standards for Accreditation of Arkansas Public Schools and School Districts from which the public charter school seeks to be exempted in order to meet the goals of the school.

<b>Waiver #1 Topic</b>	ALE
<b>Arkansas Code Annotated</b>	6-15-1005(b)(5) 6-18-503(a)(1)(C)(i) 6-48-102 6-48-103
<b>Standard for Accreditation</b>	2-I.1
<b>ADE Rules</b>	Rules Governing Student Special Needs Funding - Section 4.01.1
<b>Rationale for Waiver</b>	<p>IDEA requests a waiver in this area based on the model of its schools and its individualized approach to student development. IDEA will provide in-house services to assist students who would ordinarily be classified as in need of alternative education services, or it may employ an outside resource to assist with this type of alternative education if needed.</p> <p>IDEA will offer a number of supports and services to students who might otherwise be referred to ALE programs. These are intended to prevent the sorts of behaviors or circumstances that might require a student to enter a traditional district's ALE program, and to support students who demonstrate these behaviors while at IDEA.</p> <p>IDEA's program has demonstrated notable success in serving students who would otherwise be placed in a stand-alone ALE. IDEA uses a model called Response to Intervention (RTI) to match instructional, behavioral, and other supports to students' individual needs. RTI is defined as "the change in behavior or performance as a function of an intervention." We use the RTI model to provide high-quality intervention matched to student needs, learning rate, and level of performance. These factors also inform educational and behavioral decisions for each individual.</p>

This means that RTI is not a model for use only with students with an identified special education need, but with all students. See IDEA’s RTI Framework in the “ALE” section of this application.

IDEA’s RTI process involves a series of interventions, often determined in cooperation with a student’s family or guardian, that we put in place within our classrooms and school buildings in order to set a student up for success. The interventions in the classroom depend heavily on the student and their specific needs. In all cases, we focus on developing clear expectations and procedures with, and for, an individual student. We differentiate these strategies for students. For example, one student might need a special seating assignment that gives them much more space than is typically required. Another student may need a behavior management plan that involves easy-to-use, color-coded behavior indicators, or incentives for positive behavior. A student, family, teachers, and school leadership go through multiple rounds of this RTI process, in the spirit of giving every student the maximum number of opportunities to thrive.

IDEA provides these differentiated supports in consultation with special education staff members. If a student has a 504 Plan or an IEP, they will be served according to their 504 Plan or IEP. Academic counselors or social worker on each campus will meet regularly (sometimes multiple times a day) with students demonstrating acute need. These individuals will also work proactively to meet with students and provide encouragement, support, and services when a student is on-track.

RTI efforts are a school-wide approach to supporting a student. These efforts involve multiple adults in an effort to ensure clear, consistent expectations and supports. As such, IDEA schools do their best not to pull students out of classrooms, as we know that this typically leads to significant learning loss and the downward spiral that so often accompanies academic distress.

IDEA implements the RTI process with fidelity to ensure that students are provided with timely and appropriate interventions and referrals. It is important to note that IDEA does not arbitrarily delay or deny referrals for evaluations related to special education services or Section 504 plans, but instead is guided by the data and driven by student need. IDEA’s Child

	<p>Find process under 504 or Special Education law are not replaced or delayed by RTI, but may happen concurrently as per a student's needs.</p> <p>To further ensure that students who might be placed in an ALE at another school system are served well at IDEA, we employ Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA), Registered Behavioral Technicians (RBT), and other behavioral support personal. These individuals are tasked with helping to coach and manage around high needs behavioral issues. Every school will also employ counselors who are on campus full-time to support students with personal and behavioral needs. Further, SPSs can support with behavior needs and provide counseling.</p> <p>IDEA also employs at least one social worker at each campus. These individuals maintain warm relationships with, and will coordinate services through, a number of support service organizations that students who might otherwise attend an ALE would benefit from. IDEA's social workers provide a bevy of referrals and resources to students and families to help support them in meeting their basic needs, be it housing, food, clothing, or something else. Social workers will, to the extent allowable by confidentiality, ensure adult leaders in the school are also informed and able to support students and families who might benefit from these services.</p>
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<b>Waiver #2 Topic</b>	<b>Board of Directors</b>
<b>Arkansas Code Annotated</b>	6-13-608 6-13-611 6-13-613(c) 6-13-615 6-13-616(a) 6-13-617 6-13-618(a) 6-13-619(a)(c) and (d)(1)A 6-13-619(a)(1)(C) 6-13-619(a)(3)(A) 6-13-619(d)(3) 6-13-619(4) 6-13-620(5) 6-13-622(b) 6-13-634

	6-13-635  6-13-1303 6-14-101, <i>et seq.</i>
<b>Standard for Accreditation</b>	
<b>ADE Rules</b>	Rules Governing School Board Zones and Rezoning
<b>Rationale for Waiver</b>	IDEA requests a waiver in this area to the extent the provisions are (a) generally inapplicable in the open-enrollment charter school context, and/or (b) otherwise outlined in the IDEA’s by-laws. IDEA further requests a waiver from this portion of the Education Code to the extent it requires a vote by “licensed employees” before the Board of Directors may adopt a policy implementing site-based decision making in the school district, in light of the waiver request being made concerning certified employees. IDEA also seeks a waiver to hold less frequent board meetings prior to the launch of IDEA’s schools in August 2023 (“during the school term”). Additionally, the district does not have electors, so we are seeking a waiver from 6-13-619(c). IDEA also seeks a waiver from 6-13-635 because the IDEA Public Schools Arkansas board does not employ personnel. We also seek a waiver to 6-13-19(3)(a), as we provide any impacted personnel with ample notice and the ability to attend a meeting, regardless of the time it is held. Further, we often hold virtual meetings and wish to give our board members, who live in different parts of the state or sometimes outside of it, or who have in-person attendance limitations based on work requirements, to attend and participate fully in board meetings and executive sessions. IDEA will abide by all rules and regulations around public participation, regardless of whether a meeting is virtual or in-person.

<b>Waiver #3 Topic</b>	Superintendent Licensure
<b>Arkansas Code Annotated</b>	6-13-109 6-14-619 6-17-427
<b>Standard for Accreditation</b>	4-B.1 4-B.2
<b>ADE Rules</b>	Rules Governing the Superintendent Mentoring Program
<b>Rationale for Waiver</b>	IDEA requests a waiver in this area. IDEA plans to employ a principal to manage the day-to-day operations of the school,

	<p>and the principal will report directly to IDEA’s Executive Director (superintendent) and Board of Directors. IDEA seeks to waive the superintendent mentoring program because IDEA’s executive director/superintendent will receive extensive support and mentoring through IDEA, and technical expertise through the APSRC and ADE/DESE. IDEA hires executive directors ~2 years before the launch of schools so that they will have sufficient time to learn the ins and outs of charter district leadership in the state. IDEA also provides extensive training for its executive directors (superintendent), including imbedded training with seasoned executive directors/superintendents elsewhere in IDEA’s network. The superintendent also participates in trainings and work sessions regarding essential topics including HR, compliance, reporting, goal setting, and management, to name a few. Each ED/superintendent meets weekly with either IDEA’s chief schools officer or their deputy, and is supported through a structured weekly meeting. Note that the ED/superintendent also participates in an annual staff development cycle which emphasizes clear goal-setting, feedback, course-correction, and evaluation. This deliberate and time-tested mentoring program has produced very successful executive directors/superintendents across IDEA.</p>
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<b>Waiver #4 Topic</b>	<b>Teacher Licensure and Policies</b>
<b>Arkansas Code Annotated</b>	6-15-1004 6-15-1005(b)(5) 6-17-301(a)(1) 6-17-309 6-17-401 6-17-418 6-17-702(a)(1)(A) and (B) 6-17-705(a)(2) 6-17-802 6-17-807 6-17-902 6-17-908(a)(4)(b) 6-17-919 6-17-2401, <i>et seq.</i> 6-17-2805(a)(2) 6-17-2805(c)(1) and (c)(2) 6-17-2805(d)(1) 6-17-2807(a)(1) and (a)(2)

	6-17-2808(c) 6-21-303
<b>Standard for Accreditation</b>	4-D.1
<b>ADE Rules</b>	Rules Governing Educator Licensure Rules Governing Educator Support and Development, Section 7
<b>Rationale for Waiver</b>	<p>IDEA requests a waiver in this area to the extent it requires teachers to be certified. IDEA would like to consider highly qualified candidates based on their individual credentials, and to hire qualified teachers who are best suited for IDEA's educational model, regardless of licensure status. IDEA teachers meet the Arkansas Qualified Teaching Standards. Further, IDEA requests a waiver in this area to allow it to provide compensation packages competitive with local public school districts. IDEA sets its starting salary comparable to the top three highest-paying districts in the area, and provides a number of performance- and outcome-based bonuses to augment this already competitive salary. IDEA seeks this waiver so that it may continue to combine competitive base salary with performance bonuses, which is part of the reason IDEA has achieved a ~85% teacher retention rate year over year. IDEA also seeks this waiver so that it may reserve the right to determine specific salary schedules based upon experience, skill, education, and other qualifications. IDEA also provides a suite of stipends for additional work that teachers may take on, ensuring that extra responsibilities receive additional remuneration. The Board of Directors will adopt personnel policies related to issues such as provisions of insurance and other fringe benefits. IDEA seeks a waiver from professional development requirements in order to carry out IDEA's own extensive professional development regime. IDEA provides expansive year-round training and coaching for teachers and leaders, and schedules trainings in real-time as responses to demonstrated need; this does not follow a typical in-service training calendar. Please see the attached examples of New Teacher Institute training and Lead Team Training, which offer a sampling of IDEA's professional development suite for teachers and campus lead team members. IDEA also manages an annual cycle of professional development for non-instructional and headquarters employees. IDEA also seeks a professional development waiver in order to ensure that all PD sessions attended by staff align closely with the IDEA program, and are not unrelated or superfluous. Further, IDEA request the latitude to offer trainings without prior certification from DESE. IDEA also seeks a waiver to be able to pay teachers a</p>

	<p>rate commensurate with the requirements of PD, which may be less than their daily rate, especially during New Teacher Institute.</p> <p>IDEA seeks a waiver of TESS and LEADS so that IDEA may continue its annual cycle of teacher and leader support, training, and evaluation. IDEA’s GET (Goalposts for Effective Teaching) and TCP (Teacher Career Pathway) provide a clear framework for instructional excellence, feedback, deliberate coaching and support, and structured, predictable evaluation. Please see the attached GET Rubric and TCP Handbook. IDEA has a similar rubric and structured support, training, and evaluation program for school leaders called School Leadership Levers (SLL). This rubric and related support/training are part of every principal’s weekly check-in, and annual evaluation cycle, with their manager. Please see the attached SLL handbook. IDEA can provide additional documents to demonstrate to DESE an equivalent model for TESS and LEADS, which meets the department’s requirements. IDEA’s hope is to be able to submit the results of this robust evaluation and support system directly to the state, and not via an EdReflect portal that does not match this evaluation system.</p>
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<b>Waiver #5 Topic</b>	Planning Period, Duty Free Lunch, and Non-Instructional Duties
<b>Arkansas Code Annotated</b>	6-17-111 6-17-114 6-17-117
<b>Standard for Accreditation</b>	
<b>ADE Rules</b>	
<b>Rationale for Waiver</b>	IDEA requests a waiver in this area. The Education Code requires teachers to be contracted if they are assigned to more than sixty (60) minutes of non-instructional duties per week. While IDEA follows this guideline in a typical week, there are times when teachers will be required to take on more than 60 minutes of non-instructional duties. This revision is required to allow teachers to perform both instructional and non-instructional duties to achieve peak operation of the school and ensure families have a strong experience, especially at the beginning of the school year when systems and habits are in



	<p>the process of being established, and an “all hands on deck” effort is required at the beginning and end of school day. IDEA does not seek this waiver in order to regularly burden teachers with non-instructional duties, but rather to ensure principals have the flexibility to request teachers support a handful of non-instructional efforts during crunch times (i.e. the first few weeks of school). This flexibility is important to ensure the safety of all students by having enough supervision during these periods. Additionally, some of these non-instructional interactions provide teachers an opportunity to build relationships with parents during pickup/drop off, and to provide informal mentorship and tutoring for students. IDEA provides each instructor with a 45 minute planning period each day, which exceeds the state requirement; however, we seek this waiver to provide flexibility in the infrequent cases where a teacher must be asked to cut into planning time for a critical, and time-sensitive need. IDEA provides every teacher a 30-minute lunch, but is seeking a waiver so that teachers may occasionally work during lunch breaks at their choosing. Teachers are not deprived of their lunch and every effort is made to develop a school-based staffing model that negates that need. IDEA always seeks to balance operational needs with teacher well-being, which resulted in IDEA achieving its teacher retention goal of 85% last school year. Principals and assistant principals have a high-priority goal around teacher retention, which helps further align incentives to ensure teachers do not feel overburdened and burn out.</p>
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<b>Waiver #6 Topic</b>	<b>School Start Date, Calendar, and Attendance</b>
Arkansas Code Annotated	6-18-213(a)(1) 6-10-106
Standard for Accreditation	1-A.4.2 2-B.2
ADE Rules	Mandatory Attendance Requirements for Students in Grades Nine through Twelve
Rationale for Waiver	IDEA requests a waiver in this area to allow flexibility in addressing the needs of its students. IDEA plans to start school during the second week of August. IDEA’s school year will meet or exceed the required minimum number of instructional days in Arkansas. IDEA requests a waiver from this area of the Education Code to the extent it requires attendance to be kept in a particular format or on certain terms. If possible, IDEA strongly prefers to utilize its own attendance

	<p>system, which, to the extent technologically possible, will sync with E-School Plus. The waiver requested is intended to allow IDEA preferred choice in system(s) used, and to comply with all required and expectations for attendance accounting and reporting. IDEA is confident it can provide any and all data requested but has found forced system adoption to be a major barrier to executing school-based innovations, training efficacy, and a culture of excellence around attendance and student data generally.</p>
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<b>Waiver #7 Topic</b>	<b>Gifted and Talented</b>
<b>Arkansas Code Annotated</b>	6-20-2208(c)(6) 6-42-109
<b>Standard for Accreditation</b>	2-G.1
<b>ADE Rules</b>	Rules Governing Gifted and Talented Program Approval Standards
<b>Rationale for Waiver</b>	IDEA requests a waiver in this area. IDEA’s model provides for individualized instruction for students based on the needs of each student. This provides for a flexible approach and a rigorous curriculum encompassing the needs of students who may ordinarily be classified as in need of Gifted and Talented instruction. Please see the “Gifted and Talented” section of our application for more information.

<b>Waiver #8 Topic</b>	<b>Class Size and Teaching Load</b>
<b>Arkansas Code Annotated</b>	6-17-812
<b>Standard for Accreditation</b>	1-A.5
<b>ADE Rules</b>	Rules Governing Class Size and Teaching Load
<b>Rationale for Waiver</b>	IDEA requests a waiver in this area to allow it to adopt class size and teaching load requirements most appropriate for the proposed school. IDEA proposes the following specific enrollment and academic pattern, with the option to adjust this number by 10% if needed. Note that the SPED staff estimates are the minimum required, and will grow according to the actual special education enrollment and needs of the school. Note also that students in 6 <sup>th</sup> & 7 <sup>th</sup> grade have four 90-minute

blocks per day, one of which is a rotation through AR, HotSpot, and PE. This allows extra math and literacy time in AR & HotSpot, staffed by trained co-teachers.

Academy (K – 5 <sup>th</sup> ) Enrollment				
Year of Operation	1	2	3	4+
K	124	124	124	124
1	124	124	124	124
2	124	124	124	124
3		124	124	124
4			124	124
5				124
<b>Core Teachers</b>	<b>14.0</b>	<b>18.5</b>	<b>23.0</b>	<b>28.0</b>
Kinder	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
1st Grade	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
2nd Grade	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
3rd Grade	-	4.0	4.0	4.0
4th Grade	-	-	4.0	4.0
5th Grade	-	-	-	4.0
PE	0.5	0.5	1.0	1.0
Interventionist	0.5	1.0	1.0	2.0
SPED	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0

Co-Teachers	8.0	8.5	10.0	10.0
Kinder	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
1st Grade	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
2nd Grade	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
3rd Grade	-	-	-	-
4th Grade	-	-	-	-
5th Grade	-	-	-	-
AR Zone	0.5	0.5	1.0	1.0
Hot Spot	0.5	0.5	1.0	1.0
PE	-	0.5	1.0	1.0

College Prep (6 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup> ) Enrollment							
Year of Operation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7+
6	124	124	124	124	124	124	124
7		124	124	124	124	124	124

8			124	124	124	124	124
9				124	124	124	124
10					112	112	112
11						101	101
12							91
<b>Core Teachers</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>14.0</b>	<b>21.0</b>	<b>29.0</b>	<b>35.0</b>	<b>41.0</b>
6th Grade	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
7th Grade	-	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
8th Grade	-	-	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
9th Grade	-	-	-	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
10th Grade	-	-	-	-	5.0	5.0	5.0
11th Grade	-	-	-	-	-	4.0	4.0
12th Grade	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.0
AVID					1.0	1.0	1.0
Electives	-	-	-	1.0	2.0	4.0	6.0
PE	0.5	0.5	1.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
Interventionist	0.5	1.0	1.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
SPED	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
<b>Co-Teachers</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>2.0</b>
Classroom	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
AR Zone	0.5	0.5	0.5	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Hot Spot	0.5	0.5	0.5	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
PE	-	0.5	-	-	-	-	-

<b>Waiver #9 Topic</b>	<b>Principals</b>
<b>Arkansas Code Annotated</b>	6-17-302(a) and (c)
<b>Standard for Accreditation</b>	4-C.1 4-C.2 4-C.3 4-C.4
<b>ADE Rules</b>	
<b>Rationale for Waiver</b>	IDEA requests a waiver from this portion of the Education Code. The principal will be employed on an “at-will” basis and will not be required to hold a valid supervisory or administrative

	<p>certificate. This will allow IDEA to identify and train principal candidates with the requisite skills, experience, and demonstrable record of achieving strong student outcomes, to fit IDEA’s model. IDEA ensures that every principal is fully trained and demonstrates mastery over the School Leadership Levers (see attached handbook) before they can earn a principalship. The Principal in Residence program, built around ensuring mastery of the School Leadership Levers, is an in-house version of a licensure program that ensures that every principal is fully prepared to successfully lead an IDEA school in the IDEA model. This program, which typically requires that aspiring principals spend 1-3 years embedded in residence with a successful IDEA principal at their school, also offers weekly structured development, coaching, and evaluation. IDEA’s strong academic results are due in large part to the consistent training this principal preparation program provides. Note also that every IDEA principal is closely supervised by a Vice President for Schools or Executive Director (superintendent). This manager has a weekly check in with each principal, which is focused on key metrics including student performance data. As such, every principal is held fully accountable, and provided ample, frequent support, to achieve their goals and ensure strong student outcomes. IDEA also seeks the ability to employ an Executive Principal (a top-performing, seasoned IDEA principal) over both schools on a single campus, inclusive of the K-5 Academy and 6-12 College Prep. This individual would employ at least 4 assistant principals, who manage instructional leadership, instructor performance, and school operations. While this arrangement is rare, having the flexibility to employ an Executive Principal is important for school achievement and stability.</p>
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Waiver #10 Topic	Personnel Policies
Arkansas Code Annotated	6-17-203 6-17-204 6-17-205 6-17-208 6-17-209 6-17-211 6-17-1201, <i>et seq.</i> 6-17-1301, <i>et seq.</i> 6-17-1501, <i>et seq.</i> 6-17-1701, <i>et seq.</i> 6-17-2301(c)(1) and (d)(2) (only to extent that the classified

	salary schedule must be published on the school's website) 6-17-2302 through 6-17-2305
<b>Standard for Accreditation</b>	3-A.1 3-A.2 (only to the extent that the classified salary schedule must be published on the school's website)
<b>ADE Rules</b>	Rules Governing Documents Posted to School District and Education Service Cooperative Websites – Sections 3.00, <i>et seq.</i> , 5.01.4, 5.01.5, 6.01, 6.02 (as for these sections, only to the extent that classified & administrator salary information is required to be published on the school's website)
<b>Rationale for Waiver</b>	<p>IDEA requests a waiver from this portion of the Education Code to allow IDEA to develop personnel policies tailored to its unique needs and practices. It plans to adopt personnel policies covering all necessary areas, including but not limited to salary schedules, benefits and other compensation issues; annual school calendars; evaluation procedures; leave; grievance procedures; termination or suspension; reduction in force and assignments. Employees will be "at will" and will be paid in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act and in accordance with the referenced personnel policies of IDEA. Employees will have the right to appeal their dismissal in accordance with a grievance policy adopted by the Board of Directors. Issues such as minimum sick leave will be addressed in the Employee Handbook for the school. This waiver will generally allow IDEA to make prompt personnel decisions to address performance issues negatively impacting the school's operation. IDEA also seeks the ability to develop policies with groups of employees outside of those mandated, and elected, as committee members. IDEA develops policies carefully, with an eye towards equity within a region (in this case, central Arkansas), as well as within IDEA; forcing an elected committee from just one area would break with this. IDEA would like to have flexibility in how it organizes its website, which has been designed for ease of parent use and navigation. IDEA would like to provide most policies and required legal reporting under the IDEA Arkansas's Board of Directors page of its website, as it does with all other IDEA regions. This will simplify the ability of interested parties to find all IDEA Arkansas documents, as well as those related to other IDEA entities. This will encompass state-required information, as well as other highly useful information not required by the state.</p> <p>IDEA will post teacher salary schedules and an employee benefits guide, but is seeking flexibility to continue posting salaries for all other position on position/hiring descriptions, rather than on this section of the website. Because IDEA</p>

	operates in multiple states, and it hopes to operate in multiple regions within Arkansas, posting classified and administrator salaries can cause operational challenges and confusion around salaries across regions with significant differences in cost of living.
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<b>Waiver #11 Topic</b>	<b>Library Media Specialist</b>
<b>Arkansas Code Annotated</b>	6-25-103 6-25-104
<b>Standard for Accreditation</b>	4-F.1 4-F.2
<b>ADE Rules</b>	
<b>Rationale for Waiver</b>	IDEA requests a waiver from this portion of the Education Code. IDEA plans to hire qualified individuals to be AR facilitators who lead the work of the AR zone program on campus. These facilitators work with students to read daily, develop independent reading skills, and meet specific reading goals. IDEA will offer library media services through classroom libraries and similar offerings that will provide students with access to books and related media through online services.

<b>Waiver #12 Topic</b>	<b>Minimum Salaries for Classified Employees</b>
<b>Arkansas Code Annotated</b>	6-17-2201, <i>et seq.</i>
<b>Standard for Accreditation</b>	
<b>ADE Rules</b>	
<b>Rationale for Waiver</b>	IDEA requests a waiver from this portion of the Education Code. To ensure staffing needs are met by employing those most qualified and possessing the requisite experience to work with IDEA's students, the waiver is requested to allow IDEA flexibility in offering competitive salary packages commensurate with experience. Employees will be employed on an "at-will" basis in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act and in accordance with IDEA's personnel policies.

<b>Waiver #13 Topic</b>	<b>Guidance Counselor and Student Services</b>
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<b>Arkansas Code Annotated</b>	6-18-706 6-18-2002(2)(A) 6-18-2003(a)(2)(A)
<b>Standard for Accreditation</b>	2-C.1 2-C.2 2-E.1 4-E.1 4-E.2 4-E.3 6-A.2
<b>ADE Rules</b>	Rules Governing School Nutrition and Physical Activity Advisory Committee, 6.01(only as pertains to establishing a committee at a district level, and provided that this does not disqualify us from federal and state funding)
<b>Rationale for Waiver</b>	<p>IDEA requests a waiver from this portion of the Education Code to the extent it limits IDEA's ability to employ qualified counselors. IDEA intends to hire certified counselors as school counselors. Some may come from out of state: we believe that a portion of the statute permits these employees, who hold out of state licenses, but we are seeking a waiver to 6-13-2003(a)(2)(a) if this is not the case. IDEA also seeks a waiver to hire college counselors (distinct from school counselors) who have not obtained a license, as IDEA has had tremendous success hiring highly capable college counselors with a track record of results who do not hold a license. IDEA extensity trains and supports all college counselors via IDEA's in-house training and support program, which has allowed us to achieve stellar college acceptance rates over the past 15 years. IDEA's model also requires college counselors to teach Road to College courses that prepare high school students to be academically, socially, and emotionally prepared for college; this necessitates that some college counselors teach more than 3 courses of 40 minutes each. IDEA's extremely low college counselor-to-student ratio means IDEA can accomplish this without sacrificing the ability of students to receive frequent, personalized counseling. Note that IDEA separates guidance counseling from college counseling, which allows IDEA to ensure that focus on college matching and acceptance is not sidelined, and students receive ample social emotional support. Regarding required student health services, IDEA seeks the flexibility to hire certified nursing assistants or medical assistants at each campus, who will be overseen centrally by a registered nurse (RN) who will coach, support, and supervise them. The Regional RN divides his/her time among the campuses, providing on-site training, coaching and observations. Each Health Aide is based at the campus and holds a Registered Medical Assistant, Certified Nursing Assistant, or comparable certification. All IDEA Health Services staff follow standing orders, which are reviewed and approved annually</p>



	<p>by a consulting physician. The standing orders include approval for school-based health services such as administration of daily and PRN (as needed) medications. For students with chronic or acute medical needs, the Health Aide and RN request student care plans from the child's physician. These orders are followed by the Health Aide and overseen by the Regional RN. When medically fragile students enroll at IDEA, we collect all relevant paperwork, ID medical needs, and determine the level of care needed to be provided during the school day, based on doctor's orders. If doctor's orders require hiring a private duty nurse for 1-to-1 care, or necessitate additional training for health aids or campus staff in classrooms, the RN will oversee this.</p>
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<b>Waiver #14 Topic</b>	<b>Curriculum, Grading, and Credit Hours</b>
<b>Arkansas Code Annotated</b>	6-17-429(d)(1)
<b>Standard for Accreditation</b>	1-A.1.3 1-A.2
<b>ADE Rules</b>	Rules Governing Instructional Materials Section 5.00, 5.01.2, 5.04, 5.05
<b>Rationale for Waiver</b>	<p>IDEA requests a waiver of this portion of the Education Code because the school's program requires flexibility in addressing the unique needs of its student. The IDEA course sequence plus campus-chosen electives will not equal thirty-eight (38) unique courses.. IDEA seeks a waiver to this requirement because, by the end of the term of this charter, IDEA will only offer 9<sup>th</sup> grade; as such, IDEA cannot sustain 38 courses. The courses have daily lesson plans and fully packaged, high quality curriculum. IDEA creates minimum class minutes to ensure sufficient learning, which amount to at least 120 clock hours in core courses. In electives, IDEA meets students requests and cultivates a variety of interests, which can equate to less than 120 clock hours. As such, IDEA seeks a waiver to have more flexibility in course design in elective, non-core subjects, and to prioritize demonstrated mastery over a seat time metric. We also seek a waiver because a group of IDEA academic experts, staff, and leaders already work to select appropriate curricula and materials, and would like to continue to do this in a similar fashion.</p>

<b>Waiver #15 Topic</b>	<b>Facilities and Flag Display</b>
<b>Arkansas Code Annotated</b>	6-16-105 United States Flag 6-16-106 Arkansas State Flag

	6-21-117 Leased Academic Facilities
<b>Standard for Accreditation</b>	
<b>ADE Rules</b>	
<b>Rationale for Waiver</b>	IDEA requests a waiver of this portion of the Education Code to the extent it requires IDEA’s facilities to conform to the specific school facility standards defined in the Arkansas School Facility Manual and/or to erect a flagstaff on the school grounds. IDEA ensures any and all facilities used for academic purposes will meet the requirements of all state and local health and safety codes, the Americans with Disability Act, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. However, IDEA may be leasing its facilities and may not be permitted to erect a flagstaff on the premises. If necessary, IDEA will seek alternative methods for prominently displaying the United States and Arkansas flags at the school.

<b>Waiver #16 Topic</b>	Transportation
<b>Arkansas Code Annotated</b>	6-19-120(b)
<b>Standard for Accreditation</b>	
<b>ADE Rules</b>	
<b>Rationale for Waiver</b>	IDEA uses a technology from AT&T called Push To Talk that is based on cellular telephone service. We selected this technology to improve the frequent coverage gaps we had when using VHF and UHF two-way radio bands. While our communication technology operates through a cellular telephone service, our radios only require the driver to push one button to connect with their Transportation Manager, making this platform extremely reliable and safe to operate in school buses. We would like to use this cellular-based Push to Talk technology rather than CB radios on VHF and UHF bands.

<b>Waiver #17 Topic</b>	Physical Education
<b>Arkansas Code Annotated</b>	6-16-132 (b) (1) (A) (i) 6-16-132 (b) (1) (A) (ii)
<b>Standard for Accreditation</b>	
<b>ADE Rules</b>	ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

	RULES GOVERNING NUTRITION AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY STANDARDS AND BODY MASS INDEX FOR AGE ASSESSMENT PROTOCOLS IN ARKANSAS PUBLIC SCHOOLS: 7.01.1 & 7.01.2
<b>Rationale for Waiver</b>	IDEA seeks a waiver to the PE minimum time requirements so that that IDEA may use a portion of PE time to provide its intensive and highly-effective Critical Student Intervention to students who are 2+ years behind in essential academic areas. Most CSI students will only miss half of their PE period for CSI, as this is the amount of time required for most CSI services. IDEA provides these intensive academic services to catch students up in 3 <sup>rd</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> grade. This is one of IDEA’s most successful programs; last school year alone, the CSI program helped almost 2,000 students close a two-year gap in reading in one year. Students who participate in CSI and have a shortened PE period are supported to participate in IDEA’s robust slate of afterschool programs, including physical activities and sports, so that their day may still include exercise and athletic skill-building.

**REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS**

1. IRS letter reflecting tax exempt status or a copy of the entity’s application for 501(c)(3) status.
2. Attach documentation to demonstrate that each of the following requirements of Arkansas Code Annotated §6-23-302 was met:
  - a. The notice of the public hearing was published on a weekly basis for at least three (3) consecutive weeks prior to the date of the hearing in a newspaper having general circulation in the school district in which the school will likely be located.
  - b. The notice of the public hearing was not published in the classified or legal notice section of the newspaper.
  - c. The last publication date of the notice was no less than seven days prior to the public meeting.
  - d. Within seven calendar days following the first publication of the notice of the public hearing, emails announcing the public hearing were sent to the superintendent of each of the school districts from which the open- enrollment public charter school is likely to draw students for the purpose of enrollment and the superintendent of any district that is contiguous to the district in which the open-enrollment public charter school will be located.

3. Budget template
4. Statement of Assurance