

Ector County ISD Request for Proposals: Cover Letter

Name: **ACCELERATION ACADEMIES**

Mailing Address: 910 W. Van Buren St Suite 315 Chicago, IL 60607

Website: www.accelerationacademy.org

Contact Person: Mark A. Graves, President
mgraves@accelerationacademy.org
(312) 919-8445

Federal I.D. # 47-1906410

RFP Name: Alternative Dropout Prevention/Recovery School

RFP Number: 21-31

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Background.....	Page 3
Scope of Work.....	Page 5
Revenue Sharing Financial Model.....	Page 5
Program Design.....	Page 6
Target Population.....	Page 10
Staffing.....	Page 10
Outcomes Data.....	Page 12
Site Selection and Build-Out.....	Page 15
Ensuring Safe Learning Environments.....	Page 17
Organizational Plan.....	Page 20
Action Plan.....	Page 22
Conclusion.....	Page 32
References.....	Page 32

Background

Acceleration Academies was founded in July 2014 by Dr. Joseph Wise, a long-time educator and former superintendent after extensive research into America's high school dropout epidemic. In 2013, 1.9 million young adults over the age of 18 lived in this country without a high school diploma, not enrolled in any kind of educational programming and yet were young enough to return to their local school districts to work toward a standard HS diploma. So, Wise and his colleagues at the time set out to learn more about this growing segment of society to gain a deep understanding of the challenges facing young adults who left high school without obtaining their high school diploma. After conducting surveys and focus groups of over 2,100 former high school dropouts who had re-engaged in local programs across 6 states in 2013, our team was able to identify the triggers to dropping out of high school as well as the support structures students identified as necessary for them to be successful during their re-entry into an alternative learning environment.

We responded by partnering with school districts to offer young people a personalized alternative pathway, one that blends flexible online coursework, intensive one-on-one academic coaching and wraparound social/emotional support delivered both in-person and remotely. Our network of school programs has grown to 11 Acceleration Academies nationwide, a list that will soon grow to 12 as we open our new Charleston, South Carolina, charter school this summer. Nationally, our network recently celebrated its 1,000th graduate, a single mother and daughter of Mexican immigrants who will join a group of young people who once thought a diploma beyond their grasp. As of June, 2021, that number has grown to over 1,200.

We are eager to join forces with you to re-engage such youths, help get them back on track for diplomas that will guarantee them an average wage of at least \$400/week higher than people with a GED, reduce the risk of them ending up on government assistance or in jail, and — most important of all — give them a chance to build futures that will make them, their families and communities proud.

Since opening the first academy in July 2014, Acceleration Academies has partnered with school districts across the nation, including large, urban districts with enrollments over 300,000 students as well as smaller school districts that include more rural areas. These districts include:

- Bethel School District (WA)

- Berkeley County School District (SC)
- Charleston County School District (SC)
- Clark County School District (NV)
- Dorchester School District 2 (SC)
- Escambia County School District (FL)
- Miami-Dade County Public Schools (FL)
- Sarasota County Schools (FL)
- South Carolina Public Charter School District (SC)
- St. Lucie County Public Schools (FL)

Acceleration Academies has a deep understanding of the challenges facing the students we serve. Additionally, Acceleration Academies understands that without an educated community of bright, eager, capable young men and women, our communities will not be prepared to meet the needs of a society increasingly dependent upon technology and specialized skills. Every student in America should have the same educational opportunities as their peers, regardless of their skin color or the zip code. This program aims to spread access to traditionally disenfranchised populations in an attempt to level the playing field for all young men and women. With our commitment to post-secondary opportunities, graduates of Acceleration Academies will not only walk away with a standard diploma, but they will also have doors of opportunity opened to them that were previously closed. To do this, we rely heavily on local educational and business leaders to lead our program, and we are committed to hiring individuals with a proven track record of positive outcomes for at-risk students in Ector County. The network level experience of opening academies across the country demonstrates Acceleration Academies is primed to build capacity with new Ector County staff members in order to build on our 7 years of lessons learned and best practices, including the need for our academies to be open year round, for student recruitment and enrollment to be ongoing throughout the year, and to ensure students have the necessary ancillary supports required for them to make their education a priority in life while fulfilling responsibilities to part- or full-time employment as well as familial obligations (child care, assisting sick parents, etc.).

The Acceleration Academies network team supports regional teams with the following staff members: a Chief Executive Officer, Chief Education Officer, Chief Academic Officer, Chief of Academy

Operations, Chief Financial Officer, Director of Student Enrollment, Manager of Operations, Manager of Systems and Supports, Marketing Coordinator, and 3 Communications Team (call center) representatives. Network team members have dedicated most of their professional careers to public education and many of its staff members have been a part of the organization since inception — honing practices to meet the needs of students we call Graduation Candidates (GCs) to remind them of why they are working so hard.

Scope of Work

Acceleration Academies is a national leader in re-engaging young adults not experiencing success in a traditional high school setting. Like Ector County Independent School District, the educators at Acceleration Academies believe that all students — regardless of past academic performance or personal obstacles — are capable of graduating from high school and going on to success in college, trade school, the military and the workplace. And like you, we are committed to making that opportunity available to students of color who have too often found themselves left behind.

The Ector County Acceleration Academy will propose the following outcomes for the 2021-2022 school year: (1) Enroll 200 students in its first year of operation, to be served at one location; (2) maintain an average weekly attendance rate of 80% or higher; (3) expect each GC to complete one course for a half credit every 3-4 weeks; and (4) graduate approximately 30 or more students. These milestones are built upon the recent increases we have seen nationally across these key performance indicators.

Revenue Sharing Financial Model

Acceleration Academies enters into public-private partnerships to support school districts in their re-engagement efforts and revenue shares on the total, weighted funding (including supplemental funding for ESE and ELL students) generated by the students who are re-enrolled into the District's Acceleration Academy program. Acceleration Academies shall bill for and receive solely 90% of those funds available to the District from State, Federal and Local Units of Government for the education of District students served by Acceleration Academies; the District shall retain the remaining 10% of those funds for administrative oversight. Initial payments prior to the student survey period will be made on an agreed upon good faith estimate of the number of students to be served in the first semester of the program. True-up language within the contract will remedy any over- or under-payment scenarios.

There is no upfront cost for operational build-out of a facility, supplies, technology, personnel costs, etc. Instead, we simply share the full-time equivalent (FTE) generated by the students being served through our partnership.

Program Design

The Acceleration Academies educational program is based on our Model Fidelity Framework which is grounded in research conducted in 2014. The framework consists of 7 standards: (1) recruitment, registration, enrollment, and orientation; (2) engagement; (3) social emotional learning; (4) collection, analysis and use of data to achieve results; (5) learning environments and facilities; (6) communication and collaboration; and (7) leadership. Each standard includes sub-standards and specific objectives detailing program expectations and aligned to intended program outcomes.

Acceleration Academies' educational model is rooted in an understanding that the at-risk population we serve will be most successful with a nontraditional approach to educational programming. Every aspect of our program provides a structure distinct from that of a traditional comprehensive high school program.

Ector County Acceleration Academy will offer a blended learning program using an online learning platform, Edmentum, that GCs can access both on and off campus. As part of the blended learning environment, each GC will build a flexible, individual schedule that includes being on-site and working remotely throughout each week. Each GC is expected to complete a minimum of 25 hours of work each week, with a combination of on-site and off-site learning opportunities. Our school days extend throughout the year, for a total of approximately 230 days. GCs will be able to access their courses remotely but must attend on-site weekly to work with certified teachers (referred to as Content Coaches), school counselors (referred to as Career Coaches), and/or social workers, (referred to as Life Coaches). GCs are encouraged to participate in the full range of the school's educational and experiential activities including community circles, field trips, community service events, and career and college planning activities. Each GC is enrolled in one course at a time and has weekly sessions (on-site or remote) with the Content Coach for that course. When on-site, GCs work with the Content Coach in small groups or individually. When working remotely, GCs communicate with Content Coaches via email, text, and video conferencing.

Our research-based educational model possesses unique methodologies and features designed to serve our target population — students who have not met with success in a traditional school setting. These unique features include:

- **Nontraditional School Year** | The academy will be open year-round to serve GCs approximately 230 school days per year.
- **Extended School Day** | Extended hours of operation for both on-site and remote learning allow for flexible scheduling based upon each GC's personal commitments. Ector County Acceleration Academy will be open approximately 60 hours per week allowing maximum flexibility in allowing our GCs on-site access to face-to-face support from their content coach, GCA or other members of our support team. An academy's precise hours of operation are informed by the attendance patterns of our GCs. If significant numbers of GCs wish to begin work as early as 7 am, we may open earlier than our traditional 8 am start time and will operate into the evening so that GCs with employment and family obligations have the opportunity to meet in off-peak hours to ensure academic progress takes place.
- **Student Recruitment** | The Acceleration Academies' team will work closely with district leaders to identify students from previous cohorts who have withdrawn from ECISD prior to earning a standard high school diploma and yet remain young enough to re-enroll, generate funding and earn credits toward their degree. Once these students have been identified, our local engagement coaches and representatives from our Communications team will begin both door-to-door as well as telephone outreach efforts to invite eligible students to return to the school district, in our more flexible program, to work one course at a time toward their ECISD high school diploma. Each prospective Graduation Candidate will be approved by a member of the ECISD team to ensure best placement for the student. Our team will also meet with high school principals and guidance counselors to present our program as a tool in the district's continuum of services so that active students who are not progressing and in need of a new learning environment or simply more flexibility can be invited to transition into the Ector County

Acceleration Academy to achieve a more focused path toward earning their final high school credits.

- **Course Recovery Plan** | GCs will have the opportunity to retake failed courses for credit recovery via Edmentum. This will allow staff to focus on what students need at the exact moment they need it – making on-site time more efficient, saving time, and ensuring all GCs reach their full potential.
- **Key Partner Organizations** | The academy partners with several key community organizations to provide wraparound services to GCs. Examples of these partnerships include, but are not limited to, the American Red Cross, YMCA, Goodwill, and Boys and Girls Club. Community organizations that can assist with vaccines and other medical requirements for graduation will also be sought. We will also partner with community organizations that may also serve members of the same population we are targeting for services as a referral source.
- **Proximity to Public Transportation** | The academy will be located on or near public transportation routes to support GCs in getting to and from the academy. Free bus passes will be provided to graduation candidates who meet daily goals.
- **School Culture** | The academy's nontraditional approach includes the establishment of a strong school culture with clear expectations for all GCs. This begins upon a GC's enrollment in the academy by participation in an extended orientation process. Additionally, Acceleration Academies' Compassionate Schools Framework focuses on the Collaborative for Academic and Social Emotional Learning (CASEL) Standards. The culture we will build at the academy will include the use of restorative practices such as community circles, restorative conferences and positive language frameworks. In addition, career and college planning workshops are offered to GCs on a weekly basis focused on such things as resume writing, apprenticeship opportunities, career exploration, etc. Special school spirit events and activities are planned throughout the year to promote a positive school climate and culture.
- **Unique Proprietary Protocols** | Acceleration Academies has developed a suite of proprietary processes/protocols in alignment with the model to ensure GC success. Several examples include:

- **GC Orientation** | The orientation of GCs is a critical component of Acceleration Academies' comprehensive system for introducing GCs to the educational model and obtaining relevant personal, academic and social/emotional information about each young adult. Orientation is the first step in establishing culture, articulating expectations, and starting GCs on the path to success. Once a GC is enrolled in the school, the GC attends a series of orientation sessions that continue until the GC has completed his/her first course.
- **GC Engagement Protocol** | Acceleration Academies' GC Engagement Protocol is designed to provide a process for monitoring GC attendance and course progress. Each GC is assigned to a GC Advocate (GCA), or mentor, who serves as the GC's case manager and monitors attendance in accordance with the individualized commitment schedule. Specific steps/actions are outlined in the protocol to ensure that GCs are meeting attendance standards. All engagement efforts are documented in Atlas (Acceleration Academies' proprietary service management system) daily.
- **Data Dialogue Protocol** | Acceleration Academies' Data Dialogue Protocol features two distinct components that promote the analysis of data, determining strengths and weaknesses, and identifying action plans to improve results. Weekly data meetings are held at the site level and provide an opportunity for staff to review student performance and progress and develop specific action steps to improve outcomes. A weekly performance management call occurs every Monday, providing an opportunity for the Acceleration Academies network leadership team and site-level leadership to review progress on key performance indicators and collaborate to improve GC and program outcomes.
- **Unique Proprietary Tools** | Acceleration Academies has developed a suite of proprietary systems/tools to ensure GC success. A few examples include:
 - **Atlas** | This system serves as the hub for all GC information (i.e. recruitment, registration, enrollment, GC profile, personalized learning plan, real-time academic progress monitoring across LMS's, case management notes, etc.).
 - **GC Navigator** | This app is designed to increase attendance and engagement, allowing GCs to track their attendance, coursework and graduation progress.

- **Grad Calculator** | This tool is used to calculate the daily/weekly course completion rate necessary for a GC to hit their projected graduation date.
- **Graduation Persistence Scale (GPS)** | This online survey is designed to assess non-academic factors that may keep a GC from persisting in the program to graduation.

Target Population

We will recruit youths and young adults who have already dropped out of high school, are falling behind in their studies or are otherwise at-risk. These students may have withdrawn due to non-attendance, for medical reasons, due to court action, pregnancy or home school. Their whereabouts may be unknown, they may have withdrawn to attend a private school or may have another eligible lever code that would identify them as potentially eligible for our program. These will be the students we begin immediate door to door recruitment efforts on once a contract has been executed. We will also work closely with district leaders to identify active students with poor course performance or a lack of course completions, students lacking progress in their graduation plan and students with chronic absenteeism who are at-risk of dropping out. We will serve any student up until their 21st birthday (22nd birthday for students with an Individual Education Plan) who has been promoted to 9th grade but has not fulfilled the district's graduation requirements. Nationally, our students are, on average, about 18.5 years of age.

Staffing

Acceleration Academy will begin the process for recruiting and hiring staff once a contract has been awarded. Acceleration Academies uses a multi-step process to recruit, select, and retain a racially, linguistically, and gender-diversified staff that mirrors the student/family population served in the academies. Acceleration Academies' Director of Human Resources, working collaboratively with the Chief Education Officer, Chief Academic Officer, and Chief of Academy Operations will lead the selection of the Academy Director. The Director will be the primary intermediary between the Academy and the Ector County ISD. S/he will work closely with the Acceleration Academies Chief Academic Officer and Chief of Academy Operations to efficiently set up the opening of the Academy. This includes the recruitment, hiring, training, and evaluation of the academy staff members.

Acceleration Academies' Director of Human Resources will be responsible for posting open positions for administrative, instructional, and non-instructional personnel on multiple job boards for the Ector County Acceleration Academy. A concerted effort will be made to employ instructional staff who are familiar with, from, or express a commitment to serve GCs in the communities where the Academy is located. The Academy will achieve this by advertising the position for skilled educators, recruiting from local colleges or universities, forging partnerships with Teach For America or similar service-oriented nonprofit organizations, and by identifying potential Content Coaches who are going through Oregon's alternative credentialing process.

The first step in the application process will be the submission of a resume and cover letter. Candidates who possess the background, experience, and credentials required by the position will be contacted for a phone interview by Acceleration Academies' Director of Human Resources. The Director of Human Resources will interview the candidate to validate experience and determine if the candidate is aligned with the Academy's mission. After the screening interview is complete, the names, resumes, and cover letters of qualified candidates will be forwarded to the Academy's Director. The Director will then select candidates for an in-person (or virtual) interview. For teaching candidates, this in-person interview may include a sample lesson as well as a writing sample. Other positions will require a writing sample. The Academy's Director may bring in candidates for multiple interviews throughout the hiring process. Once the Academy's Director has selected a finalist, the job candidate will interview with a member of the Acceleration Academies network leadership team. Offers are extended by the Director of Human Resources, and remain conditional until a state/federal background check has been completed.

Professional Development

The Academy's unique educational model requires extensive professional development and training for staff. Acceleration Academies' Chief Academic Officer provides oversight for professional development and training in alignment with Acceleration Academies' national model. Acceleration Academies' national network team provides professional development and training as needed to ensure local alignment with the national model. Acceleration Academies employs a Model Fidelity Coach (MFC) who supports training and development at the local level and works in conjunction with the academy's Director to plan and implement professional development and training for staff.

Outcomes Data

Our organization is built on continuous improvement for the success of our Graduation Candidates. Acceleration Academies' proprietary service management system, Atlas, is used to collect, store, and organize student data as well as key performance metrics related to student and program outcomes. The following is a list of student and staff accountability metrics as well as the typical cadence for disaggregation of the data, data analysis and subsequent goal setting:

GC Enrollment. GCs who are interested in or referred to Acceleration Academy enter the registration pipeline and are scheduled immediately for orientation. Atlas tracks the registration pipeline with daily updates on the dashboard display that reflect both "Approved" registrations as well as "Pending" registrations. GCs with special needs are monitored closely through the registration process to ensure that all Individual Education Plans are properly supported.

Graduates and Withdrawals. GCs who either complete their academic requirements or who fail to make adequate progress despite the full range of support are tracked carefully and reported at both the network and the site level on a weekly basis. Both of these metrics are an important part of Acceleration Academies' accountability systems and key performance indicators, and can be found in the quarterly report from at each site.

GC Attendance. Both on-site and online attendance is monitored on a daily and a weekly basis, and is disaggregated by sub-groups (i.e. special programs, etc.) to better understand emerging trends. GC attendance is seen as a leading indicator for program health and is therefore closely studied and used to update local strategy.

GC Time on Task. The amount of time that GCs are engaged in learning is another leading indicator that closely follows attendance for guiding local strategy. Therefore, this metric is monitored both daily and weekly, and is disaggregated by sub-groups for refined analysis. Edmentum's *Courseware* ports Time on Task data into Atlas via an application programming interface (API) that offers rich analysis of each GC's academic experience.

GC Course Completion. As the key component of a GC's high school transcript, each course completion brings the GC one step closer to a high school diploma. Therefore, the most important of the available lagging indicators is course completion data. Course completions are reviewed at the local level prior to approval by the Director or designee, and are displayed on the Atlas dashboard as a key performance metric. Each week, course completions are disaggregated to gain insight into academic performance at both the network and the site level, analyzed to identify emerging trends.

GC Cohort Data. In an effort to have as many GCs as possible graduate in-cohort, at the end of each month, GC progress is compared to their cohort year to ensure they are on-track for course completion and graduation. This data is shared at the network and site level to determine strategy for any GC lagging in progress, as well as continuing to monitor GCs who are close to graduation. Because our academies operate year-round, students are enrolling every week of the year. Some students enroll needing only a half credit to graduate while others may have only a couple of credits under their belt. Because of this, calculating a cohort graduation rate is a challenging metric to identify and report. Instead of calling our students Seniors, Juniors, Sophomores and Freshmen, we tier our Graduation Candidates based upon the number of credits needed to graduate.

Site-Level Academic Progress. At the site level, staff (content coaches, graduation candidate advocates, and special education coaches) report weekly on course completions, GC progress, and GC case management for the individual GCs on their caseload. These local huddles occur two or three times each week and typically include attention to daily strategies for engagement and academic success. Frontline team members use course completion data as a guide for caseload management in an effort to ensure that all GCs are on track for graduation and that all frontline team members are making adequate progress with their assigned caseload.

Site-Level Enrollment. Enrollment goals are set at the network and site level, and Directors closely monitor efforts to meet enrollment goals on a daily and weekly basis. Once a month, each Director meets with the Chief Operations Officer to discuss progress toward enrollment goals based on strategy that is addressed in weekly meetings. When negative trends persist in the area of enrollment, the Chief Operations Officer may recommend a variety of interventions or may introduce additional resources to support local recruitment efforts.

Quarterly Performance Goals. Each Director works closely with the Network’s Executive Team to establish quarterly enrollment, engagement, and course completion goals that demonstrate academic and programmatic health at the local and network levels. All daily and weekly strategy is based on these quarterly goals and align with performance incentives for site leaders. These goals are updated on a monthly basis.

To ensure adherence to all accountability and compliance protocols, Acceleration Academies’ site directors (academy leaders) participate in all partner-district hosted alternative program collaboration meetings. Acceleration Academies currently produces quarterly accountability reports for all district partners and meets with the district’s designated liaison along with other identified district leaders on a quarterly basis. Leadership from the Acceleration Academies national team participate in these meetings as well as the site director.

Acceleration Academy is a data-driven organization, meaning that all decisions are made based on the careful analysis of student achievement data. Each week, site leaders meet to study the recruitment, enrollment, and academic results from the prior week compared against expected outcomes. The table below represents a selection of our key performance indicators since January 2019.

NETWORK DATA SUMMARY – AS OF 5/31/21*					
Category	Metric	2019	2020	2021*	Projected 2021
ENGAGEMENT	Average Monthly Enrollment	1,514	1,457	1,745	1,745
	Number of New Students Re-engaged	2,854	2,560	715	3,000**
	Average 5-day attendance	63%	67%	70%	80%
ACADEMIC	Total Course Completions	4,997	5,167	2,972	6,094
	Credits Earned at AA	2,499	2,584	1,486	3,067

	Math Course Completions	639	670	620	1,488
	ELA Course Completions	1,223	1,467	704	1,690
GRADUATION	Number of Graduates	201	371	206	454

** New academies opening in Summer and Fall 2021

Site Selection and Build-Out

When we surveyed former high school dropouts who re-enrolled in an alternative setting, one theme was resounding: the population of students we aim to serve have significant psychological scars resulting from past educational experiences and would prefer not to return to a district building on a campus where they had found frustration. For this reason, our organization will lease its own commercial space for a 36 or 60 month term at no expense to Ector County ISD.

Once Acceleration Academies has been notified of the contract award, we plan to lease commercial space and build it out to meet the specifications described below. Our start-up plan includes site selection — it's vital that the ops team have the time to search for sites which will include targeted areas so that recruitment may flourish.

The Ector County Acceleration Academy will be strategically located in a highly visible and functional place. By collecting and analyzing school district and geographical data, we will locate the facility in an area where there is a steep dropout rate so that canvassing recruitment efforts may be most effective. An important variable is transportation; the facility will be situated near public transportation stops, since prospective students often have challenges getting to and from school. Another important component of our facility selection process is the specifications of the interior and exterior space. The academy will be approximately 5,000 square feet with an open floor plan. We will have small conference rooms, a kitchenette and comfortable seating to provide a low-key but studios “coffee shop” feel. From a design standpoint, the exterior business front will have branded signage with LED illumination so that day or night, when traffic passes by, the academy will be highly visible. The facility will meet all applicable healthy, safety, and zoning requirements, and be approved by the local city planning and zoning

departments. The applicable business and occupancy permits will be acquired during the buildout timeline. While the majority of the GC learning occurs in one room, the other spaces in the facility have clearly-defined uses:

Reception/Registration Area - situated so that each person (i.e. student, parent, staff member, etc.) is able to check-in with a staff member the moment they walk in our door, an arrangement that ensures safety for all persons present in the site. This allows for conversations to occur with parents and/or graduation candidates about filling out registration forms.

Testing Area - designated areas where students will be tested and monitored; this can include national, state or local assessments.

Orientation Room - collaborative sessions, restorative circles, and guest speakers will engage with staff/students here.

Furniture - there will be multiple work tables set-up for students so that they may collaborate with the staff. A CAD drawing will be drafted by the operations department so that the model floor plan may be produced and executed.

The facility will also be handicapped-accessible and accommodate the needs of all Graduation Candidates. Acceleration Academies' Operations Department will work with designers, architects, and contractors to ensure the facility meets all applicable site and ADA requirements. All learning locations are on the ground floor so there is no need for stairs and/or elevators.

Extended Hours of Operation

Our academy's hours of operation will be determined by the attendance patterns of our Graduation Candidates; we want to be available to them when it's most convenient for them. We typically pilot 7 am-7 pm hours Monday-Thursday with a shorter, 8-hour day offered on Fridays. We also want to be available to students with full-time jobs or childcare obligations on the weekends. We will pilot weekend hours and make each staff member available via Zoom and other remote platforms to support our GC's progress every day of the week.

During orientation, each Graduation Candidate will complete a commitment contract that includes the days and hours of the week the staff will expect to see each student. Our expectation is for each GC to be on-site a minimum of 12 hours per week and working off-site for an additional 12 hours for a total minimum engagement each week of ~25 hours. As soon as a GC misses a scheduled day on-site, our retention protocol will be initiated and contact will be made with that GC to determine why the student was not present and to help them overcome any existing barriers to onsite attendance.

Ensuring Safe Learning Environments

Acceleration Academies prides itself in operating welcoming, inclusive and safe learning environments for our Graduation Candidates, many of whom have experienced multiple traumas in their lives that make it difficult to trust. We will continue to rely upon our research to inform our build-out and operational activities to ensure our facility in Ector County not only meets all local inspection protocols but also meets Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. Our academies are located in ground-level storefront properties allowing for easy access to students, staff and visitors who use wheelchairs. We partner with outside surveillance software vendors to supply security equipment and monitoring services. Vendors provide necessary video security cameras and access control accessories. The cameras will be installed in the new facility so that complete visibility of the site is captured for monitoring purposes. Acceleration Academies' network staff and the Director at the site will collaborate to ensure safety at the site.

Ector County Acceleration Academy's Emergency Management plan will be developed once the physical site has been identified. Once a site location has been confirmed, staff will be trained on policies and procedures for emergency drills and actual emergencies including, but not limited to, active shooter and hostage situations, bomb threats, fires, and natural disasters.

The academy has the right to deny any person access to the building if the situation appears suspicious. Additionally, only pre-approved personnel will be permitted to gain access to the school site. The academy will have only one entrance and exit and the door will be locked, even during business hours, to ensure prudence in allowing individuals into the site.

Ector County Acceleration Academy will adopt the ECISD Code of Conduct and follow the practices outlined within the policy. All GCs must sign and adhere to the Code of Conduct. Restorative Practices and student-centered behavior conferences will be used to maintain a safe and orderly school environment which promotes Acceleration Academies' philosophy of providing a college preparatory education for all of its GCs. The academy will hire and train an Engagement Coach to assume the responsibilities of a safe-school officer. The Engagement Coach will oversee the safety and security of the school utilizing the Compassionate Schools Framework and a Restorative Practices approach to behavioral intervention. When appropriate, the academy will coordinate with local law enforcement and probation services to address emergent issues. Additional staff members will be trained as safe-school officers to ensure there is a safe-school officer on-site whenever the facility is open.

If there are safety issues associated with an employee, the Academy's Director will ensure proper action is taken. If there problems arise with GCs, the Career Life Coaches and GCAs will escalate the situation to the Director, who will in-turn, inform the Network for a larger assessment so that safety standards and the facility environment is safe for all personnel.

Acceleration Academies' ethos is grounded in the *Compassionate Schools* philosophy that embraces the following three ideals: (1) schools should promote intellectual development while instilling positive attitudes and requiring acceptance and respect for all students; (2) learning environments are organized for collaborative learning with students of varying abilities working together to accomplish learning goals; and (3) schools, families and communities must work together to educate all students. Ector County Acceleration Academy will be a place where staff and GCs learn to be aware of the challenges faced by others. The staff will respond to the physical, emotional, and social challenges faced by GCs and families by offering support to remove barriers to learning with compassion.

Acceleration Academies' *Compassionate Schools Framework* is grounded in the CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning) standards. These standards are infused in day-to-day life at the Academy. The Life Coach (licensed social worker) will conduct both individual and small group workshops focused on fostering the standards.

The Academy's nontraditional approach includes the establishment of a strong school culture with clear expectations for all GCs. This begins upon a GC's enrollment in the Academy by participation in an extended orientation process. The orientation of GCs is a critical component of Acceleration Academies' comprehensive system for introducing GCs to the educational model and obtaining relevant personal, academic and social/emotional information about each young adult. Orientation is the first step in establishing culture, articulating expectations, and starting GCs on the path to success. Once a GC is enrolled in the school, the GC attends a series of orientation sessions. During orientation, each GC takes the Graduation Persistence Scale (GPS), a proprietary tool designed to measure a GC's social-emotional well-being and the potential for a GC to persist in the program to earn a standard high school diploma. During the orientation process, the Life Coach reviews the data and meets with the GC to develop a social-emotional learning plan that is part of the personal learning plan (PLP). Plans are reviewed with the student monthly and by team members weekly to ensure the GC is finding success, and identify any needed additional resources or services. Each GC is assigned to a Graduation Candidate Advocate (GCA) who serves as a case manager, supporting GCs with a trauma-informed case management model.

Acceleration Academies values the power of intentional, proactive behavior support. Because of this, Acceleration Academies is committed to using the *Compassionate Schools Framework* and a restorative practices approach for the majority of issues requiring intervention and redirection. Acceleration Academies knows that building strong relationships is the backbone of developing safe learning environments, and that many discipline issues in traditional schools stem from power struggles between staff and students. The Acceleration Academy model is grounded in the belief that a restorative practices approach to almost all minor, and many moderate infractions is the most effective way to support the continued growth of young people, and so will include regular community circles to enhance relationships among all GCs and staff. Restorative conferences will be used when mild or moderate infractions result in a loss of trust. These conferences include the use of restorative, proactive language grounded in positive presuppositions. Ector County Acceleration Academy will use incentives to promote positive behaviors of GCs. A few examples of incentives include positive feedback, recognition for academic progress and performance, and awards for outstanding behavior and citizenship. In addition, Acceleration Academies has developed a proprietary app called GC Navigator that allows GCs to track their progress in their courses and progress toward a high school diploma. GC Navigator

includes specific challenges that encourage GCs to stay engaged in making academic progress, built around a reward system.

The Ector County Acceleration Academy team will be trained in restorative practices to serve as a foundation for all staff and GC interactions. The team will conduct regular community circles that include an icebreaker and a central topic question, thus providing an opportunity to build relationships among GCs and staff and the school community. In addition, staff will lead restorative conferences using the Restorative Conference Script which serves as the primary method of resolving conflict between and among GCs and staff members.

The Ector County Acceleration Academy learning environment will be student-centered and provide equitable opportunities for all enrolled students. The academy will foster high expectations for academic performance for all GCs as they progress towards earning their high school diploma and plan for their next steps in the world of work or schooling.

Organizational Plan

Acceleration Academies is fortunate to be led by a group of veteran educators who have built their careers on the pursuit of equity for underserved and historically marginalized student populations. Our leaders have been former school district superintendents, assistant superintendents and Chief Academic Officers. Each academic member of our leadership team has been with the organization for at least four years and has helped to build upon the learnings of years past to continuously improve our model for the betterment of our Graduation Candidates. Multiple members of our team have been responsible for the execution of professional development and evaluation of teachers, design of non-traditional programming and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports that make their contributions to our blended learning model essential. The research done by members of our team in 2013 led to the design of our blended learning model and the wrap-around support framework used in our academies today. Bios of our CEO, CFO and Educational Program team provided below and copies of appropriate certifications are provided as attachments to this proposal.

Dr. Joseph Wise – *CEO and Co-Founder / Former Superintendent*

Joseph Wise has a proven record of helping school districts, school boards, and school leaders make rapid improvements to support student achievement. He has successfully led major public and private sector organizations throughout North America to set ambitious goals and achieve impressive results. Dr. Wise has successfully bridged academic, business, and governmental interests to build — and sustain — powerful organizational reforms.

Dr. Wise formerly served as Superintendent of Schools for the nation's 15th largest public school district (Duval County Public Schools, Jacksonville, Florida) and the State of Delaware's largest public school district (Christina School District, Wilmington, Delaware), earning a reputation as a visionary leader who brought about measurable improvements in both student achievement and operational management. He is the co-founder and Chairman of the Board of Distinctive Schools, a high-performing charter management organization serving Chicago and Detroit. Dr. Wise is also the co-founder of Acceleration Academies, an organization focused on providing teens and young adults who had abandoned education an opportunity to re-engage and ultimately earn their high school diploma. He has served on the board of NWEA for over 16 years and is the past CEO, current Board Chairman, of the Education Research & Development Institute (ERDI). In 2013, Dr. Wise led the research that ultimately led to the design of our blended learning model that we use today in each of our academies.

Dr. Margie Sharp – *Chief Education Officer*

Dr. Sharp currently serves as the Chief Education Officer for Acceleration Academies and has a longstanding career in public education that spans well over three decades. Throughout her career, Dr. Sharp established a record of leading school and district reform efforts in rural, urban and suburban public school districts in the mid-Atlantic region. As an educator, Dr. Sharp has consistently focused on ensuring that *EVERY* child has access to high-quality educational opportunities. Prior to joining Acceleration Academies, Dr. Sharp served as the Assistant Superintendent in the Avon Grove School District in Pennsylvania, where she was responsible for curriculum and instruction, professional development, strategic planning, leadership development, grant writing and oversight, and supervision of elementary and secondary education programs. She previously served as executive director of curriculum and instruction (K-12), director of elementary education, and principal in the largest school district in Delaware. She also served as an adjunct faculty member for the Educational Leadership

Doctoral Program at the University of Delaware. Dr. Sharp's areas of expertise include district-wide strategic planning, curriculum development and audits, assessment systems, leadership development, and professional development.

Mr. Eric Schneider – *Chief Academic Officer*

With over 30 years focused on increasing student achievement as a high school English teacher, high school principal and K-12 district administrator, Acceleration Academies' Chief Academic Officer, Eric Schneider, has a deep appreciation for the value of a well-constructed and well-managed academic program. Furthermore, he understands the value of working closely with frontline educators to co-design a program that fundamentally increases the commitment that teachers bring to their work every day.

Ms. Holly Lane – *Chief Financial Officer*

Holly Lane serves as the Chief Financial Officer for Acceleration Academies. Prior to this role, she was the Chief Financial Officer of Prairie Capital Funds. Prior to joining Prairie Capital in 1999, Holly was involved in the purchase of the Affy Tapple Company in 1995, a Midwest Caramel Apple institution. As an owner, Holly was responsible for building the organization, including leading most functional areas within the company.

Action Plan

Providing a high quality, whole-student-focused, research-based model is of the utmost importance to Acceleration Academies. It is the reason why we limit new district partnerships to 2-3 each year so that we can ensure a high level of adherence to our blended learning model and training and support to new district-based academy teams. Acceleration Academies has earmarked one of those three expansion slots for Ector County ISD because of this RFP process; we will lean on our experienced team to provide all of the necessary support required to launch a highly successful partnership and program in the city of Odessa this summer. Acceleration Academies will source for a District Director as soon as a contract has been executed with ECISD. We will build an experienced team of educators who have a track record of successfully serving at-risk students. Seasonal employees on our Communications team may be offered additional hours to make recruitment calls to eligible students in ECISD.

Transient Population. Acceleration Academies supports Graduation Candidates living in large urban areas like Miami and Las Vegas as well as more rural settings like Spanaway, Washington and St Lucie County, Florida. While these geographic areas may present their own unique challenges to recruiting and supporting GCs, one thing we know is true with our target population of students: they can be highly mobile. This may be due to unstable living arrangements or financial predicaments that make stability and regular attendance and progress a challenge. For this reason, our retention protocols are activated within 24 hours of non-attendance or an unexcused absence. Regular communication with our GCs is critical to their success. Therefore, telephonic outreach or a home visit are actions we take early and often as we begin to see a GC disengage. We also rely on our GC's network of supports as well as fellow GCs who may know how to find GCs who have disengaged or been on the move due to aforementioned obstacles.

ELL Services. Ector County Acceleration Academy will employ a certified ESL Coach to serve as case manager for all English language learners (ELL) GCs. The ESL Coach will be responsible for administering assessments, monitoring progress, and providing direct instruction and support to the GC based upon the GC's LEP level. The progress of ELLs will be reviewed during weekly data meetings in which each GC's attendance, engagement and course progression are scrutinized. If an ELL GC is struggling with the content, there are multiple avenues to provide intervention and support that include Edmentum accommodations and one-to-one support from our certified ESL coach. Initially, the ESL coach reviews data to identify the concept/skill the GC is struggling with and other potential issues that may be impacting learning. If the issue is content-related, the Content Coach provides intervention individually or in a small group. If the issue is related to social-emotional learning, the Content Coach would engage the Life Coach and the Graduation Candidate Advocate (GCA) in accessing appropriate support and services.

All GCs are evaluated through the WIDA Access test each school year. Services are adjusted according to the GC's LEP levels. Additionally, the ESL teacher and/or the GC can initiate consideration of changes in services and supports based on GC performance and needs. Such changes would be made in compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

Edmentum, the online content provider, features several instructional adaptations and options for supporting an ELL GC with coursework. For example, Edmentum offers language translations so a GC can access text material and video content in their native language. GCs not needing full translation can also utilize a translation dictionary while keeping the curriculum content in English.

ESE Services. Acceleration Academies is committed to providing students with disabilities a Free, Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). Ector County Acceleration Academy will hire a Special Education Coach (certified special education teacher) who will be responsible for overseeing and providing services to GCs with disabilities. The Ector County Acceleration Academy Director and the Special Education Coach will work collaboratively with the Ector County ISD Special Education staff to support students with IEPs.

Ector County Acceleration Academy will serve special education GCs based on IEP goals that are written for students with mild to moderate disabilities under IDEA. This classification would include GCs who are able to receive instruction with their nondisabled peers during 40% to 100% of the school day. The Ector County Acceleration Academy team will utilize the Individual Education Plan (IEP) process to ensure FAPE criteria are met for disabled and nondisabled GCs alike. A GC identified as eligible for special education services has these services described in the identified GC's IEP. The IEP identifies a GC's academic and behavioral goals, determines the appropriate levels of direct engagement necessary for the GC to make adequate progress toward these goals, and coordinates the delivery of services (e.g., accommodations, interventions, supports and services, outside supports) delineated in the GC's IEP. Student progress is monitored by the Special Education Coach and Content Coach (certified teachers). Content Coaches on the GC's IEP team communicate on a weekly basis to plan additional interventions and discuss achievements.

Ector County Acceleration Academy will monitor GC progress toward IEP goals by charting, observations, and by using progress monitoring methods on curricular formative and summative assessments, as well as on national assessments. GC progress toward IEP goals will be shared with parent(s) or guardian(s) (if the GC is under 18 or has provided consent) on a quarterly basis or as specified by the IEP. If a special education GC is not making adequate progress toward IEP goals, an

IEP meeting will be held to identify additional interventions, supports, and related services to assist the GC.

Ector County Acceleration Academy will provide all services and instruction for GCs with disabilities in conformity with each GC's IEP and in compliance with IDEA and all applicable laws and regulations. If a GC requires a service that is not readily accessible through the Academy's existing staffing or support services, the academy will coordinate services with the district and/or subcontract with a third-party special education provider.

Ector County Acceleration Academy will use its multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) regular review of all individual student data to determine if there is a student with a potential disability who has yet to be identified. Progress monitoring occurs in cycles throughout the year over a period of 6-8 weeks to determine how the GC is responding to instruction.

Ector County Acceleration Academy's Multi-Tiered Systems of Support includes three tiers of support:

- **Tier I | Core Instruction.** All GCs are engaged in courses identified on their personalized learning plan (PLP), in a blended learning environment with instruction provided by the Content Coach (certified teacher). GCs are provided with both individual and small group instruction based upon how they are responding to instruction. Tier 1 support interventions may include a quieter work space, a tangible incentive for positive behavior, and/or something else that would represent a minor change to the GC's overall day.
- **Tier II | Small Group Intervention.** Based upon the initial universal screening and review of a GCs academic and school records, GCs may be placed in a small group intervention to support a specific need. This small group intervention is in addition to the instruction all GCs receive in Tier 1. For example, GCs can participate in an anger management group led by the Life Coach if they are having difficulty with peer conflict. A GC struggling academically may be given the opportunity to work in a separate room with a small (3-5) group of GCs and a Content Coach to go over the content in more

depth. Manipulatives and consumable materials may be used to enrich the instruction provided in an online course.

- **Tier III | Intensive, Individualized Support.** The small number of GCs who move up to this most intensive level of support continue with Tier 1 instruction but also participate in a higher intensity of intervention. These sessions typically last longer and are more narrowly focused. For example, if the Tier II anger management group was not successful, specific designated attendance days and times may be given to the GC to prevent additional conflict. For a GC struggling with Algebra, a Tier III intervention may include providing extra one-to-one time with the Content Coach, a look at a history of math concerns for a potential IEP referral, and/or the addition of remediation.

The first Tier II plan is implemented for 6-8 weeks and is followed by an MTSS team meeting to review GC data for achievement and growth. If growth is made, the same plan is continued for another 6–8 weeks; but if the GC does not make progress, a new Tier II plan is created. If after three Tier II plans have been implemented and not found successful, the GC will move to Tier III. Progress monitoring will be done every other week during the Tier II process. Factors that will be analyzed include peer relationships, academic progress in course, course completion pace, attendance, and/or behavior while on site. If a GC does not make growth academically or behaviorally during Tier III, a referral for further specialized testing or evaluation for special education services may be needed. A parent may request an initial special education evaluation at any time. If a GC is not eligible for special education services through IDEA, the GC may be eligible for appropriate educational services through Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

The IEP team reviews and analyzes each special education GC's academic progress multiple times throughout the year. This review includes an evaluation of the special education GC's credit attainment rate, attendance, grades, standardized test scores, and other performance and behavioral data. The decision to transition a GC receiving services out of special education is made with input from all members of the GC's IEP team. If a GC is transitioned out of special education, the GC's Content Coach monitors progress closely and ensures that the GC is making sufficient progress in his or her coursework. GCs who transition out of special education but fail to make progress are reassessed and an initial IEP meeting is held. In addition, a GC over the age of 14 or a GC's parent(s) or guardian(s) may

request reinstatement of special education services. An assessment is then conducted and an initial IEP meeting conducted to review results and determine eligibility.

Acceleration Academies retains the services of a nationwide expert to provide oversight for the special education program in conjunction with its Chief Education Officer and Chief Academic Officer. The Special Education Consultant will conduct monthly meetings with the Director and Special Education Coach(es), and site visits on a quarterly basis, to provide support/consultation and to ensure compliance with federal and state requirements. Locally, the Academy's Director and Special Education Coach(es) are responsible for evaluating the special education program's success and identifying areas for improvement.

Flexible Instructional Model. Acceleration Academy provides a rigorous academic program for all GCs through the catalogue of courses made available in Edmentum's *Courseware* platform. Edmentum's *Courseware* is an effective digital course catalogue that includes courses aligned to all state and national standards. Edmentum includes rigorous, media-rich and interactive online content designed to meet students at their individual proficiency level. Edmentum courses can be customized to serve students who are falling behind, working at grade level or who have reached an advanced study level.

Edmentum's *Courseware* includes a range of core subjects, electives, global languages and honors classes, as well as educational experiences designed to cater to each student's individual style. Courses include integrated assessments along with pretests that allow learners to test out of content they have already mastered and focus on concepts that need additional work. To ensure concept mastery, course-level assessments also include tests for each course module. Furthermore, Edmentum includes twenty-seven courses designed to reinforce key skills and concepts and equip students for success on college entrance exams.

As noted in the document titled *Research Base and Instructional Design of Edmentum Digital Curriculum* (McLeod, 2017), a cornerstone of Edmentum Courseware is the principle of constructivist learning and student agency, a dynamic interaction between the learner and the subject matter. According to McLeod, constructivist learning theory states that learners must be active participants in

the process of constructing their own knowledge, thus creating essential space for student agency and cultural identity into the learning environment.

To ensure that all GCs are on track for graduation, a Personalized Learning Plan (PLP) will be developed for each GC upon entry to Ector County Acceleration Academy. The PLP becomes the roadmap for success, providing the necessary platform for tracking and discussing GC's academic progress and future course selection with the academy's Career Life Coach (CLC), Content Coach (CC) and Graduation Candidate Advocate (GCA). Within the PLP, each GC's individual learning goals are captured and actualized, including the academic needs of English Language Learners, students with disabilities, gifted and talented/advanced students, and those who may age out before attaining a high school diploma. These unique needs are fully integrated into the roadmap for academic success, ensuring access to programmatic resources when required and/or advisable.

Acceleration Academy is committed to providing much more than a basic academic program guiding GCs toward their high school diploma. In fact, GCs are best served - and are far more motivated to succeed - when there is ongoing support for their career aspirations. Based on this understanding, it is essential that all GCs have access to dual credit and career and technical education (CTE) opportunities that lead to high demand careers and industry-recognized certifications.

Starting at the registration phase, each GC's academic record is thoroughly reviewed by a Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS) team, under the direction of the Director, to gauge the needs of each GC. These needs are additionally assessed during Orientation, when the newly enrolled GC completes our proprietary needs assessment survey, through the Graduation Persistence Survey (GPS). Results of the GPS are used to identify the tier of each GC and are reviewed weekly during MTSS team meetings; high level concerns are addressed with the GC as appropriate. The MTSS Team is responsible for the behavioral assessments of students as well as generating and implementing behavioral plans to remediate behavioral and social challenges for GCs in general education. The team is also available for consultation with school personnel and parents of these GCs. MTSS team responsibilities include the following: facilitating, recruit assessing, and supporting instructional programs for students in general education; providing training and working collaboratively with Content Coaches, Graduation Candidate Advocates (GCAs); and supporting staff to demonstrate best practices, strategies and techniques to

enhance instructions for GCs with social, communication, behavioral, and learning challenges. The MTSS Team will work with classroom and school personnel to design a behavioral intervention model appropriate for high school students.

Starting at orientation, GCs are taught our values of showing respect, taking responsibility, and strengthening relationships to build success. GCs are encouraged to attend regularly scheduled community building events, are empowered to make choices, and have opportunities to earn rewards for outstanding choices via a proprietary application called GC Navigator. We understand that actions (positive and negative) are nonverbal ways of communication. We educate individuals on how their actions impact the larger community and provide meaningful learning opportunities where most traditional schools would implement a punitive system of punishment.

Acceleration Academies tracks academic, attendance, social-emotional growth and engagement through a proprietary system called Atlas. The MTSS team uses the tools embedded within Atlas to track progress monitoring of each graduation candidate. Each GC is monitored by an assigned case manager (GCA) and all GCs are discussed during an all-staff meeting, the Friday Fidelity Forum. GCs who have not been responding as expected to interventions being used by the MTSS team and staff are reviewed and a new intervention is put in place. If all interventions put in place are seemingly unsuccessful, the graduation candidate and any member of their support system (parent, guardian, mentor, case worker, etc.) will meet with the MTSS team to discuss next steps.

Realizing that discipline issues in traditional schools often stem from power struggles between staff and students, staff at the school focus on clear expectations and de-escalation techniques that encourage positive interactions among all staff and students. In reviewing the discipline records of the bulk of our GCs, we find that small issues (cursing, cell phone use, and dress code violations) often escalated into power struggles and resulted in disproportionately harsh discipline measures, deteriorated relationships, and the marginalization of students within their school communities.

Staff believe that a Restorative Practices approach to low-level discipline infractions best supports the continued growth of our GCs, upholds existing relationships, and leads to lasting change in a close-knit community of learners.

Graduation candidates who have more serious discipline infractions need additional support. That is why we have trained Life Coaches who are integral members of the MTSS team. Life Coaches coordinate additional support services in collaboration with the case managers, community resources, family support systems, and mental health service providers. Transition services and the socio-educational plans are incorporated into students' Personalized Learning Plan which staff members may access. Plans are reviewed with the student monthly and by staff members weekly during the Friday Fidelity Forum. Each student has a Learning Portfolio which serves as a repository for artifacts so that students and staff may engage in ongoing conversations, using real-time data, to promote learning and engagement in coursework. Additional wrap-around services may include, but are not limited to; specialized schedules, daily check-ins, weekly support groups, food and housing support, human service referrals, and specialized case management services.

Acceleration Academy utilizes the College, Career and Life Readiness (CCLR) Framework in the Hobson's/Naviance platform. This framework provides a blueprint to prepare GCs for success after graduation. This web-based toolkit helps the team at Acceleration Academies define, measure, and track success as GCs graduate and move to college, careers, and life. Career coaches leverage the CCLR framework to drive long-term student engagement and better academic outcomes. The CCLR framework also supports conversations about local work-study options based on career-interest surveys. Naviance's research-backed framework is developmentally appropriate, outlining six competencies that GCs in grades 6-12 must achieve to become college-, career- and life-ready with discrete goals at each grade level in these areas: social-emotional learning, interpersonal skills, academic skills, career knowledge, college knowledge, and transition skills. Each competency outlines themes and objectives to further define success, as well as grade-specific activities to achieve each grade-level objective. The model provides guidance on key metrics related to each competency.

The Naviance CCLR framework provides a research-based needs assessment and a summative assessment that integrates with Acceleration Academies' Model Fidelity Framework. This framework helps the Acceleration Academy team focus on the "strategic why" of driving student outcomes and community engagement by establishing a consistent and research-based "how." The online aspect of the

CCLR framework helps Acceleration Academy use technology to its full potential and provides tools that GCs can apply in their daily lives.

Post-graduate planning starts during the multi-staged orientation; starting at day one GCs understand their personalized learning plan and graduation plan. GCs are tracked via graduation tiers (1-4). Throughout each graduation tier, GCs complete tasks designed to prepare them for post-graduation success. Acceleration Academy opens all of its social-emotional learning services (groups, counselors, and coaches) and career services to current GCs and graduates.

Technology Integration. The academy will provide adequate technology for state and/or district mandated computer-based testing as well as ensure that each GC has access to a Chromebook and Wi-Fi for both onsite and remote learning. The operations department will distribute devices to staff and GCs. Each device is asset tagged with a label containing a QR code that corresponds with device ID in the Atlas IT Asset Inventory Portal. That technology inventory is stored in two main systems, BambooHR and Atlas IT Portal. By having the technology specification, it allows us to track activity and triage any issues that may arise with the device once a ticket is submitted to the Help Desk. When there are hardware issues, tickets may be submitted to Atlas IT Portal and support will be provided for: device connectivity issues, Chromebook OS, security issues, Microsoft Office suite and Windows OS related issues. The dedicated technicians will install unattended remote management software on all computers (Zoho Assist). Chrome Remote Desktop will additionally be used on all Chromebook devices for remote management. If a trouble ticket is submitted, the case will be assigned to a technician, and they will commence the Incident Management Processes (IMP) to identify, analyze and correct the problem affecting the user and restore normal functionality. The operations department will hold bimonthly meetings to evaluate ordering points and replenishment for the academy.

Acceleration Academies also is a proud district partner of T-Mobile Project 10 Million service. Through the program, T-Mobile grants Acceleration Academies a set number of free Wi-Fi hotspots for distribution at our local academies. Our GCs use these hotspots for coursework and academic-related activities while off-site. Data use is monitored at the Network level as well as with a predetermined Point of Contact at each academy to ensure GCs with devices are making continued academic progress. Another way we manage the devices is through our loaner program in the Atlas IT Portal. The

functionality will allow a site admin to check-in and check-out devices and the system will store and report on the student, device status, condition and timestamps. The academy will work in conjunction with a dedicated IT technology company staffed by technicians responsible for remotely monitoring and managing AA's information technology systems as identified: network firewall, ubiquiti Wi-Fi network and onsite network management.

Conclusion

Acceleration Academies would be honored to partner with the Ector County Independent School District to re-engage the district's disengaged high school population and serve as another option in the district's continuum of services for students in need of further flexibility and personalization as they work toward earning a standard high school diploma issued by the District. There is a clear moral and economic case to be made for continuing to serve the population of students we all hold close to our hearts. Let's make this commitment to their future by partnering this summer to provide new hope and the opportunity for these young women and men to reach their full potential.

References

We have built strong relationships with our district partners and encourage you to contact any of our liaisons, including the individuals listed below. It is noteworthy that the Bethel School District, Miami-Dade County Public Schools, Sarasota County Schools and St Lucie County Schools all had graduation rates in the high 80s when we began our partnership and now each has a district graduation rate over 90% thanks in part to our partnership and providing additional pathways to a high school diploma for their students.

Dr. Jennifer Bethman, Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Education (Bethel School District)
jbethman@bethelsd.org | (253) 468-0178 (c)

Mr. Eric Gant, Executive Director, Educational Services Division (Clark County School District)
ganted@nv.ccsd.net | (702) 799-8650 x5301 (w)

Mr. Arnold Montgomery, Region Administrative Director (Miami-Dade County Public Schools)
amontgomery@dadeschools.net | (305) 995-7582 (w)

Ms. Jane Goodwin, School Board Member (Sarasota County Schools)

jane.goodwin@sarasotacountyschools.net | (941) 786-4738 (c)

Dr. Sunny Booker, Director of Alternative Education (St Lucie County Public Schools)

sunny.booker@stlucieschools.org | (305) 810-9375 (c)