Innovation Plan Application

April 2013

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Overview

Colorado's Innovation Schools Act is designed to improve student achievement by granting schools a high degree of autonomy in exchange for increased student performance and outcomes. The Act provides opportunities for program flexibility with respect to curriculum implementation, personnel, , organizing the school day, determining the most efficient use of resources, and in general, organizing the delivery of high-quality educational services. The idea is to empower public school to tailor its services most effectively and efficiently to meet the needs of the population of students it serves.

The Act further provides schools the opportunity for increased flexibility by providing a clear path to waive certain state statutes, district policies and union contract provisions that may otherwise inhibit a school's ability to implement strategies and tactics that can produce significant gains in student academic performance. Excel Academy is applying for Innovation School Status because, to effectively serve students as an intensive pathways high school, we will need flexibility in a variety of areas including: the ability to create a local calendar and daily school schedule to ensure adequate seat time for students and professional development for staff; ability to customize a professional development program for staff that incorporates training on Excel-specific instructional and culture-building strategies; flexibility to make staff recruitment, selection, retention, and dismissal determinations at the school level to ensure students are being taught by instructors that are a best fit for a student population with prioritized needs that are different from common expectations found at a traditional district-run high school. Furthermore, by collaborating with an established organization known for providing specialized programs targeting at-risk student populations, innovation will allow the school to be structured more closely to the school's proven design model and thereby expanding district awareness of potential levers for accelerating student achievement.

Given DPS's decision to select Excel Academy as the best program for an intensive pathway model in the Southwest region of the district, the best way to gain the flexibility needed for our program's success is to seek Innovation School Status. The specific waivers Excel requests are identified in Appendix D: Waiver Requests. Our requests are generally concerned with these areas of innovation:

- School staffing - which includes changes in teacher-student ratios, leadership structure and the addition of site-based special service providers
- Faculty recruitment, preparation and professional development, evaluation and compensation, which includes the ability for Excel to implement recruitment and hiring processes, design of professional development, use of peer-based evaluation, and implementation of a site-based incentive program
- Class scheduling, which includes the use of block schedules, extended school days, and extended school years.
- School governance, which includes the use of an Excel Advisory Committee that will be responsible for the same expectations of a state-defined School Accountability Committee
- Use of resources, which includes providing more site-based control over resources and allows purchases by staff according to "real" cost rather than average cost and/or using private vendors for certain services in lieu of receiving them from the district
- Preparation and counseling of students for transition to higher education and the workforce

An Intensive Pathway to Postsecondary Success

Excel will implement a common instructional framework, with Jobs for the Future (JFF) as our project partner, to prepare all students for college-level work. Excel's curriculum framework, which forms the foundation for instruction and ongoing professional development, is based on six (6) proven, high engagement instructional strategies, developed by JFF. They include: (1) Collaborative Group Work; (2) Writing to Learn; (3) Literacy Groups; (4) Questioning; (5) Classroom Talk; and (6) Scaffolding. Initial evidence shows that these instructional strategies are well suited for low-performing programs/schools because each strategy requires students to actively participate in class through writing, questioning, speaking, and collaborating. Instructional strategies such as questioning and writing also equip students with analytical tools to construct answers. Daily use of these six instructional strategies facilitates active student participation and ownership that builds strong positive academic norms resulting in higher student expectations and increased instructional rigor.

Through research and experience, Excel has identified some essential characteristics of program design that produce dramatic improvements in academic performance of students. These are:

1. Single School Academic and Behavioral Culture
2. Use of JFF's Common Instructional Framework (CIF) that differentiates instruction and motivates students to take a lead role in their educational program
3. Curriculum focus is on relevance
4. Program will focus on student remediation and acceleration, including 90 minute English and math blocks with an additional 30-minute sustained reading block (total of 120 minutes of literacy)
5. School-within-a-school program to accelerate students that are off track and at risk of dropping out based on overage and under-credited status

Mission

The mission of Excel Academy is to serve high school students in Denver that have dropped out of school, or that are at-risk of dropping out of school, with a proven, data-driven, accountable and high standards education program that (1) produces high numbers and percentages of high school graduates; and (2) prepares graduates for postsecondary success.

Efficiencies Brought About Through Innovation

It is the goal of Excel Academy to accomplish more and at the same time cost less. Some of the ways the innovations outlined in this plan will result in greater efficiency and cost savings to the District are:

- Use of resources, which includes providing more site-based control over resources and allows purchases by staff according to "real" cost rather than average cost and/or using private vendors for certain services in lieu of receiving them from the district.
- Use of creative scheduling and block periods contribute to a more concentrated, efficient school model where time on task is accelerated and every moment is geared to graduation and postsecondary success.
- A successful school climate model with extensive behavioral supports which decreases the need for disproportional disciplinary actions, suspensions, expulsions or placement of students in expensive disciplinary campuses financed by the District.
- A proven methodology for conducting high quality reviews with established Quality Management processes and trained corporate resources who are experienced in raising accountability standards with an at-risk student population.
- All business and back office support for Excel employees including human resources, accounting, legal services, and insurance and employee help line.

Leadership Overview

Excel's campus leadership model differs from that found in traditional public schools by placing an executive director and principal to provide support to all facets of the campus. Excel does so because we want the principal to focus exclusively on teaching and learning, and to have no responsibilities that extend beyond this focus. Excel's executive director will possess a Master's degree (strong preference) have at least five (5) years of relevant experience, with three (3) years of proven, progressive supervisory experience working directly with at-risk student populations in an educational setting. Beyond the minimum qualifications, Excel chooses campus leaders based on a number of important qualities that we believe are necessary to grow and strengthen the organization's core culture. Qualities that Excel particularly looks for when selecting its leaders include the following:

1. **Technical Competence** -- Leaders who are knowledgeable of the task at hand
2. **Stamina and Vitality** -- Leaders who exhibit high levels of energy and effort daily
3. **Judgment, Intelligence and Conceptual Skills** -- Leaders that can effectively problem solve, set priorities, and can think strategically under stressful and imperfect conditions
4. **People Skills** -- Leaders who can effectively communicate, motivate, and delegate
5. **Character** – Leaders with strong personal values and attributes such as honesty, commitment, fairness, and integrity
6. **Accountable** -- Leaders who seek and accept responsibility
7. **Emotional Intelligence** -- Leaders who can effectively work with diverse people in diverse situations to meet common goals
8. **Self-Motivated** -- Leaders who have a strong desire to succeed
9. **Motivational** -- Leaders that can inspire individuals and groups of people to action
10. **Courage** – Leaders that are not afraid to speak up when things are not working well, or as well as they could, and take responsibility for finding better ways of doing things
11. **Vision** -- Leaders that envision higher levels of performance and service that is demonstrated by continuous program improvement
12. **Passion** -- Leaders that love what they do and who are motivated through their passion to serve our students.

Education Plan Overview

At Excel Academy, our educational plan will integrate the Jobs for the Future "Back on Track to College" model with Excel's "Remediation to Acceleration" approach. The educational plan will focus on helping off-track students graduate with college-ready skills by moving them rapidly along the continuum from "remediation" (guided by a minimal standard for a high school diploma) to "acceleration" (rooted in a higher standard of learning for all), and leading as rapidly as possible to credentials of value in today's economy. To that end, Excel Academy- Southwest will implement JFF's Common Instructional Framework (CIF) and utilize Six Strategies to Build College Readiness.

The program's curriculum, graduation requirements, and academic calendar are similarly aligned with the District's. Classes and class days are longer than traditional public schools, which reflect a block-scheduling model that provides students 80 minutes of instruction in each class. This model allows students with no high school credit to earn a high school degree in 2.5 years, instead of the traditional four years.

Each student will have an individualized graduation plan and postsecondary plan. The individualized graduation plan will be developed at the student's orientation, and will be created in consultation with the student's parent(s)/guardian(s). Student progress will be tracked each week, and data will be analyzed and trended monthly. The two overriding outcomes for this program are (1) graduating

students; and (2) making sure they are prepared, accepted, and successful in a suitable postsecondary program.

The program has been validated through two recent, independent studies conducted by the Mathematical Policy Research, Inc. ("Mathematica")[1] and Jobs for the Future (JFF)[2], both of which are cited by hyperlink below. These two studies, conducted without Excel's knowledge throughout their entirety, provide empirical evidence that supports the effectiveness of the program model we are proposing to DPS for high school students at risk of dropping out of school. Since the publication of JFF's report, JFF and Excel have agreed to develop one of Excel's Philadelphia schools as a clinical site for educators nationally to train on JFF's CIF strategies and "Back on Track" model.[3] JFF will be Excel's collaborative partner in providing this program in Denver, with a primary focus on instructional coaching, professional development, and postsecondary transition.

Teaching Overview

Excel Academy-Southwest will use the "rounds model," a powerful embedded approach based on medical school rounds at teaching hospitals, where interns accompany a physician to visit patients and together they review, discuss and research each case. Clark University in Massachusetts adapted the process for educational use so that teacher hosts, or "rounds leaders," have a structure for incorporating visitors in their classrooms and engaging them in dialogue on students' learning and teaching practice. The "rounds" model for professional feedback will guide modifications to the professional development offered at Excel Academy-Southwest

The campus principal conducts formal teacher observations each year, and academic coaches and team leaders conduct instructional walkthroughs daily. The overall framework that guides the program's strategic mission is its campus improvement plan, containing the program's measurable objectives for the school year. SIP data is reviewed weekly and trended monthly, and is used as a basis to determine teaching and instructional effectiveness and to determine professional development needs. Excel Academy-Southwest will meet the requirements of Colorado Senate Bill 10-191 by rating teachers' effectiveness annually from various factors; 50 percent of which will come from measures of student academic growth. With this valuable feedback process, professional development facilitated by Jobs for the Future and Excel will focus on equipping administrators, teachers, and counselors with the special knowledge, skills, and techniques they need to serve overage and under-credited high school youth. For staff development activities to advance Excel's school mission and goals, all components will be integrated through a continuous improvement process that engages administrators, teachers, support staff, and parents.

Collaborative and Participatory School Governance

Excel Academy will combine the best practices of its Quality Management Team (QMT) with a collaborative, participatory school governance group called the Excel Advisory Council (EAC). School leaders, parents, students (from student government ranks), teachers, and members of the community will attend regular monthly meetings to provide real input, constructive feedback and monitoring for the state/district-required Unified Improvement Plan and other non-personnel issues. The Council will make reports to the DPS Instructional Superintendent to whom Excel is assigned. The Quality Management Team will still meet to do the work of setting the accountability standards, the heavy lifting of continuous monitoring of student progress and creating and maintaining the School Improvement Plan (SIP). Quarterly the QMT will meet jointly with

[1] http://www.mathematica-mpr.com/publications/PDFs/education/alternative_schools_Phila.pdf
[2] http://www.jff.org/sites/default/files/FromRemediationToAcceleration_forPrint.pdf
[3] http://abclocal.go.com/wpvi/story?section=news/local&id=8552467\

the Excel Advisory Council so that the two bodies are collaborative and seamlessly integrated into a common understanding of school operations that are properly reflected in the School and Unified Improvement Plans. These two groups working together will eliminate the need for redundant, multiple committees, yet still retain the state-mandated accountability features that were the intent of Article 22.

Excel takes great pride in our long-standing success with parent and community involvement, support, and connections to our programs. The single school culture and climate we develop encompasses the broader "family" that is Excel. This includes every individual who has contact with our students; be it the nurse, the janitor, the mother and father, the grandparent or the community partner. All these people and others make Excel the school where graduation is the result and postsecondary success becomes the norm. We have been encouraged with the level of support received for our Intensive Pathways program in Denver both by parents as partners and by community supporters who realize that the success of Excel is the success of everyone connected to Denver and its youth.

Sharing Innovations and Best Practices

We applaud DPS, particularly the Office of School Reform and Innovation on their commitment to the Denver Plan and most importantly, on working to make the Innovation Schools Act of 2008 a reality. As we continue to build successful schools in major urban areas of the United States such as Denver, Chicago, Philadelphia, and Houston, we want to share our innovations, best practices, and hard-earned lessons-learned. Our partner, JFF, is already actively involved in disseminating this kind of knowledge in 108 programs in 39 cities across the country.

We hope to learn and share more about the "hot button" issues that pervade school innovation for the at-risk population throughout the next three years and beyond. Some these issues are:

How do we adopt more proactive and comprehensive accountability strategies and policies for students and teachers?
How do we implement school models that can scale quickly through existing and new schools?
How do we implement a more responsive and nimble infrastructure?
How do we build bridges that allow districts, unions, and states to innovate?
And how do we develop solutions that accomplish more without costing more?

It is our goal that Excel Academy as a high-performing intensive pathway school will contribute to OSRI's mission of becoming a national model for transformational change in public education. We dedicate ourselves to producing transformational changes district-wide by identifying and sharing our innovative, best-in-class policies and practices as an innovative school.

Innovation: Mission and Vision

Rationale
Excel's intensive pathway model for at-risk students is rooted in high expectations and provides students with a personalized and differentiated learning environment. Excel draws on our proven record of success serving this targeted student population and provides research-based evidence of effectiveness. Excel's program is designed to hold all students to rigorous achievement goals, including students with disabilities and specialized needs and English language learners.

Mission Statement
Excel's accelerated school **mission** is to serve high school students in Denver that have dropped out of school, or that are at-risk of dropping out of school. We do this with a data-driven, accountable and high standards education program that (1) produces high numbers and percentages of high school graduates; and (2) prepares graduates for postsecondary success.

Targeted Student Population
Excel proposes a program that will be located in the District's Southwest Region based on DPS' stated "need for additional intensive pathways seats to serve students who are older than 17 and between 31-120 credits from graduation (segment 4b) or more than 2 years from graduation (segment 5)." In addition, Excel can serve students reflected in sections 2b and 3, below. The proposed program is structured to serve the following student populations:

- 2b. – **9th graders who are failing that** have risk factors and are more than 30 credits behind
- 3 – **Young and far**, which include students who are 16-17 and 2 or more years off track
- 4b – **Older and close enough to graduation, but maybe not with their class** (17+ and 30-120 credits off track)
- 5 – **Older and far**, consisting of students that are 18+ that are two or more years off track.

Excel currently manages programs that serve these student populations, so we are very familiar and experienced in understanding their needs and matching them with an educational program to meet the objectives articulated in our mission statement; that is, ensuring high levels of graduates that are prepared to be successful in a postsecondary environment. In our current programs, these student groups taken together approach 100 percent Free and Reduced Lunch, and are comprised of approximately 20 percent Special Education and 5 percent ELL students. Excel's research of DPS indicates programs comprised of high levels of Free and Reduced lunch students (90-100 percent); and potentially higher levels of Special Education and ELL students (approximately 30 percent, each). This program is not well suited for students with cognitive disabilities. Excel has extensive experience in supporting ELL students in this program environment where students are mainstreamed and are provided with ESL support in the general education classroom.

Excel's expertise and history with the program model proposed in this application is displayed in the table below. As this table shows, Excel currently manages seven (7) intensive pathway programs. It is important to note that four (4) programs began last school year and an additional program was initiated this school year, based largely on the success of our first two intensive pathway models begun in Philadelphia.

Summary of Excel's Current Intensive Pathway Programs

Local Education Agency	Program Inception	Student Population[4]
School District of Philadelphia	2004	Grades 9-12 (n=310)
School District of Philadelphia	2009	Grades 9-12 (n=355)
School District of Lancaster	2011	Grades 7-12 (n=350
Camden City Public Schools	2011	Grades 9-12 (n=200)
Aspira Charter School	2011	Grades 9-12 (n=150
Mastery Charter School	2011	Grades 9-12 (n=66)
Chicago Public Schools	2012	Grades 9-12 (n=375)

[4] All students are overage and under credited at enrollment e.g. 9th grade students age 16 or older

School Culture

Excel's school culture is grounded in ten ***core values and beliefs***, stated below, which form the foundational framework that informs and guides our programs' goals.

1. We focus daily on student success
2. We believe in the power of teamwork
3. We honor and embrace diversity
4. We ensure that all students are safe
5. We model high standards of professional behavior
6. We teach that education is the key to self-sufficiency
7. We recognize the unique value and talent of each individual
8. We practice respect for all individuals
9. We deliver meaningful and appropriate instruction
10. We are accountable for everything we do

The key ***goals*** for this program are as follows:

1. To increase student academic achievement
2. To raise student attendance
3. To create and maintain a safe and orderly learning environment
4. To prepare students to meet state and District graduation requirements
5. To provide students with the necessary skills and support to enroll in a postsecondary institution, certification program, or trade school and to obtain gainful, self-sufficient employment

Excel employs a single school academic culture within all of its programs, which is facilitated by using six research-based best practices for instructional delivery that were developed by Jobs for the Future (JFF), Excel's collaborative partner for this application (the Common Instructional Framework or "CIF"). These six strategies include (1) collaborative group work, (2) writing to learn, (3) literacy groups, (4) questioning, (5) scaffolding, and (6) classroom talk. Using the district's core curriculum as its base, these strategies compliment and facilitate differentiated instruction for classes containing students with varying ability levels. Moreover, providing students with a variety of instructional strategies engages and provides them methods of instruction in ways that complement their learning styles.

Excel's school climate model is a foundational component of Excel's single school culture approach. The model is based on creating, maintaining, and growing an active and intentional positive peer culture that celebrates success daily and emphasizes personal accountability for behavior. Excel specifically trains students on the principles of pro-social behavior and provides them with the skills necessary to engage their peers through positive peer counseling and conflict mediation. Excel's model is designed to increase each student's level of self-discipline, self-direction, self-respect, and self-esteem. The model is implemented through a continuum of increased positive recognition and enhanced levels of student status consisting of six progressive, interrelated levels. The model effectively promotes and celebrates pro-social behaviors with privileges, status and recognition, and provides immediate intervention and accountability for students that exhibit behaviors that detract from an effective campus learning environment.

Parent Satisfaction

Excel highly values the involvement of parents and guardians and views them as full partners with us in support of their child's educational program. In working with DPS, Excel will use results from parent surveys as feedback for data analysis, which will serve as a basis to measure and improve program quality. Excel's expectations regarding the outcomes of DPS' parent satisfaction surveys are summarized in the table below regarding their positive perceptions of the Excel program.

2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
75% of responses are "strongly agree" or "agree"	80% of responses are "strongly agree or agree"	85% of responses are "strongly agree" or "agree"

Excel will provide surveys to parents at parent/student assemblies, events, graduations, conferences, when dropping off or picking up students, direct mail, and through students to take home and return. The program's student services director will be responsible for assuring surveys are returned using methods including but not limited to phone calls and texts, email, direct contact at school, newsletters, and home visits. Additionally, at student orientation and enrollment, parents will be encouraged to contact members of the campus leadership team and encouraged to meet with teachers during six-week conference periods where they will be asked for feedback on their overall perception of the program and ways they believe it can be improved.

Data from surveys will be analyzed and used for evaluating the campus's leadership team at the end of each school year. Responses that do not meet the standard of the SPF rubric will require the development of a correction action, which will be incorporated into the program's SIP. If there is no significant improvement in responses after the second school year, members of the campus leadership team will be replaced.

Student Engagement

Excel's goal for average daily attendance is 85 percent. Each student's staff resource team meets and ranks students on Excel's progressive level system, which evaluates students' weekly academic progress, citizenship, and attendance. Weekly student rankings are conspicuously posted throughout the school building, which is another means by which students receive feedback on their overall performance. Students at the higher end of the continuum receive increasing levels of privileges, recognition, and status, which promotes higher levels of attendance.

The program's attendance coordinator oversees Excel's attendance plan, which is a key accountability metric in determining the effectiveness of our program. Excel's truancy plan, which is overseen by the program's attendance coordinator, employs a nine (9)-step process to locate absent/truant students with documentation provided at each step. These steps include:

(1) Phone calls
(2) Home visits
(3) Inquiries with neighbors and other students
(4) Call Office of Emergency Services
(5) Check computer to see if student assigned to another school
(6) Check for active cases with Department of Human Services
(7) Check Department of Public Assistance for recent address
(8) Contact parent's employer
(9) Contact Juvenile Probation/Family Court personnel

Similar to parent satisfaction surveys, Excel's expectation regarding outcomes of student satisfaction surveys is summarized in the table below.

2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
75% of responses are "strongly agree" or "agree"	80% of responses are "strongly agree or agree"	85% of responses are "strongly agree" or "agree"

Data from the surveys will be analyzed and used as a basis for evaluating the campus leadership team at the end of the school year. Aggregate responses that do not meet the standard of the SPF rubric will require the development of a correction action, which will be incorporated into the program's CIP. If there is no significant improvement in responses after the second school year, members of the campus leadership team will be replaced.

Innovation: Education Plan

Curriculum

At the core of the year's *Call for New Quality Schools* was the need for a strong and effective academic instructional program. DPS has admirably reduced the dropout rate by one third since 2005, but still only one-half of students are currently graduating from high school. Higher percentage gains in reading and mathematics are needed to achieve a higher number of schools meeting or exceeding SPF expectations (DPS 2010 Plan). The achievement gap between African-American and Latino students and their Anglo and Asian American counterparts will need to be closed. To advance the current rate of progress and empower Denver students not only to graduate but also to succeed in college and careers, Excel proposes a non-traditional performance high school with an innovative educational plan. Our plan is the result of a strong and vibrant partnership between Jobs for the Future (JFF) and Excel, who both have a proven history of success with students who have fallen off-track or who have fallen out of the system altogether.

Curricular Model and Focus

It is imperative that disadvantaged students having a difficult time maneuvering a traditional public school are provided an opportunity to be successful in a high-performing intensive pathway high school. At Excel Academy-Southwest, our educational plan integrates the existing DPS curriculum with the JFF "Back on Track to College" model and with Excel's "Remediation to Acceleration" educational approach. The educational plan is focused on helping off-track students graduate with college-ready skills by moving them rapidly along the continuum from "remediation" (guided by a minimal standard for a high school diploma) to "acceleration" (rooted in a higher standard of learning for all), leading as rapidly as possible to credentials of value in today's economy. To that end, Excel Academy- Denver will implement JFF's Common Instructional Framework (CIF) and utilize Six Strategies to Build College Readiness. These are presented in the table below:

The Common Instructional Framework: Six Strategies to Build College Readiness

1. ***Collaborative Group Work brings students together in small groups to engage in learning, with each student accountable for her or his contribution. Activities are designed so that students with diverse skill levels are both supported and challenged by their peers.***

2. ***Writing to Learn helps students, including English language learners, develop their ideas, critical thinking, and fluency of expression in all subjects. Students experiment with written language in every class every day.***

3. ***Literacy Groups, a form of Collaborative Group Work provides students a supportive structure for accessing challenging texts, broadly defined, and engaging in high-level discourse. Using roles that have an explicit purpose, students deconstruct text and scaffold one another's learning.***

4. ***Questioning challenges students and teachers to use deep, probing questions to foster purposeful conversations and stimulate intellectual inquiry.***

5. ***Classroom Talk encourages all students to develop their thinking, listening, and speaking skills, and promotes active learning. Classroom Talk takes place in pairs, in groups, and with whole classes.***

6. ***Scaffolding encompasses a broad range of techniques, such as pre-reading activities and graphic organizers that help students connect prior knowledge, different content areas, or personal experience - with challenging new concepts.***

Learning Environment

The initial implementation of these strategies includes challenges for both students and teachers. As teachers transition away from traditional methods in which they have long been comfortable, a new learning environment is created. Students gain confidence and thrive in this academic environment. Excel includes academics, community involvement, mentoring, internships, extra-curricular programs, and a positive school climate that supports a single behavior and academic school culture. Jobs for the Future works with over 200 Back on Track and Early High Schools using this CIF and supports the program with intensive, ongoing coaching for teachers and school leaders. In nearly a decade of work with these schools, JFF has seen their programs change the educational trajectories of low-income and minority students. Early college students can earn up to two years of college credit while in high school, saving money and earning valuable exposure to the rigor and expectations of college. A quarter of early college students earn a full associate's degree along with their high school diploma, and 86 percent enroll in college immediately after high school. Excel has managed successful alternate high school campuses since 2003 and is committed to and experienced with this higher standard for alternative high schools.

In this learning environment, students become:

- Complex Thinkers
- Flexible Adapters
- Problem Solvers
- Effective Communicators
- Cooperative and Collaborative Workers

- Self-Directed Achievers
- Responsible and Involved Citizens
- Skilled and Active Learners
- Caring Individuals
- Innovative, Quality Producers

Philosophy and Instructional Methodology

At Excel Academy, academics and socio-emotional skills will be built on a practical, research-based foundation. In each classroom, students learn by doing and do so in a classroom with a student to teacher ratio of 25:1 or less. We will focus on building relationships, respect, responsibility and leadership. Using this philosophy, Excel helps students discover their true potential, rekindle their love for learning and prepare them for postsecondary and career success. Another key aspect of Excel's philosophy and instructional methodology is our strong belief that all children can learn and achieve at high levels. Research by David C. Conley at the University of Oregon has stated that youth must be actively supported in their postsecondary planning in order to succeed. At Excel Academy of Denver, we will provide a postsecondary bridging program that will help students meet our goals of 100 percent of graduating students receiving acceptance letters from colleges or universities or other suitable programs that will provide each graduating student a pathway to full-time self-sufficient employment. Currently over 90 percent of graduating students from Excel Academy North and Excel Academy South in Philadelphia meets this important performance indicator.

Excel Academy in partnership with Jobs for the Future will expand on the Philadelphia model and implement a three-phase approach utilized by other successful early college high schools. It is our expectation that all students will, at a minimum, complete two capstone college courses, beginning in the final 12 months of their enrollment. These 3 phases are:

- **Enriched Preparation** integrating high-quality, college-ready instruction with strong academic and social supports
- **Postsecondary Bridging** building college-ready skills and provides informed transition counseling
- **First-Year Support** offering appropriate supports in students' first year to ensure postsecondary persistence and success.

The accompanying features we use in each phase of the early college high school are provided in greater detail:

PHASE ONE: ENRICHED PREPARATION

Explicit College-Going Culture

- Staff will deliver consistent messages, from intake through graduation, that students are college material and college success is the goal.
- Staff will continually assesses progress through strategic use of data, using college access and completion as the key measures of program success.
- Staff will create a climate focused on acculturation to academic norms and practices as well as personal responsibility for one's own learning and life goals.
- The physical setup and artifacts in the building as well as opportunities to experience college classes and college life will enable students to perceive themselves as college students.

➢

College Ready Curriculum & Instruction

- Curriculum emphasizes deep learning over test preparation, focusing on a solid understanding of key concepts and exploration of major themes within the core disciplines.
- Curriculum is aligned and sequenced toward increasingly challenging subject matter, building skills needed for entry into credit-bearing college coursework.
- Substantial reading and writing takes place daily across the curriculum; and scaffolding occurs through collaborative group work, literacy circles and other strategies that enable learners with diverse skill levels to support and challenge their peers.
- All students develop thinking, listening, speaking and inquiry skills through purposeful questioning and opportunities to talk about their learning.
- Students experience ongoing opportunities to practice college-ready skills and behaviors such as time management and test-taking strategies as this learning is embedded into the standards-based curriculum.

Intentional Use of Time to Maximize Instruction & Accelerate Learning

- Program organizes time flexibly to enable older youth to fulfill family/work responsibilities while working toward graduation and postsecondary goals.
- Program is of sufficient length and intensity to enable youth to both gain a secondary credential and get adequately prepared for college.
- Staff uses regular assessments, including college placement exams, to diagnose students' specific learning needs and customize instruction to accelerate learning.
- Technological tools provide the skill building support and facilitate "anytime, anywhere" learning to supplement classroom instruction.
- Students are coached and supported to use time outside the program to accomplish their learning goals and develop independent work habits.

Personalized Guidance and Support

- Students develop a clear, realistic and detailed postsecondary and career plan.
- Students develop an understanding of how they learn best, reflecting regularly on what they still must accomplish or master to graduate college ready.
- Program provides leadership, service and work opportunities to build students' agency, self-advocacy and key academic behaviors, such as persistence and time management.
- Program works to strengthen students' care network, such as child-care and mental health resources, so they have adequate support to address barriers that impede learning.
- Staff develops students' abilities to have greater responsibility and voice in their own learning and life choices.

PHASE TWO: POSTSECONDARY BRIDGING

Supported Dual Enrollment

- Students enroll in credit-bearing courses to gain exposure to college experiences and expectations. First courses can be those that teach essential skills within a career context (e.g., medical terminology taught in an English course) or, where possible, enriched math and English gatekeeper courses.
- Where appropriate, program takes advantage of available developmental education courses to build student skills and reduce time to completion.
- First college courses explicitly model college instruction through the use of syllabi, online message boards and college-style pedagogy and assessments (e.g. sophisticated papers, research projects and presentations).
- Program provides opportunities to take college courses accompanied by formal, intense academic support and scaffolding to ensure early college success.

A Focus on College Knowledge

- Program helps students develop college-ready academic behaviors including study skills, time and stress management, persistence, self-advocacy and awareness of performance.
- Students gain college navigation skills, learning about admissions requirements, financial aid, college culture, campus resources and connecting with professors.
- Program continues to use college-ready instruction and curriculum to develop key cognitive strategies and content knowledge required for college success.
- Students receive college IDs providing access to college facilities (e.g., skills centers, library, gym and cafeteria).

Personalized Guidance and Connection to Best Bets

- Counselors use data such as attendance and assessment to monitor student progress toward the goal of entry into credit-bearing courses.
- Program utilizes cohort-based approach to leverage peer connections, expand students' social network and build additional postsecondary support.
- Program integrates intentional career exploration and planning that takes into account students' career aspirations and labor market demand to help drive toward "best bet" postsecondary programs.
- Program graduates who are currently enrolled in college mentor students in the bridge phase to guide key decision-making during the transition to postsecondary opportunities.

PHASE THREE: FIRST-YEAR SUPPORT

(Note: This phase will be delivered through a partnership between the school/program and the community college.)

Support for Students to Earn Credits Predictive of Completion

- Staff uses data to monitor student progress, with particular attention to performance in the first few months of college classes.
- Students experience consistent check-ins (monthly minimum) by designated person and are encouraged to connect with networks and support providers on campus, expanding their social capital and awareness of formal and informal supports and resources.
- Students, particularly those who are struggling, receive intensive academic supports to help them succeed in credit-bearing college courses.
- Students are offered performance-based incentives, such as scholarships, to motivate them to accomplish personal and academic benchmarks.
- Staff creates individualized plans that include additional customized academic supports for students who are not on track to earn a credential after the first year of college enrollment.
- Staff provides early and ongoing supports, anticipating and preventing obstacles and providing additional referrals and follow-up as needed.

Just-in-time Support to Ensure Persistence

- Emergency funds are set aside for students to cover critical start-up expenses (e.g., books, housing, child care)
- Staff provides early and ongoing supports, anticipating and preventing obstacles and providing additional referrals and follow-up as needed.

Building Attachment to Postsecondary Education

- Students are connected to campus resources, especially those targeted for first-generation college-goers.
- Student mentors provide key information on college courses and faculty to first-year students so they make more informed choices.
- Staff develops or facilitates on-campus alumni groups that include student mentors and advisors.
- Students engage in small cohort-based learning and leadership communities

Similar to Excel's current accelerated graduation programs, we will aggressively recruit Denver-area community and junior colleges for partnerships that will provide opportunities for students to engage in dual enrollment and advanced placement (AP) opportunities while enrolled in Excel Academy-Southwest. In Philadelphia, Excel has established a partnership with a local college that allows our teachers to teach college courses to our recent graduates at our campus. Having a college program on our campus motivates students, who know that transition into college will be seamless since college course are available at the campus from which they graduated from high school. We will work toward an agreement with a Denver-based college this year to establish dual enrollment programs for the opening of Denver's Excel Academy.

Excel will assign staff to the program whose primary responsibility will be to develop and nurture postsecondary relationships. A central component of our culture places heavy emphasis on all students transitioning into postsecondary programs. With that as a central tenet in Excel's mission, all staff has a role in facilitating and nurturing postsecondary acceptance and placement of our students.

Methods to Differentiate Instruction to Meet the Needs of the Targeted Population

Excel Academy has identified the targeted student population from the categories described in the Call for New Quality Schools 2012. In consideration of DPS' needs and Excel's expertise, this high school will target segments 2b, 3, 4b and 5.

Segment Description	Annual Dropout Rate
2b. **9th graders who are falling**. They have risk factors and are more than 30 credits behind.	20%
3. **Young and far**: 16-17/2 or more years off track	34%
4b. **Older and close enough to graduate**, but maybe not with their calls: (17+, 30-120 credits off track	33%
5. **Older and far**: 18+/≥2 years off track	40%

Differentiated instruction is critical to the success of students attending this innovative performance campus. This will be implemented in many different ways. In the foundational core courses a Response to Intervention (RtI) approach will be used. Teachers receive professional development that will strengthen their ability to monitor student progress constantly and vary instructional activities to address the pace and learning styles of all students. We will be following a three-tier model of intervention that will includes Tier 2 and Tier 3 intervention delivery in reading and math strategic classes of 90 -120 minutes per day. This will rapidly move struggling students from remediation to acceleration so that they will be back on track and ready for postsecondary bridging and college classes before or by graduation. To provide further differentiation, students take advantage of open computer labs before school, at lunch and after school. In the setting we use technology as a personalized learning pathway that enables the student to learn at his or her own pace, receive virtual tutoring, with built in scaffolding, and to accelerate and accrue college level skills and knowledge. Whether they take self-paced credit recovery courses, elective courses that may range beyond what we offer (such as Chinese or Chemistry II), or enrichment courses online, the student is receiving individualized, differentiated instruction.

Supplementing DPS Curriculum

This Intensive Pathway High School intends to use the DPS high school curriculum for core content and **enhance** it with the JFF Common Instructional Framework's Six Strategies to Build College Readiness. Other supplementation will occur with our unique Guided Group Interaction (GGI), which is a daily feature of every student's schedule and is used to reinforce positive school culture and to discuss personal obstacles faced by students. GGI's small group dynamic, consisting of approximately 20 students, provides students with the opportunity to raise issues that they face daily that hinder their ability to take full advantage of their academic program, and to receive counseling and constructive feedback from a staff facilitator and their peers. In Excel's experience, GGI significantly helps students refocus on their academic goals and to make better choices in their personal life. Along with the discussion aspect, Excel uses a life skills curriculum. The following shows some of the topics covered in GGI at Excel's Excel Academies:

- School to Work Transitions
- Conflict Resolutions
- Drug Abuse
- Grief and Loss
- Suicide Prevention
- Bullying
- Anger Management

Scope/Sequence

While following the District-approved core curriculum, we will establish a scope and sequence that is in alignment with each student's individualized graduation plan so that the curriculum may be accelerated where needed to reach student graduation goals. Excel Academy will utilize a quarter system. This will allow students to earn credit every nine weeks utilizing district curriculum and course codes.

Standards- Transformation in Teaching and Learning

From CDE 2011

Colorado Department of Education (CDE) and DPS are in the national forefront in developing and implementing new updated Colorado Academic Standards (CAS). As the graphic shows above, Excel Academy-Southwest will open the 2013-14 school year simultaneously with CAS's first year of new standards implementation. Excel welcomes the opportunity to become a part of this standards movement toward 21st Century learning and the integration of the Common Core. Although our leadership and staff is in the process of learning more about the standards in depth, we think that the Six Instructional Strategies (from JFF) take our students into a 21st Century classroom that centers on Level 3 Strategic Thinking and Level 4 Extended Thinking (Depth of Knowledge – Webb Model). We seek to work closely with DPS as we transform teaching and learning on our campuses.

Cultural Relevancy

An overarching goal of this innovative performance high school is to prepare students for college and career success in a variety of cultural contexts. We honor and respect the culture and background of each student. This makes itself apparent in Excel's emphasis on parent engagement and community building, diversity training for staff, and curricular choices in the classroom. This includes a selection of culturally relevant texts, projects, and curriculum.

Class Size

The general academic classrooms will have a 25:1 pupil to teacher ratio. In other areas such as the daily Guided Group Interaction classes, there is an 8:1 pupil to counselors/staff ratio.

Timeline of Curriculum Development

The *Back on Track* and *Early College High School* Educational plan is fully developed and has been used successfully by over 200 high schools in the past decade in collaboration of Jobs for the Future.

Track Record of the Proposed Education Plan

A partnership between Excel and JFF with regard to Excel's two (2) Philadelphia-based accelerated programs has yielded significant results with the student population. After one year of the CIF implementation, two-thirds of students at both Excel schools in Philadelphia grew two or more grade levels in reading and mathematics.

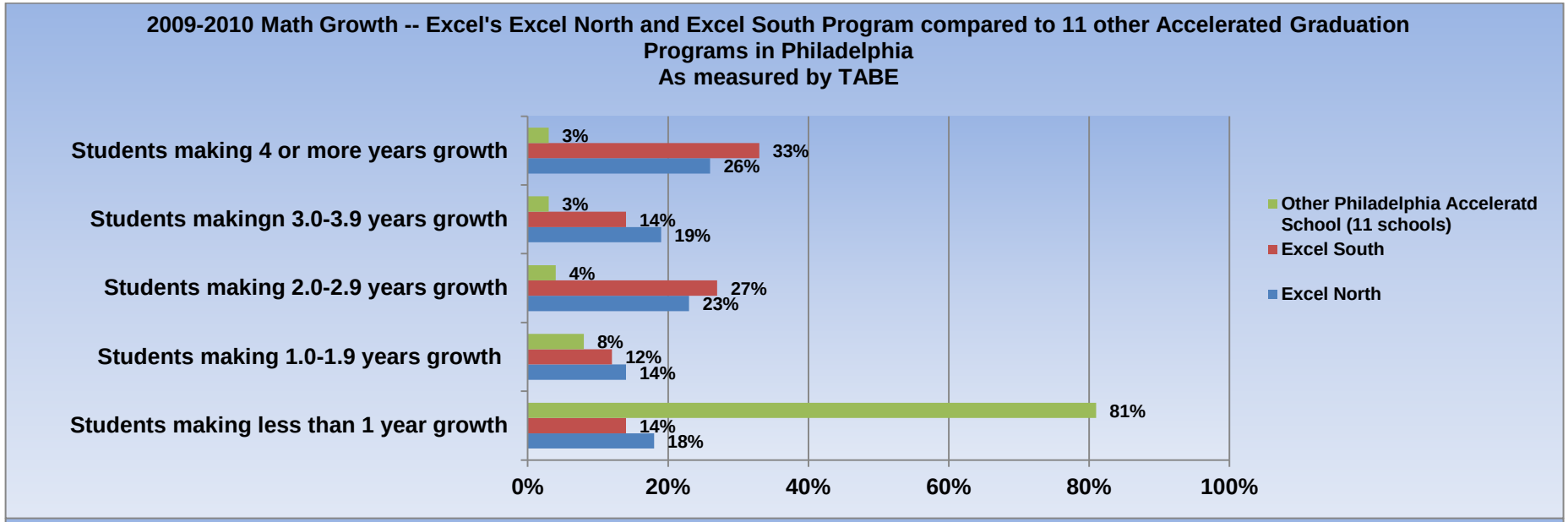
Combining JFF's innovative instructional approach with Excel's student support systems has produced powerful evidence that suggests that college-ready instructional strategies can be successful with students who are underrepresented in higher education. Moreover, JFF ,through a decade of collaboration with a network of over 200 early college high schools and more recent work with "Back on Track to College" schools for off-track and out-of-school youth, has documented the success of programs that offer the right combination of acceleration and support to change the educational trajectories of low-income and minority students. The partnership between Excel and JFF sets a higher standard for alternative schools and is truly aspirational.

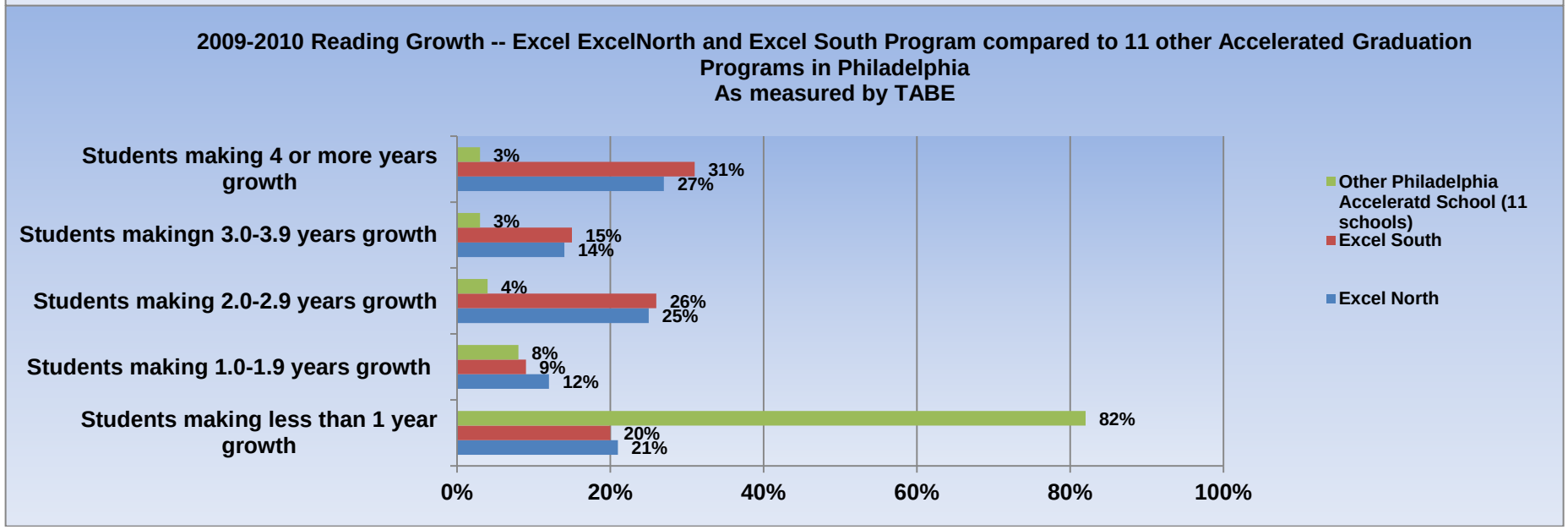
During the 2009-2010 school years, the School District of Philadelphia and the Philadelphia Youth Network partnered with JFF to implement JFF's instructional strategies within 13 accelerated graduation programs (also known as "Back on Track" schools). Two (2) of the 13 programs were managed by Excel – Excel North and Excel South. Student gains were measured using the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) using a pre-test, post-test methodology.

Excel's commitment to implementing JFF's instructional strategies was absolute, and continues to be so. This strong commitment probably best explains the variance in outcomes experienced by Excel's Philadelphia-based Excel programs when compared to the outcomes of the other 11 other accelerated graduation programs. In summary, in the course of one year, more than two-thirds of students at each of Excel's two accelerated graduation schools made two or more years of progress in reading skill, and the same was true for math. Over a quarter of the students had made four grade levels of progress, compared to an average of 3 percent at Philadelphia's other Accelerated Schools.

These two programs – Excel North and Excel South – are the program models that are proposed in this application to DPS, and which serves the same student population that Excel and JFF anticipate serving in Denver. A summary of the findings are illustrated in the two graphs found on the following page. To review the student in full, please use the accompanying hyperlink that is footnoted at the bottom of this page.[5]

[5] http://www.jff.org/publications/education/remediation-acceleration-early-lessons-t/1319


2009-2010 Math Growth -- Excel's Excel North and Excel South Program compared to 11 other Accelerated Graduation Programs in Philadelphia
As measured by TABE
Students making 4 or more years growth
3%
33%
26%
Students makingn 3.0-3.9 years growth
3%
14%
19%
Students making 2.0-2.9 years growth
4%
27%
23%
Students making 1.0-1.9 years growth
8%
12%
14%
Students making less than 1 year growth
81%
14%
18%
0%
20%
40%
60%
80%
100%
Other Philadelphia Acceleratd School (11 schools)
Excel South
Excel North


2009-2010 Reading Growth -- Excel ExcelNorth and Excel South Program compared to 11 other Accelerated Graduation Programs in Philadelphia
As measured by TABE
Students making 4 or more years growth
3%
31%
27%
Students makingn 3.0-3.9 years growth
3%
15%
14%
Students making 2.0-2.9 years growth
4%
26%
25%
Students making 1.0-1.9 years growth
8%
9%
12%
Students making less than 1 year growth
82%
20%
21%
0%
20%
40%
60%
80%
100%
Other Philadelphia Acceleratd School (11 schools)
Excel South
Excel North

Innovation: Longer Instructional Day

The school calendar will be similar to that of the DPS calendar with limited modifications to address the local needs of the school community and student population. This may include -but need not be limited to- such design features as a modified calendar to schedule targeted professional development for programs that are unique to the Excel Academy school design and an extended school day/year for students to further academic proficiency and credit accumulation. State law establishes the school year as 1080 hours of planned teacher-student instruction for high schools. We will exceed that amount with a longer instructional day. Excel's accelerated education programs are generally comprised of students with basic-skill deficiencies who lag academically behind their peers. Without these programs, most of these students would likely dropout. Virtually every student enters the program overage and under-credentialed. At Excel Academy, it will be a requirement for students to be engaged in learning for a longer school day; class periods are lengthened to one hour and twenty minutes in duration, providing a full Carnegie credit unit of 120 hours per course. This allows students with zero academic credits at enrollment to graduate within 2.5 years. Students will be required to accumulate 240 credits toward graduation and complete a senior community service project to meet graduation requirements. State-certified teachers meeting highly qualified status teach students. Excel will assure the academy meets all District and State of Colorado graduation requirements.

Innovation: Accountability

Progress Monitoring and Assessment

Establishing an aligned and coordinated assessment plan also supports the school's Response to Intervention program. Because Excel's instructional program is grounded in RtI methodology, ongoing student data is critical to narrow gaps in students' instructional plans. From a teacher perspective, a robust assessment program also provides data to increase capacity of teachers to effectively serve students. Other indicators will also be utilized to assess the type of intervention needed for each individual student. These include student attendance, student behavior, and credits attempted and earned.

Because of Excel's aligned instructional and assessment practice, Excel Schools have experienced considerable success in other urban school districts. Student test preparation approached 100 percent with an equally high test administration track record. The following are assessments to be utilized in Excel Academy:

For fourteen years Colorado has used the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) tests. With the adoption of new academic standards, a new assessment system that is aligned to the new standards will be put in place. In order to transition to the new state tests, CDE began using the Transitional Colorado Assessment Program (TCAP) in 2012 and 2013, and 2014, which measures a blend of old and new standards and will allow school districts to transition their instruction from the old standards to the new ones. The transitional assessments will also allow for continued growth calculations using state tests to maintain comparability from year to year until the system is completely transitioned to the new standards and assessments. This will also preserve the comparability of the school and the district's performance framework

accountability system until the new system is implemented at the state level. Excel Academy will also administer COACT in the spring of 2014.

- Instead of traditional district-scheduled interim assessments, teachers will create common, lesson- and unit-specific classroom assessments including portfolios, culminating projects and exams with multiple-choice, essay, and short answer questions in order to monitor the learning progress of student's mid-course. Given the innovative use of a quarterly system for earning credit, it will be essential for the school to leverage these assessments to ensure students are making progress towards mastery of course objectives. To this end, Excel also will leverage existing assessment materials per class as provided through district scope and sequence documents. Student progress on mid-course assessments will be monitored by administration to determine achievement gaps and growth to monitor efficacy of teaching and learning.

Excel has reviewed DPS' 2011 School Performance Framework for Alternative Educational Campuses (SPF-Alternative Campuses), and will structure its program to meet the measurable annual achievement goals and objectives contained therein. Achieving these standards will reflect a significant improvement in achievement for this student population in Denver. Specifically, Excel will align its achievement goals and objectives for the proposed program to meet indicators of the SPF-Alternative Campuses as follows[6]:

Indicators	Measures	Goals – Year 1	Goals – Year 2	Goals – Year 3
1. **Student Progress over time – Growth**	Growth Percentile	Approaching Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard
	MAP Growth	Approaching Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard
2. **Student Achievement Level – Status**	% TCAP proficient or above	Approaching Standard	Approaching Standard	Meets Standard
3. **Post-Secondary Readiness**	Colorado ACT	Approaching Standard	Approaching Standard	Meets Standard
	Transition Success	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Exceeds Standard
	Transition success rate change	Approaching Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard
4. **Student Engagement & Satisfaction**	Attendance Improvement	Meets Standard	Exceeds Standard	Exceeds Standard
	Average Daily Attendance	Approaching Standard	Approaching Standard	Meets Standard
	Student Satisfaction	Meets Standard	Exceeds Standard	Exceeds Standard
5. **Parent Engagement**	Parent Satisfaction	Meets Standard	Exceeds Standard	Exceeds Standard

[6] Excel Academy recognizes that at the time of plan submission, it is not currently designated as an alternative education campus (AEC) by the state (CDE); however, Excel will have a "Pending" status through the first year of operations and, following a review of the school's student population, will be given AEC status retroactively largely based on the current way in which students are enrolled in the school. Since Excel does not anticipate any problems in being granted this status, they will base their performance targets on the alternative SPF rubric. Additional student achievement monitoring will be established through the school's Campus Improvement Plan development process as described on pages 11 and 12 of the Performance School Application.

The goals established in the table above are speculative, conservative, and are subject to change. They are largely based on Excel's student populations in its current intensive pathway programs, which are made up of large numbers of students that lag significantly behind their age and grade-appropriate cohorts in reading, language, and mathematic skills. Achievement gains are also based on outcomes in similar schools that Excel Academy is modeled after (and from which school leaders have articulated from) and so by enabling autonomies through this innovation plan, and allowing Excel Academy to run consistent with similar school models, should result in similar gains. For example, it is common for students in these current programs to be four or more years behind in all core academic skills (e.g. 17 years old and reading at a 4th grade level). While students meeting this profile are likely to grow significantly while enrolled in the program, it is doubtful they will be proficient, as measured on standardized assessments, by the time these assessments are scheduled.

Excel is confident of the following, which is reflected in the goals established in the table above and which is drawn from the data and our experience managing similar programs in Philadelphia.

1. We can accelerate student growth significantly toward proficiency standards and, thus close the achievement gap.
2. We can significantly improve student attendance rates when compared to their prior attendance history prior to enrolling in the program.
3. We can retain students at a high rate and, consequently, produce low student attrition (drop out) rates.
4. We can support students with a seamless pathway into a postsecondary program of study with support from Excel staff and additional support from our collaborative partner for this project, JFF.
5. We can produce high levels of student and parent satisfaction

However, until we are able to analyze specific student data for actual students that will attend the intensive pathway program in Denver under Excel's management, projected goals are speculative.

Continuous Improvement and Quality Management

Each year, prior to the start of a school year in August, Excel devotes a significant amount of professional development time toward reviewing program outcomes from the previous year and clarifying baseline measures for each program. From this analysis of the data, campus leadership teams, working with campus staff, set performance benchmarks for the upcoming school year. Strategies, responsibilities, and timelines for each objective complete the CIP, which is each campus's strategic operational plan for the school year. Responsibility for the CIP/UIP lies with the Quality Management Team (QTM) comprised of the school leadership (principal, executive director, director of special populations, director of operation, and director of special services, academic coordinators and team leaders) which meets on campus monthly to monitor and evaluate progress on the indicators.[7] To drive continuous improvement, Excel's CIPs are structured to capture at a minimum data from ten (10) essential program outcomes that includes the following:

1. Graduation rates

[7] Note: The CIP is a term specific to the Excel/Camelot school design. Excel Academy will continue to develop a Unified Improvement Plan consistent with state and district policies. This plan will be the responsibility of the school principal with oversight and consultation provided by the Excel Advisory Committee (as described in the district policy waiver for BDFH). The principal will leverage the contributions made by the CIP to inform the development of the formal UIP.

2. Promotion and credit accumulation rates
3. Post-secondary placement rates
4. Standardized test participation rates
5. Academic growth (literacy and math)
6. Special education and ESOL compliance
7. Safety and climate
8. Student attendance
9. Family and student support
10. Community outreach

Excel's QM process consists of twice-annual comprehensive reviews and program audits of each Excel program by the corporate management team. The process involves the following components, using specific protocols and instruments to validate findings.

- A review of the overall fidelity of instruction using an Instructional Checklist containing 25 specific criteria for review
- A review of program data, including the program's Campus Improvement Plan; Personal Learning Plans; Postsecondary Transition Plans; trends related to student promotion and retention, and student attendance
- A facilities walkthrough checklist containing 50 specific criteria for inspection, falling within the domains of (1) Building exterior; (2) Building interior; (3) Mechanicals; and (4) School Climate and Safety
- Special Education Review, including a review of a random sample of files to ensure compliance with IDEA; interviews with Special Education Director to ensure policies and processes are aligned with federal, state, and district requirements; and recommendations for overall improvement
- Teacher (Classroom) observations, using a specific evaluation instrument designed to capture data relative to (1) Planning and Preparation; (2) Classroom Environment; and (3) Overall Instruction, and which also includes specific recommendation for teachers to aid in improving the overall instructional delivery to students
- Teacher surveys, which inform management of specific needs and suggestions from classroom teachers that focus on improving teaching and learning at the program
- Intensive interviews with program leadership staff, including Directors, Principals, Student Support Personnel, and Team Leaders, to better inform management of overall strengths and weaknesses of the program, and to determine additional ways in which program can be supported through additional/reallocation of resources
- Student Interviews, which allows the QM team to hear directly from students with regard to their perceptions of the program – i.e., are they learning; are they engaged; are they happy; what ways can the program be improved; how do they perceive their staff and teachers?
- A review of all campus leadership goals

Excel's Senior Management team audits programs twice annually, with formal reports consisting of findings and recommendations that go directly to Excel's CEO, COO, and senior leadership staff. Each report contains recommendations for program improvement with specific attention given to improving student achievement and classroom instruction. At the end of the year, each program is graded on a numerical scale consisting of over 70 different criteria, with staff eligible for bonuses and other professional considerations for high scores. Excel's Quality Management process supports an ongoing process to promote continuous program improvement

District promotion policies are included in the Student and Parent Handbook and are discussed with students and parents at orientation prior enrollment in the school. Students receive weekly

feedback on their progress, and parents have multiple opportunities to engage staff so they can monitor the progress of their child.

Every student will have an individual graduation plan developed in consultation with each student and their parents/guardians, and is part of each student's enrollment and orientation into the program. Graduation plans are built from a review and analysis of student transcripts and other relevant data that is available in the student's cumulative folder.

A schedule (roster) is developed for each student, consisting of the courses, listed in sequence, needed for graduation and establishes a target graduation date. The student along with the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school's principal sign the plan. Graduation plans are reviewed at least once every two weeks by the student's support team, consisting of his or her lead teacher (academic advisor**)** and the student's team of teachers, counselors, and instructional support personnel. This staff team ensures that the student is making predicted progress toward their graduation goals. Each student is counseled and advised afterward regarding the outcome of the review. Parents are informed of student progress at the midpoint of each grading period, and report card conferences are scheduled for parents at least twice each school year. Parents are also encouraged to call or visit the school and discuss their child's progress at any time during the school year.

Excel will implement a customized student information system (SIS) that meets all district, state, and federal reporting requirements for the District and which will also provide Excel with the ability to analyze data to inform the program on key accountability metrics. Among other things, the system will have the ability to:

- Automatically create class and teacher schedules
- Handle records of examinations, assessments, marks, grades and academic progression
- Maintain records of absences and attendance
- Record communications with students
- Provide statistical reports
- Communicate student details to parents through a parent portal
- Track Special Education/ IEP services and progress

Excel will also provide information regarding enrolled students using the DPS' current systems, including School Net and Infinite Campus.

Graduation Requirements

Similar to DPS' policies our students graduate with 240 credits and must complete a senior project. In keeping with our mission/goal **to ensure that students are prepared for postsecondary success and workforce readiness,** we will work closely with DPS to incorporate any High School Guidelines. We will also welcome discussion of the High School Endorsement that will include criteria for indicators to determine the postsecondary and workforce readiness of students enrolled and graduating. Additionally Excel places a high priority on providing each student with individualized guidance counseling on prerequisites required for graduation and postsecondary options after graduation. From orientation to graduation, each student and their parents work with our principals, academic coordinators, student service coordinators and other teachers and key staff to develop an individual career and academic plan. Such a plan is adopted for each student within the first 10 days of enrollment. Graduation rates and postsecondary transition are key performance indicators for Excel, and are incorporated into our annual campus improvement planning improvement-

planning process. At Excel's accelerated high school programs, modified block scheduling (80 minutes per class) is used to accelerate credit acquisition in high school.

English Language Learner Students

Excel's English Language Learners Program (ELL) is designed to improve Limited English Proficient (LEP) students' proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in English. Excel's objective is for ELL students to use the English language by demonstrating their understanding of the core academic subjects; to communicate and converse in social situations; and to understand the cultures in which we live. An estimated 20-30% of the student body will come with their native languages of Spanish, Hmong, Vietnamese, Cantonese and Haitian – Creole and others, and may subsequently require varying levels of English language support. Excel Academy – Denver will serve ELL students in accordance with all applicable Federal Laws and Regulations and in compliance with Section 22-24-105 of the Colorado Revised Statutes.

A Home Language Survey will be distributed as part of the registration process to all students to identify those students whose primary or home language is other than English. A student who has responded "yes" on questions 1 and 2 of the survey will be assessed with a district screening assessment and evaluated by the campus Instructional Services Advisory Team (ISAT). If it is recommended by the ISAT that a student enter the ELA program, then the parent is notified no later than 30 days after the beginning of school. The parent may choose to opt in or opt out. If the parent opts out, the student will still be monitored by the ISAT so we can re-notify the parent with another request if the student is having difficulty.

Every effort will be made to communicate with parents who are not proficient in English. They will be constantly kept informed of campus activities and informed on their student's progress in the program every 9 weeks. Additionally an ELA Parent Advisory Committee will be formed (with the enrollment of 20 or more ELL students) so that essential two-way communication is encouraged and achieved.

The placement process will include a district screening assessment within 10 days of the day the student enters the campus and ELA services begin within 30 days of arrival. Excel Academy will utilize a student progress monitoring system to make instructional planning decisions for each student's Individual Language Instruction Education Plan (LIEP). This will also ensure that students are receiving rigorous content in four domains (listening, speaking, reading and writing) based on the challenging Colorado ELD standards that all Colorado students are expected to demonstrate.

Understanding that Denver Public School District has a program design that incorporates four stages of ELL intervention, Excel's program will focus on providing Supported English Content Instruction, Mainstream English Language Classroom with transition teachers and Mainstream English Classroom Only. If 60 or more English language learners who speak Spanish are enrolled and desire services, the campus will offer a transitional native language instruction model or identify such a program nearby for such students to attend. A research-based English Language Development (ELD) curriculum, Springboard/ *Edge*, will provide students with a balanced approach to learning English through literature selections and expository readings from other content areas. The curriculum includes systematic, explicit reading and writing instruction, classic and contemporary literature, expository content readings which give students opportunities to acquire content area vocabulary and at the same time develop understanding and insight into the world around them and provides the skills and strategies students need to be successful in the mainstream classroom.

The DPS core academic curriculum and standards will be used. Additionally the WIDA (World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment) standards will be incorporated into instruction in the supported English Content Instruction block (80 minutes per day) and in the mainstream English Language classroom with transition teachers. The ELA program at Excel Academy will maintain as its goal the acquisition of a second language for identified students using cognitively demanding grade-level content while increasing academic content knowledge at the same time.

In order to facilitate English language development for ELLs, a research-based model of sheltered instruction will be implemented. Students will be grouped in Core Academic Courses according to English proficiency with an ELL professional on each team as needed to support sheltered instruction. Excel Academy facilitates a collaborative approach where teachers work together to use multiple strategies and interventions to increase language acquisition. The need for ELA-S may also dictate Spanish-speaking teacher teams.

Further, English Language Development (ELD) vocabulary and oral language development will take place during supported content courses using DPS' language curriculum, *EDGE* . Excel Academy values further development of heritage languages as a marketable job skill and therefore, will support further language development in a native language through class or independent study time in the Studio Courses. English Language Learners will be assessed on an ongoing basis using the district assessments in order to determine their growth and the appropriate course offerings to support further learning. Excel expects ELA students to obtain the ability to read, comprehend, speak, and write to common core standards.

For students identified as both ELL and SPED, the ISAT team will work with the Multilingual Assessment Services Team (MAST) from DPS to ensure students receive adequate services. Excel Academy will specifically seek out and give priority when equally qualified teachers have ELA training through the district as well as encouraging the entire faculty to become ELA certified within three years. Professional development will be prioritized to emphasize language development and second language acquisition as well as research-based instructional strategies such as cooperative learning, total physical response strategies and scaffolded learning.

The Instructional Services Advisory Team (ISAT) will be made up of the principal, the director of special populations and the ELA specialist from each core academic area as well as a representative from the elective courses that will monitor ELD at the school, ensuring placement, monitoring, classifying and exiting of ELL students. Every effort will be made that each ELA instructor is a fully qualified, state-endorsed ELA teacher or a teacher that has undergone 150 hours of training with the Department of English Language Acquisition for the state of Colorado.

As part of the DPS/Excel Academy's quality management system, teachers are consistently evaluated to ensure that professional development prepares them to implement an effective ELA program on campus. Professional Development for campus faculty and staff takes place two weeks before the school year begins and throughout the year. Administrators such as the principal and director of special populations are also trained to effectively evaluate whether teachers are using their training appropriately to provide effective ELL instruction in keeping with the goals of the program.

Overall students are to show sufficient proficiency within three years of enrollment in the program. Exit from the program is based on a solid body of evidence drawn from CDE standards, district ELL screening assessment, TCAP scores, and student work samples in writing and mathematics. A parent progress report is sent on ELL students every semester throughout their participation. After exiting from the program a student is monitored for 2 years to make sure that progress is sustained.

Special Education Students

Excel believes that every student can and must have an opportunity to reach their full academic potential. Excel has served thousands of students in our alternative programs identified under either the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA) or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (Section 504) as in need of special education services. A review of recent data shows that approximately 15-30 percent of students in Excel's alternative programs are identified as eligible for special education services. Excel's philosophy is that all students with disabilities should participate to the greatest extent possible in a rigorous educational program that will enhance their academic skills and prepare them for postsecondary educational and employment opportunities.

Excel is experienced in serving special education students that span the spectrum of program types, ranging from students requiring full-time special education support to students mainstreamed full time into a general education classroom. In every instance, Excel's guiding principle is that instruction for special needs students should always occur in the least restrictive environment possible.

The Excel Academy campus will have a qualified Special Populations Director with responsibilities for assuring that each student's special education records and Individual Education Plan (IEP) are current and compliant. IEP meetings are conducted at least annually or more frequently, and Evaluation Assessments (EAs) occur every three years or less, where required. Parents are notified of their student's progress relative to their IEP goals at each grading period. Special education teachers record student progress toward their IEP goals, which is mailed to parents or guardians along with the student's report card. Additionally, special education teachers maintain "service logs" that document the special education services provided daily to each student in accordance with their IEP. General classroom teachers maintain "modification/accommodation" logs, which document daily modifications and accommodations to support all special education students mainstreamed into regular education classrooms. Student logs are reviewed and monitored consistently by the special populations director to ensure compliance with the student's IEP.

The staff listed below will be assigned to work with special populations

- Special Populations Director – Oversee overall special education program of services; provides guidance for teachers; develops and provides professional development
- Special Education Teachers/Case Managers -- Provide student instruction and development and implementation of IEPs and accommodations. Excel Academy will have a team of highly qualified, certified Special Education teachers.
- Behavior Coaches – Support students social and emotional needs inside and outside of the classroom

As part of each program's Campus Improvement Plan, Excel IEP data is reviewed monthly to determine compliance and to ensure that each student's IEP is current. Student academic and behavior performance is also reviewed weekly during team meetings and any specific concerns regarding the student's program are highlighted for the special education director during these meetings. Finally, as part of Excel's twice-annual Quality Management program review, special education files and processes are reviewed, and a report that details overall compliance by program is prepared for the CEO, COO, and senior staff. .

Excel's core curriculum contains best practice strategies for designing instruction specifically for students with disabilities. As part of on-going professional development Excel's certified special education staff provides training on strategies for identifying and applying appropriate classroom accommodations and modifications that facilitate learning and promote the inclusion of special education students within the general curriculum.

In summary, Excel compliance with the Individuals with Disability Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) will provide a free and appropriate public education to children with disabilities who need all levels of special education and related services. Excel has the experience and ability to support the needs of all students with disabilities.

Academic Intervention and Acceleration

Excel will establish a school-wide support approach to target instructional interventions in response to student's specific areas of needs as soon as those needs become apparent. The school-wide support approach would follow Response to Intervention (RtI) principles and would include

- High quality, research-based instruction/intervention matched to student needs
- Frequent use of data to determine learning rate and student performance level
- Educational decisions based upon the student's response to instruction/intervention

Excel will establish a three-tiered approach for academics, emotional issues, and behavioral issues in order to implement RtI, explained below.

- At **tier 1** <u>all</u> students receive
  - District curriculum that is scientifically, research-based and aligned to the Common Core
  - Curriculum-based measures and assessments for screening, diagnostic and continuous progress monitoring
  - Differentiated instruction designed to meet a broad range of needs

- At **tier 2** <u>some</u> students receive
  - Supplemental interventions in small groups inside the general education classroom or outside of the general education classroom
  - Interventions targeted to remediate a specific skill
  - Interventions implemented with integrity (e.g., number of minutes/day and per week, materials used, progress monitoring and implementer) tied to student needs

- At **tier 3** <u>very few</u> students receive
  - Integrated instruction from all three tiers to strengthen the accumulated impact of the interventions and instruction
  - Interventions delivered to very small groups of 2-3 students or individual students

- Interventions focused on narrowly defined skill areas identified from the results of frequent progress monitoring
- Interventions implemented with integrity (e.g., number of minutes/day and per week, materials used, progress monitoring and implementer) tied to student needs

Excel's high school accelerated programs will be structured to engage students in learning for a longer school day than is common for students attending DPS high schools. At Excel's accelerated high school programs, modified block scheduling (80 minutes each) is used to accelerate credit acquisition in high school. Similar to the District, Excel students are required to accumulate 240 credits and must complete a senior project to meet graduation requirements.

As is common in our *Back on Track* campuses, Excel Academy will create and maintain a whole school culture that prevents overage and under-credited students from dropping out of high school or not meeting their Individual Graduation Plan. Some of the features that support this target population on our campuses are listed below:

- ***A Campus of Caring Adults***

Excel offers multiple avenues for our students to have daily access to one or more trained and caring adults who are motivated and trained to support student success. The pupil to staff ratio is 8:1. Team leaders, teachers, student service personnel, behavior support staff, principals, special education staff, counselors, and support staff are trained to support our continuous improvement culture where student improvement and success comes first. Excel's history as an alternative program provider is marked by vigorous outreach and collaboration with community-based and postsecondary organizations that are uniquely situated to assist in helping our students in overcoming the multiple barriers many of them face in achieving academic and life success.

- ***Safety and Structure***

The rigor and consistency of Excel's behavioral model directly supports the rigor of Excel's and JFF's academic model, which, in turn, promotes student performance. Simply, Excel's behavioral model creates a campus culture where every student can learn and every teacher can teach. Our ability to ensure student safety means limiting student chaos and danger and placing the focus where it rightly should be – on student learning and academic performance and success. Knowing that they are safe allows students to relax and focus on their education.

- ***Individualized Plans and Postsecondary Planning and Support***

Excel's program focuses on supporting each student individually. When students enroll in an Excel program, their school records are carefully reviewed; students are administered diagnostic tests to determine their functional grade levels in reading and math, and each student is provided with an individualized graduation plan to gauge and guide their progress. From each student's first day of enrollment through their graduation date, staff is focused on preparing them for postsecondary transition by developing an individualized postsecondary plan; preparing them to take college entrance exams; and supporting each student with assistance in preparing applications for college or trade school, financial aid packets, and scholarship forms.

- ***Student and Family Support***

Excel aggressively seeks ways in which to reduce or eliminate daily barriers to academic success faced by our students. Excel knows that our student population faces barriers inside and outside of the classroom that impede their academic performance. Excel Academy-Southwest will employ a student services director that will focus on partnering with strategically-positioned community-based and public organizations. Through working collaboratively, these

partnerships will add great value to the quality of our program by assisting students in addressing and overcoming their personal barriers to success. Emphasis on implementing comprehensive wrap-around services and "whole child" approaches are fundamental components of every Excel program.

- ***Celebrating Success Daily***

Excel celebrates and rewards student success daily. Students are organized into teams and meet in twice-daily assemblies at the beginning and the end of each day, known as "Townhouse." During townhouse, student government leaders direct townhouse assemblies, provide feedback to the student body, and receive feedback from staff and students on those things that are positive about the day. Individual students are recognized and celebrated daily for specific accomplishments

Each week, a staff resource team meets and ranks students on our progressive level system, recognizing academic progress good citizenship, and attendance. Weekly student rankings are conspicuously posted throughout the school building. Excel's positive peer culture is strengthened by our daily recognition and celebration of student successes, and is a prevalent feature at all Excel programs.

- ***Experiential and Project-Based Learning***

Excel believes that we owe our students a deeper educational context, where learning themes taught in the classroom are connected to real world experiences. Providing our students with field-based experiences adds depth and context to learning. Field-based learning experiences that emphasize experiential and project-based themes are methods Excel uses to build on the student's academic experience. Our programs in Philadelphia have provided opportunities for students to learn about American government at the Constitution Center, Liberty Bell and Independence Hall; opportunities to learn about aquatic and animal life at the Baltimore Aquarium zoo; and opportunities to learn about African-American history at the Underground Railroad Museum and the African-American Museum, to list but a few examples. We plan to take advantage of the many sites and programs Denver has to offer.

- ***Student Leadership Training***

Excel's behavior model uses a positive normative culture framework that focuses on turning negative leadership qualities into positive leadership qualities. For students to ascend to the highest levels of leadership in our model requires that they become members of their campus's student government. These students are expected to influence the positive behavior of their peers and to support of the positive normative culture while attending Excel's program. We train our students to be positive leaders by taking an active role in influencing, mediating, and redirecting the behavior of their peers in support of the positive normative culture endemic to all Excel programs.

- ***Parent and Family Outreach***

Excel Academy-Southwest believes strongly that parents should be full partners with us to support their child's educational program. Our program is structured to provide parents with multiple avenues to engage with Excel's campus staff in support their child's progress and success. Excel uses several strategies to encourage high levels of parental involvement, which we reference throughout this proposal. Parents tell us constantly that they appreciate the respect and courtesy that they are afforded by Excel's staff, and especially are pleased with the degree to which they remain informed by and have access to school personnel. Excel's history has been marked by the unqualified support of our student's parents.

Academic interventions are also used to prevent students who have fallen behind academically from dropping out. Some of these interventions have been discussed in previous sections on Curricular Focus. They include credit recovery courses, computer software that designs individualized learning pathway for each students, and strategic reading and mathematics classes in which students receive direct instruction for 120 minutes and 90 minutes, respectively, throughout the school week.

Gifted and Talented Students

Excel recognizes that students who are identified as gifted and talented are in need of specially designed instruction. Excel's dedicated multidisciplinary team ("GMTD") will create a gifted individualized education program ("GIEP") that will be reviewed and revised once a year according to the student's individual needs. Gifted students have unusual learning qualities and needs, and the GIEP will provide individual programs, which will enable them to learn at different rates, to learn different material earlier, and to think at a level different than their classmates. A GMTD creates a GIEP according to needs, age, and developmental level of each individual student. Each GIEP is unique and crafted to continuously promote acceleration, enrichment, or both.

Supplemental Programming

Intramural Sports

Excel will provide intramural sports opportunities for students who wish to compete in sports-related activities. Intramural sports activities will be based on results from student surveys and will be held after school once a week.

Extracurricular Activities

Extracurricular activities will be provided after school three days each week. These activities will include various clubs (e.g. chess club, book club, science club) that match student interests. Surveys will be conducted to determine student interests and clubs will be organized that match student interests.

After-School Enrichment Programs

Excel may offer students opportunities to participate in after- school enrichment programs, which will include the following:

- School newspaper and Yearbook
- Computer lab for academic enrichment and educational support, homework assistance, and tutoring
- Job readiness and career preparation (resume writing, job interview skills, application)
- College application essay writing
- Skills training and part-time job opportunities

Innovation: Human Resource Management

Campus Leadership Team Personnel
In Excel's model, the overall leadership is shared between the principal and the executive director. This is deliberately done so that the principal can focus exclusively on instruction and learning. Excel will use the following management model for this program:

Management Model of Campus Team (375 student program)

Position Title	Minimum Qualifications
Executive Director (Focus: operational aspects of the program)	Master Degree in Education preferred (Bachelor's degree may be substituted with relevant experience); five years relevant experience; three years of progressive supervisory and/or administrative experience; and experience working with at-risk student populations.
Principal (Focus: academic leadership and implementing best instructional practices; curriculum alignment)	Master's Degree in Education; principal certification; three (3) years teaching experience; two (2) years of progressive supervisory and/or administrative experience; and experience working with at-risk student populations.
Operations Director (Focus: non-academic aspects of program – e.g. school climate, building, transportation, food services, etc.)	Master's Degree in Education or related field preferred (Bachelor's degree may be substituted with relevant experience); three (3) years teaching experience or experience working in a school setting; two (2) years of progressive supervisory and/or administrative experience; and experience working with at-risk student populations.
Special Populations Director (focus: special student populations, including Special Education and ESL)	Master's Degree in Education; special education certification (ESL certification preferred); or three (3) years teaching experience or experience working in a school setting with special needs student populations; two (2) years of progressive supervisory and/or administrative experience; and experience working with at-risk student populations.
Student Services Director (focus: postsecondary transition; liaison to community and public support agencies; student counseling)	Master's Degree in Education, Social Work, or related field preferred (Bachelor's degree may be substituted with relevant experience); three(3) years of experience in providing student support services; and experience in working with at-risk student populations.
Academic Coordinator (focus: implementation of JFF strategies; teacher coaching and observations; assessment; data analysis; professional development	Master's Degree in Education preferred (Bachelor's degree may be substituted with relevant experience); current instructional certification with three (3) years of teaching (classroom) experience; and experience working with at-risk student populations.

Beyond specific qualifications and job responsibilities, Excel's culture supports, encourages, and values the following attributes in its leaders:

1. **Technical Competence** Leaders who are knowledgeable of the task at hand and, more generally, exemplify a commitment to Excel's broader mission, goals, and culture

- **Stamina and Vitality** Leaders who exhibit high levels of energy and effort daily

2. **Judgment, Intelligence and Conceptual Skills** Leaders that can effectively problem solve, set priorities, and design strategies under stressful and imperfect conditions that tend to consistently produce the most desirable results

3. **Track Record** Leaders who have a documented history of achieving results.

4. **People Skills** Leaders who can effectively communicate, motivate, and delegate.

5. **Character** Leaders whose personal values (e.g. honesty, fairness, integrity, and respect) creates and binds the loyalty and trust of others.

6. **Accountability** Leaders who practice rational risk-taking, creativity, and initiative, and who seek and accept responsibility.

7. **High Emotional Intelligence** Leaders who can effectively work with diverse people in diverse situations to meet common goals.

8. **Self-Motivated** Leaders who have a strong desire to succeed.

9. **Motivational** Leaders that can move individuals and groups of people to action.

10. **Courageous** Leaders who resist groupthink by speaking up when things are not working well and by taking responsibility for suggesting and creating better ways of doing things.

11. **Visionary** Leaders that can envision higher levels of performance and service that is accompanied by strategic planning that facilitates continuous program improvement.

12. **Passionate** Leaders who love what they do and are motivated through their passion to serve Excel students.

Timeline and Plans for Recruiting and Hiring the Principal and other Key Campus Leaders

Campus Leader	Anticipated Selection Dater
Executive Director	January, 2013
Principal	February, 2013
Director of Operations	May, 2013
Director of Special Education	May, 2013
Director of Student Services	May, 2013

Start Up Team -- Oversight of the Corporate Leadership Team
Below is a summary of Excel's start up team for this project. Please note that three (3) members of the corporate team are former high-ranking administrators with large, urban school districts and, in that capacity, held positions with direct oversight over District Title 1 funds, student placement, school accountability, and special student populations (IDEA and Section 504). This team of seasoned administrators reflects and symbolizes Camelot's absolute commitment to excellence and to ensuring outstanding results with respect to implementing and administering this important project. **This team will ultimately select the campus-based Camelot management team that will co-lead a program with the principal on a daily basis.** This team will also provide program evaluation, quality assurance, and technical support services to the school as specified in the approved DPS contract.

Joe Carter -- **Joe** joined Excel in 2004 and currently is the company's **Chief Operations Officer** overseeing the daily operations of Excel's educational programs. Joe holds dual Masters Degrees in Education Administration and Criminal Justice Administration; is a certified principal; and holds certifications in Special Education and English as a Second Language in multiple states. While serving as principal of Excel Academy (Excel's first intensive pathway program), Joe developed and implemented Excel's accelerated high school model. Joe will have primary authority for overseeing the planning and implementation of all intensive pathways programs.

Nilsa Gonzalez -- Nilsa joined Excel full time last year after several years of serving the company as a private consultant. Nilsa currently serves as Excel's **Chief Academic Officer**. Nilsa brings the experience and credibility that comes with a 36-year career in public education, most of which is with the School District of Philadelphia, beginning as a classroom teacher and ascending to principal, cluster leader and Associate Superintendent for the District. Nilsa holds a Master Degree in Education as well as an ESL Certification. Nilsa's primary responsibility for this project will be to oversee the implementation of curricula, assessments, professional development and classroom instruction.

LaVonne Sheffield (**representing Jobs for the Future**) – **LaVonne** began her career in education as a classroom teacher in 1973, and over the ensuing 38 years has held positions in public education including chief of staff (Detroit Public Schools), Chief Academic Officer (Detroit Public Schools), Chief Accountability Officer (School District of Philadelphia), and Superintendent (2) – Recover School District, Louisiana; Rockford Public Schools, Illinois). Currently LaVonne holds the position of Superintendent in Residency with Jobs for the Future. LaVonne holds a PhD in Education from the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor, and has a Superintendent Certification in the State of Illinois. Dr. Sheffield's primary responsibility for this

project will be to (1) oversee implementation of the instructional framework; (2) develop the rounds model protocol; (3) assist in creating professional development curriculum; (4) secure partnerships with postsecondary institutions; and (5) design the college preparatory and advanced placement courses.

Brenda Taylor (consultant) – **Brenda** is the former Deputy Chief of Specialized Instructional Services for the School District of Philadelphia and possesses a distinguished career of more than 36 years as a professional educator with experience in the areas of health, behavioral health, special education, homeless student support, and alternative education and interventions (RTI). Brenda will serve as a **consultant** to Excel on this project in the areas of special student populations; behavioral health support; compliance monitoring (e.g. IDEIA); and overall program development. Brenda is a member of Excel's Quality Management Team and conducts periodic performance audits for Excel's alternative programs. Brenda holds teaching certifications in elementary and special education as well as elementary and secondary principal certifications and letter of eligibility for superintendent.

Milt Alexander – **Milt** joined Excel in 2005 and currently serves as the **Vice President of Alternative Education Programs** where he oversees the daily operations of Excel's Alternative Education Division. Milt holds a Masters of Education and has worked with at-risk youth for the last 17 years of his career. During that period, Milt has served as a teacher, instructional leader, assistant principal, principal, and program executive director. Milt's primary responsibility as a member of the planning team will be overseeing and supporting matters of program operations.

David Wingard – David joined Excel in 2003 and currently serves as **Vice President for Quality Management and Compliance** where he oversees all contract compliance, quality assurance, and risk management issues for every Excel program. David holds a Doctorate in Educational Administration from the University of Texas at Austin and has worked in the educational policy and alternative education fields for the last 20 years, including leadership positions with public, not-for-profit, and for-profit organizations. David's primary responsibility as a member of the planning team is contract compliance and quality management; program accountability, data analysis and reporting; and all risk management matters.

Campus Leadership Team Coaching and Evaluation

Every campus program's executive director, as part of Excel's quality management process, is required to establish professional goals, objectives, and strategies each year. Progress toward meeting their goals is monitored twice a year during on-site quality management reviews. Coaching determinations result from these bi-annual evaluations.

Secondly, each campus constructs a strategic Campus Improvement Plan each year, with measureable objectives that index to contract performance standards. These data are trended monthly and reviewed by corporate staff to assure that trends are sufficient to meet annual goals. These data indicate where and when the executive director may need additional coaching and intervention to assure overall annual program goal attainment. This plan is also shared with the school's principal who will have responsibility for the development of the district/state-mandated UIP.

Additionally, Excel's Chief Academic Officer conducts on-site mid-year reviews of every program using a comprehensive evaluation rubric comprised of more than 60 specific areas of analysis falling within three (3) principal programmatic domains: (1) School Academic Performance; (2) School Learning Environment; and (3) Contract Compliance. The purpose of this review is to provide the program's executive director with an overall assessment of program

quality at the halfway point of the school year. These data illuminate areas where the executive director needs additional support (coaching) and where significant programmatic weaknesses are determined to exist.

Finally, Excel's QM team grades each program at the end of the school year, with final grades tied to economic and professional incentives for the leadership team. These grades, which are letter grades similar to those that students receive, reflect an overall assessment of the program relative to the following program components:

1. CIP
2. Classroom Observations
3. Data Collection and Use
4. Contract Compliance
5. School Climate and Norms
6. Emergency Preparedness and Safety
7. School Cleanliness
8. Instructional Environment, Support and Leadership
9. Contract End of Year Outcomes

Combined, these measures serve as strong indicators and help target areas for school leader coaching.

School Personnel Structure

Beyond the campus leadership team, the table on the following page outlines key positions that the school will fill to ensure successful ongoing operations.

Additional School Positions

Position	Description
Attendance Coordinator	Oversees all aspects of student attendance and truancy plan
Team Leader	Responsible for overall school climate; student counseling; safety; parent and agency interface, support teachers in the classroom
Regular Education Teachers (including electives	Classroom instruction and student academic growth
Special Education Teachers	Oversee all students with IEPs; ensure IEPs are current, compliant, and that students are making progress toward goals; child find; oversee implementation of classroom accommodations and modifications
ELA Teachers	Oversee compliance and progress of all ELL students; ensure LIEPs are current and that students are making progress toward goals; administer and analyze student ESL assessments.
Special Education Aides	Assist special education teachers in support of SPED population; support students in pullout instruction and one-on-one support
Behavioral Specialists	Support team leader to ensure with overall school climate; safety; discipline; documentation; classroom support

Succession Plan

Excel is an equal opportunity employer with a philosophy of promoting from within based on demonstrated performance. Members sought for the campus leadership team must have a Master's Degree in Education; have significant experience working with at-risk youth; and possess a demonstrated record of success. Co-leaders of the school program are the ED and

the Principal and in their leadership roles, are responsible for providing leadership/leadership-developing opportunities for their direct reports. This should result in the existence of "high-potential" succession candidates at the school level.

Excel currently operates 23 contracted programs (including six Excel Therapeutic Day School programs) from which additional internal candidates can be recruited from These programs are categorized below. Daily these programs serve approximately more than 4300 students.

1. **Alternative Multiple Pathways to Graduation Programs** (7 programs), which target overage and under credited students at risk of dropping out of school, with an additional program scheduled to open during 2013-2014 under contract with Denver Public Schools;
2. **Alternative Discipline Programs** (8 programs), which are programs that enable students to stay on track while in a disciplinary program and transition successfully back to their home campus or graduate; and
3. **Therapeutic Day School Programs** (7 programs) which are programs that serve a range of students whose IEP Teams have determined and documented that the student's IEP cannot be implemented in the student's home school or in a neighboring school with required supports and services and consequently the student needs an Alternative Special Education Setting (ASES).

Excel's experience with the student population that CPS seeks to address in this proposal is extensive and spans grades K-12. These programs include remedial disciplinary, accelerated programs for overage and under credited students (similar to this proposal); and subcontracted programs serving charter school organizations. The table below summarizes the current schools that Excel operates and manages for at-risk students:

Excel's Alternative Education Programs

LEA	Year Began	Student Enrollment	Program -- Current
School District of Philadelphia, PA	2004	400	Excel Academy (formally Boone Alternative School) -- transitional l(disciplinary) program for grades 5-12
School District of Philadelphia, PA	2004	310	Excel North – accelerated school for grades 9-12 (overage and under-credited)
School District of Philadelphia, PA	2009	355	Excel South – accelerated school for grades 9-12 (overage and under-credited)
School District of Lancaster, PA	2009	100	Buerhle Alternative School -- transitional (disciplinary) program for grades 6-12
School District of Lancaster, PA	2011	350	Phoenix Academy – accelerated program for grades 7-12 (overage and under-credited)
Camden City Public Schools Camden, NJ	2011	200	Camden Accelerated School Program for grades 9-12 (overage and under-credited)
Camden City Public Schools	2011	150	Camden Transitional School Program (disciplinary) for grades 6-12

LEA	Year Began	Student Enrollment	Program -- Current
Camden, NJ			
Camden City Public Schools Camden, NJ	2011	100	Camden Behavioral (School within a School, disciplinary) program for grades 9-12
Escambia County Public School District Pensacola, FL	2010	200	Alternative transitional (disciplinary) program for grades 6-12
Mercer County Technical School District Trenton, NJ	2009	225	Alternative high school for Mercer County (New Jersey) -- consortium comprised of 9 (nine) public school districts in Mercer County, NJ; school of choice for students not achieving success at regular campus
ASPIRA Charter School Philadelphia, PA	2011	150	Accelerated high school (school within a school program) for overage and under-credited students
Mastery Charter School Philadelphia, PA	2011	100	Transition (disciplinary program) – School within a school model for students in grades 9-12
Mastery Charter School Philadelphia, PA	2010	48	Early Intervention Program for consortium of Mastery Charter Schools for grades K-6 (behavioral placement)
Chicago Public Schools	2012	375	Excel Academy-Chicago -- accelerated school for grades 9-12 (overage and under-credited)
Houston Independent School District	2012	1000	Beechnut Academy -- transitional (disciplinary) program for grades 6-12

Within Excel's system, executive directors are selected from the ranks of Excel's principals or operations directors who have demonstrated an exemplary ability to success-fully lead. In the event the School's Principal were to change Excel Academy will utilize district support and processes to fill the position while also engaging the community. Principals are typically chosen from Excel's pool of academic coaches; operation's directors are typically chosen from Excel's pool of team leaders; special population directors are typically chosen from Excel's pool of special education and ESL teachers; and student services directors are typically chosen from Excel's pool of social workers. Based on Excel's system of internal promotion, staff is expected to "double train" not only for the position they currently hold, but also for the position that is their next level of promotion. By doing so, this creates a system of succession where staff is cross-trained across key leadership positions. This, in turn, ensures consistency and stability in implementing the innovation plan in the school in the event there are leadership changes.

Innovation: Teaching

Teacher Coaching
Excel Academy-Southwest will use the "rounds model," a powerful embedded approach based on medical school rounds at teaching hospitals, where interns accompany a physician to visit patients and together they review, discuss and research each case. Clark University in Massachusetts adapted the process for educational use so that teacher hosts, or "rounds leaders," have a structure for incorporating visitors in their classrooms and engaging them in dialogue on students' learning and teaching practice.

A host teacher prepares a "pre-rounds sheet" that explains the learning objective and lesson plan for the class and cites specific areas where he or she desires feedback. The purpose of "pre-rounds" is to focus the classroom observation and subsequent discussion and review the learning that took place and how the teaching practice supported learning. Done correctly, rounds support the teacher in the improvement of his or her craft in a non-evaluative fashion. What distinguishes "rounds" from other professional development is that it occurs in the actual context of teaching and learning, making the model more collaborative and reflective than other forms of professional development.

Teacher Evaluation
Formal evaluation of DPS teachers at Excel Academy will be based on the district-approved evaluation system, LEAP (or any future equivalents). To support formal evaluation and to leverage existing opportunities for continuous development of educator effectiveness for our teachers, Excel Academy will establish a system for reporting and posting professional development programs and activities. Use of web-based technologies is essential to integrating these processes to enable all teachers and counselors to take full advantage of professional development in both a job-embedded model and with 24/7 access. Additionally, the "rounds" model for professional feedback will guide modifications to the professional development offered at Excel Academy. School Improvement Planning (SIP) is the focal point for all campus-based decisions and is a standard part of the agenda for all daily management resource meetings. Each programs' SIP is divided into the major areas of focus. These are school climate and safety, academic achievement, and special populations. Within each area are the program elements that are directly tied to program accountability. These program elements include variables such as student attendance, suspensions and expulsions, individual and aggregate student growth gains in reading and math; test participation rates; and graduation, promotion, attrition, and postsecondary transition. Also important are indicators that drive improvements in teacher effectiveness. While we celebrate success, unsatisfactory leadership and teacher performance will not be tolerated Each program manager (including directors of student support services; directors of special student populations; principals; directors of operations; team leaders) is responsible for assuring that each program element for which they are assigned meet the standards (performance benchmarks) established in the SIP.

The campus principal conducts formal teacher observations during the year and instructional walkthroughs are conducted daily by academic coaches and team leaders. Working as a collaborative management team, all SIP elements are reviewed daily as a matter of due diligence and quality assurance. All members of the resource team are expected to contribute ideas and suggestions for improvement and to take personal responsibility for supporting the goals and objectives of the SIP. Moreover, daily resource meetings serve the purpose of integrating all parts of the program into a central, systemic whole, creating common meaning to the interdependent components of Excel's programs. Campus managers convey information

discussed at daily resource meetings to their subordinates and encourage their feedback and responses, which is brought back to the resource team for additional consideration.

Professional Development

The goal for professional development at Excel Academy will reflect the goal of the DPS Call for New Quality Schools 2013-2014; that is, "all students will graduate from DPS schools prepared for postsecondary success." In particular, professional development facilitated by Jobs for the Future and Excel will focus on equipping administrators, teachers, and counselors with the special knowledge, skills, and techniques they need to serve overage and under-credited youth. For staff development activities to advance our school's mission and goals, all components will be integrated through a continuous improvement process that engages administrators, teachers, support staff, and parents. Everyone associated with Excel Academy will view student development and professional development as two intertwined functions with the single aim of creating an environment where learning is the focus for students, staff and the larger school community.

Effective professional development is essential to increasing student achievement. Research indicates that when the performance of teachers and school leaders improves, student achievement improves. The strategy for providing professional development at Excel Academy is to weave high quality, relevant training into the very fabric of the alternative school. Concepts that will inform this strategy include the following:

- Sharp focus on embedded teacher development based on student data;
- Learning communities organized within the school where teachers and administrators are trained in research strategies and pedagogical practices designed to improve student achievement and personal professional development;
- Staff at every level modeling the behaviors of stewardship, operational effectiveness and leadership;
- Training programs for support staff to continuously develop and improve job-related process and procedures, which will enable schools to operate more efficiently;
- Parents and community partners who participate in an array of programs and activities where they learn strategies and acquire tools to assist in the academic development of their children;
- Partnerships with local and state colleges and universities;
- Technology designed to enable staff to share knowledge and research with other educators locally and nationally;
- A system of professional development standards that will guide the design, delivery, and evaluation of training and development programs;
- Programs designed to enhance leadership skills of administrators; and
- Programs designed to enhance knowledge and competencies of teachers.

The model for professional development at Excel Academy will have student achievement as the core that connects its various functions and school constituencies. A student-centered model aligns services with planning and coordinating activities, defines standards for professional development, utilizes an effective evaluation system and involves staff in the development and implementation process. **Wherever training and development occurs, the overarching purpose will be to increase student achievement.** Success of the model depends on diligent coordinating, tracking and evaluating of all training and development to measure its impact on student achievement.

Teachers will complete 54 hours of pre-service training and 40 hours of training during the school year. All teaching staff will be surveyed to identify instructional strengths and weaknesses. Upon completion of the survey, a yearlong professional development calendar will be completed using JFF consultants and school-based teachers to provide training.

Prior to beginning the school year, all staff will be provided with 54 hours of pre-service professional development, using the PD calendar displayed on the following page as a guide. These topics are specifically chosen to assimilate staff into Excel's single school culture model.

The counseling program is preventative and developmental in nature and design, with its emphasis on academic success for every student, not simply those students who are motivated, supported and ready to learn. To achieve a quality developmental counseling program, campus clerical staff must support counselors so that counselors spend their time providing direct services to students including individual academic planning and counseling for students who are tardy or absent or who have behavior issues. The other key area of responsibility for counselors is data analysis: disaggregated data, aptitude, and grade point averages in relationship to achievement. As part of the induction, counselors will be assigned to work with community-based organizations that support student and family counseling and their professional development at Excel Academy will reflect this.

Pre-Service Professional Development Calendar

Week 1 = 30 hours

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Introductions *Ice Breaker* *Team Relationship Overview*	*Norms Training*	*Jobs For The Future and Excel's Partnership*	*Instructional Strategies* *Educational Expectations*	*CIP/UIP* *Operations Walkthrough*
Lunch	*Lunch*	*Lunch*	*Lunch*	*Lunch*
Team Building *Norms* *Force-field*	*Reading Groups/ Diamond/ Townhouse*	*The Rounds Model*	*CIP/UIP*	*Classroom Set-up*

Week 2 = 24 hours

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Optional Classroom Set-up	*DPS Procedures*	*Norms* *Student and Staff Expectations*	*DPS Procedures*	*Suicide Training* *Case Planning Guide*
Lunch	*Lunch*	*Lunch*	*Lunch*	*Lunch*
Optional Classroom Set-up	*Handbooks* *Grade books* *IC*	*Lesson Plans* *Syllabus Overview*	*Handbooks* *Grade books* *IC*	*Team Building* *WIN*

During the school year, JFF and Excel provide professional development that is designed to enhance each teacher's instructional effectiveness so that they may meet the specific learning needs of their students. All professional development is based on sound educational research and promising practices and focuses on the following specific goals:

- Increasing the educator's content knowledge in the area of the educator's certification or assignment
- Raising the skill level of all educator's teaching skills based on research on effective practice, with attention given to interventions for struggling students
- Providing educators with a variety of classroom-based assessment skills and additional skills needed to analyze and use data in instructional decision-making
- Empowering educators to work effectively with parents and community partners

Some examples of professional development topics include

- Curriculum development and alignment
- Differentiated instruction
- Normative culture
- Lesson planning and instructional resources
- Instructional delivery, methods, and models
- Accelerated learning and computer-based instruction
- Effective teaching techniques for at-risk student populations
- Accountability and contract performance measures
- Laws impacting special populations
- Federal, state, and local education requirements
- Record keeping, reporting and documentation
- School safety and security
- Behavioral management and classroom management
- Assessment preparation, administration and evaluation
- Parental and community involvement
- Service learning and community-based projects
- JFF Training – Common Instructional Framework and Rounds Model

Hiring

Excel will recruit, hire and retain staff to fulfill the staffing needs of Excel Academy. All staff will adhere to Colorado State Board of Education requirements and all teachers who teach core content classes will meet the Highly Qualified requirements of NCLB by holding a Colorado teaching license and demonstrating subject matter competency. Excel will post for positions internally and externally beginning 6-9 months from the campus opening date. External employment opportunities will be posted on the state website, the Colorado Alliance of School Executives website (CASE) and the Colorado Board of Education Services (BOCES) job opportunities websites. We will attend the Colorado Association of School Personnel Administrators (CASPA) Denver-Metro Educators Job Fair in March 2013 to recruit qualified staff. With these strategies, Excel will generate a candidate pool and will begin interviews rounds. Selected staff will have, at minimum, two interview rounds with school leaders. New hires will be oriented to Excel policies, procedures, adhere to Colorado state requirements, and comply with all terms and conditions set forth in this proposal.

Excel Academy will employ all DPS teachers who are either new to the district or who have not attained district-recognized status as a non-probationary teacher under an annual contract, which will also mean that they will not be managed as either a probationary or non-probationary teacher. Excel Academy recognizes the value of having experienced and highly-qualified teachers from within DPS join the school and so will honor the non-probationary status of DPS

teachers who enter the school with this status and will have their status managed by the school consistent with existing district policies and procedures.

Innovation: Evidence of Community Support

Historical Connections to Parents

Excel aggressively seeks the involvement of parents and guardians and views them as full partners with us in support of their child's educational program. We underscore our commitment to parents in our Campus Improvement Planning (CIP) process, requiring each campus to include goals and strategies to gauge levels of parental involvement. In working with DPS, Excel will use results from parent surveys as feedback for data analysis, which will serve as a basis to measure and improve program quality. Traditional strategies used by Excel to support parental engagement include the following:

- Conducting periodic parent outreach nights
- Requiring input from parents when developing their child's academic, behavior, and transition plans
- Issuing monthly progress reports for parents to review and sign
- Providing multiple avenues for parents to meet with staff to discuss student progress
- Facilitating parental conferences in lieu of suspensions[8] to create a team approach when addressing inappropriate student behavior.
- Inviting parents/guardians to participate in a variety of school-sponsored events throughout the school year, including college and career awareness week, student talent shows, and student award banquets
- Contacting parents of absent students every day to make sure they know when their child is absent
- Involving parents of special education and ELL students in every step of the IEP and ESOL process
- Linking parents to Excel's consortium of care-giving organizations to assist in solving significant problems or crises faced in their daily lives

Historical Connections to the Community

Excel strongly believes in the importance of linking our programs to community-based, public and private organizations (e.g. local businesses) that are strategically positioned and motivated to serve our students and, by doing so, add value to our overall program. Community partnerships are critical in their importance to Excel's model because they support our students in multiple ways to address their personal barriers to success. Historically Excel has focused on partnerships that support students and their families in the following ways.

- Partnerships that provide services for pregnant students and students who are or will be parents
- Partnerships for students in need of social-emotional counseling and behavioral health services
- Partnerships for students needing mentorships and financial support
- Partnerships for students needing career counseling and postsecondary linkages
- Partnerships for students needing emergency and crisis intervention and placement services
- Partnerships for students needing drug and alcohol intervention programs
- Partnerships for students needing health services and support

[8] Excel has a zero suspension policy.

- Partnerships for students needing part time employment and summer job placement

Community and Parent Engagement Strategy Current and Ongoing
Excel takes great pride in our long-standing success with parent and community involvement, support, and connections to our programs. We have been encouraged with the level of support received for our Intensive Pathways program in Southwest Denver. Upon notification of the award, Excel immediately began to initiate intensive efforts, including those outlined in the table below, as we prepare the program for the 2013-2014 school year.

Planned Parent and Community Engagement Activities

ACTIVITY	AUDIENCE	PURPOSE
Connect with DPS high schools and keep them updated on Excel Academy – Denver progress	High School Principals and Counselors	Communicate future options for at-risk students, gain support for referrals, outreach to students and parents
Hold information sessions at local community resource centers. Initiate and sustain direct contact with families in community	Parents, Students	Communicate future option for students; gain commitment for enrollment
Conduct meetings with local colleges, technical schools	Higher Education Partners	Promote recruitment of teachers and explore post-secondary credit opportunities for students
Conduct meetings and presentations	DPS Intensive Pathways Office	Communicate how best we can serve the targeted student population
Conduct meetings and presentations to political leaders	Political Leaders (i.e.: Mayor's Office, City Council, Governor's Office)	Gain support for Excel Academy- Denver and the outreach to the community's most at risk students
Conduct meetings with agencies who serve our target student population	Employees of community and government agencies and organizations (i.e. CYC, Goodwill, United Way, WIC)	Student support services and referrals
Conduct meetings with local businesses	Business Community	Internships for students, outreach to parents; mentorships

ACTIVITY	AUDIENCE	PURPOSE
Conduct meetings with local religious leaders	Faith-Based Organizations	Outreach to parents and guardians

Campus-based accountability relative to contractual accountability metrics is the central focus of Excel's continuous program improvement process, and is incorporated in the program's strategic campus improvement plan (CIP/UIP). Excel implements continuous improvement using a CIP/UIP developed each year by the entire campus staff prior to the beginning of a new school year, and are framed around the following process:

1. Setting measurable objectives for the upcoming school year based on a review of the previous year's data (or for the first year, baseline data based on student history)
2. Articulating the strategies that will be used to meet those objectives
3. Assigning timelines and accountability for who is responsible for each strategy/task
4. Monitoring and trending the data, and adjusting strategies throughout the year to ensure that objectives are met or exceeded at the end of the school year

Appendix A: Letters of Support from the Community

May 24, 2013
Denver Public Schools
Board of Education
900 Grant
Denver, CO 80204

To Board of Education

I am writing this letter of support of the innovation plan for Excel Academy, as they work to open a new high school in the Southwest Denver area. This school would serve “at-risk” students. The Excel Learning method teaches character education, provides social emotional support, emphasizes collaborative learning to students who have otherwise have not been successful in traditional schools.

Often, we as educators, assume our students are entering our schools with social emotional tools that will enable them to be successful in school and in life. This has not been the case for many of our students. The reality is that many children are not equipped with the social emotional and or character qualities to maximize their academic potential. With work schedules and after school activities, sometimes the time spent with a teacher is longer during the weekdays than the time spent with a parent, therefore the importance of using hours to teach appropriate social emotional learning increases in value.

I believe this is a layer of support that often goes unnoticed by school districts. I am urging the Denver Public Schools Board of Education to open this school in the Southwest Denver area and enable the expertise of Excel Academy to engage our students that many have forgotten about.

Classrooms that are intentionally engaged in discussions and activities about a person’s character, not only positively affect a student’s life but the entire school begins to have a more positive atmosphere. Students feel more connected with each other, and teacher-student relationships are strengthened. This not only has benefits socially and personally for students, but it also increases student achievement.

As an educator and active member of the Denver community I am writing this letter of support for Excel. In challenging and inspiring students to be positive forces in their society, you as Board of Education of the Denver Public Schools are changing the course of the next generation.

Gabriel Trujillo
Community Member, Educator

720-338-5762
gabrieltrujillo.2527@gmail.com

May 9, 2013

To whom it may:

I am looking forward to joining the team at EXCEL Academy. I am anticipating the many experiences that I will encounter while working at an innovation school. It will be a privilege to help students transition into a new school and build relationships with their families and the community. This opportunity will be a challenge that I am looking forward to at this point in my career.

Sincerely,

Adrienne Atencio

[Special Education teacher who has been hired to the school]

May 10, 2013

To whom it may concern

Per phone conversation with Mrs. Guadalupe Dimas, here is the translated statement

She states that she is looking forward to sending her son Dimas to Excel Academy for the 2013-2014 school year. She is happy to know that her son will be getting the educational support from the teachers and staff to help him be successful and graduate. Mrs. Valenzuela also states that she is secure in knowing that she will be involved with her sons successes and will be kept informed of his behavior on a regular basis.

Y. Monica Castillo
[Translato]

May 9, 2013

To whom it might concern,

Excel Academy sounds like a terrific and exciting idea. It's not your traditional high school setting. Being able to finish high school sooner than expected and catching up on some classes I've missed along the way is thrilling. This will be a new beginning for me. I hope to get the best out of it, and since I am planning on attending college I feel like finishing high school strong will be the ideal situation.

Carlos Contreras-Lopez
[Student]

To Whom It May Concern:

I work at Harvey Park Recreation Center and constantly dealing with at-risk youth from Southwest Denver. I am always looking for a program that can cater more to these individuals. What I constantly hear is that schools are too big and the students get lost or forgotten. I see that there are schools that are opening up but they are charter or specialty schools that are not geared to the troubled students.

I understand that Excel Academy will open in the fall. I am excited that we are getting a school that will have a smaller setting, so these kids will feel that they are actually getting listened to? I would like to see a setting where they will feel comfortable talking and even feel special. A place where there is more of a one- on-one feel and the teachers actually care and are willing and able to spend time with individuals. This is a great opportunity for the community.

I would be willing to be on a committee or work together to achieve this goal. I know it is a lot to ask but we are losing a lot of these kids and I would like to cut that number down.

Thanks For your time

Daniel Bujanda

Harvey Park

Dear School Board Members:

I am writing this letter in support of Excel Schools Excel Academy - Denver. Their interest in starting a school to meet the needs of the community in the Southwest region of Denver Public Schools is critically important to the students living in this area of Denver. As a mother of a former Denver Public School student, community member living within the DPS community, former Parent/Community Involvement Liaison and current DPS School Principal, I have seen some of our neighborhoods struggle for years to achieve the needed results for students and the community. I believe that Excel Academy can catalyze and be a partner in positive change in this community. Excel's track record of getting students on schedule for graduation and up to grade level and the uniqueness of the model fits the needs of 9th -12th graders who are slightly or significantly off-track to a full high school diploma. In addition, Excel Academy and their focus on post-secondary readiness are critical to the success of the students in the Southwest region becoming economically self-sufficient as adults.

Along with some of my DPS peers, I had the opportunity to visit other Excel schools in both Lancaster and Philadelphia Pennsylvania. While on our visit; I observed a well-structured school environment on all campuses. Staff who were passionate, committed professionals, rendering a very high level of quality academic services and care to the students they serve. This group is result oriented and their students, whose work and academic results can be found throughout the school, are fixated on life beyond high school. College and successful careers is no longer something that these young people think will never happen; because of Excel and their care and expectations for students, these scholars know, college and career is in their future and they are working hard towards that end.

For these reasons I recommend that the Denver Public Schools Board of Education consider approving Excel School's Excel Academy performance school application and work in partnership with them to open a school in our community for the Fall 2013. By doing this, you make it possible for students in DPS to have another quality high school option to propel them toward success.

Sincerely,

Angela Robertson, Principal
P.U.S.H. Academy at Montbello Campus

Statement Regarding Evidence of Support

The proposed innovation school is a new school, and at the time of innovation plan submission, had not fully staffed its teaching positions. All teachers offered employment prior to the time of plan submission were notified of the school's innovation plan prior to their signing of an employment contract. Additionally, all of these teachers provided a letter in support of the innovation plan with a recognition that they will be allowed to vote on the proposed waivers from the DCTA collective bargaining agreement by means of a secret ballot prior to the start of the school year.

All employees hired after submission of the innovation plan will have access to the innovation school's plan prior to being hired. Prior to being hired and upon acceptance of employment at the school, each employee shall be informed of the school's innovation plan and the waivers included in the plan. Teachers, will also be informed that they will be allowed to vote on the proposed waivers from the DCTA collective bargaining agreement by means of a private ballot prior to the start of the school year.

As a new school, the school also does not have a school accountability committee ("SAC"). Included in this plan is a letter submitted on behalf of the Excel Academy Advisory Group, which is a group of teachers, administrators, community members, and prospective parents which is providing advisory support to the school during its start-up phase. Once established, the permanent Excel Advisory Group (school name for the SAC), will be asked to review the school's innovation plan and vote its support for the plan.

Finally, all school administrators have provided letters of support for the innovation plan. These letters are included.

Cynthia Navarro
Principal

Appendix B: Job Descriptions for All Leadership Team Members

Job Descriptions for All Leadership Team Members

EXCEL

Job Description

Position:	**Executive Director**	**Department:**	**Operations**
Supervisor:	**Assistant VP of Operations**	**FLSA Status:**	**Exempt**

Job Purpose

The Executive Director is responsible for providing a high-quality, safe learning environment for all students enrolled in the school. The Executive Director is responsible for providing oversight to all school departments-serving as a co-leader with the campus principal, and for ensuring that the directors of each respective department work as a cohesive team. The Executive Director is responsible for achieving all the contract standards outlined in the service agreement with the local school district. The Executive Director is responsible for providing sound fiscal and facility management for the program. The Executive Director is ultimately responsible for census, budget, staffing, and employee relations issues.

Essential Functions

1. Understands and implements Excel's philosophy, policy and procedures relating to conduct, discipline, educational and attendance outcomes for students, staff and parents.
2. Ensures ongoing campus excellence, rigorous program evaluation and consistent quality of finance and administration, communications and systems, recommend timelines and resources needed to achieve the strategic goals.
3. Has working knowledge of current contract. Reviews contract and assures 100% compliance of that contract.
4. Ensures compliance of all school rules, administrative policies, and state, municipal and federal regulatory guidelines.
5. Communicates appropriately to supervisor and sees that supervisor is kept fully informed on the condition of the campus and all important factors influencing it. Reports appropriately to Corporate Risk and Human Resources Department as required.
6. Directs the development, selection, evaluation and implementation of school operational policies, programs and resources. Uses motivational techniques and strategies in the development and continued improvement of the school.
7. Prepares annual budget within Excel guidelines and by assigned deadlines for Corporate and Board approval and ensures school operates with the budget guidelines. Continually reviews expenses and ensures money is being spent to its fullest resource and submits invoices and Amex receipts to Corporate Finance on a weekly basis. Reviews and approves all campuses T/Es and ensures they are submitted to Corporate Accounting within 30 days of the expense.
8. Provides oversight over campus projects and initiatives through well-defined plans including procedures, deadlines and accountability measures.

9. Assists in the development and management of the campus improvement plan; reports progress and areas of concern to the corporate staff and key stakeholders as required; updates campus plans and related budget projections.
10. Supervises assigned staff including documenting their performance, development, training and other issues. Ensures assigned staff is in compliance and performance issues are addressed. Assigns reassigns and reviews work of entire campus staff; continuously works to keep campus fully staffed.
11. Develops and conducts professional development for staff members based on new or deficient performance in CIP/Contract Standard deliverables
12. Attends all required leadership, team and professional meetings and participates in developing strategies for continuous school improvement.
13. Exhibits professional conduct with school colleagues, School District staff, students and their parents in accordance with Excel policies, procedures and work rules.

Position Requirements

- Master's Degree in Education or Related field (or Bachelor's degree and experience that has been achieved and is equivalent to the required education, experience and required knowledge)
- Five years teaching experience
- Three years of progressive supervisory and/or administrative experience
- Experience working with at-risk youth

EXCEL

Job Description

Position:	**Director of Operations**	**Department:**	**Operations**
Supervisor:	**Executive Director**	**FLSA Status:**	**Exempt**

Job Purpose

The Director of Operations is responsible for providing leadership in the administration and management of their assigned campus while providing supervision, direction and guidance to students and staff members. This position is the campus expert on the Excel model and supervises and trains all staff both formally and informally in our model, practices and policies. The Director of Operations is a member of the Leadership Team and works collaboratively with other resource team members to ensure a high-quality program.

Essential Functions

1. Understands and implements Excel's philosophy, policy and procedures relating to conduct, discipline, educational and attendance outcomes for students, staff and parents.
2. Responsible for daily operations including climate, safety and environment for all students, staff and visitors. Reviews absentee issues and any possible student issues prior to start of each school day and reassigns students or staff if necessary.
3. Demonstrates professional leadership qualities while utilizing motivational techniques and strategies in the development of daily school wide programs, operations, climate and safety.
4. Reviews each incident report daily or no later than 24 hours after the incident. Meets with identified staff for additional training or support by end of day or no later than 48 hours after incident. Recommends if an internal investigation is necessary to Executive Director. Identifies policy violations or staff trends and immediately implements disciplinary actions, training or other interventions.
5. Identifies and ensures all required stakeholders (parents, school districts, etc.) are contacted after an incident within identified time frame. Recognizes student trends and triggers and works with team and student to reduce incidents.
6. Immediately responds to and oversees any emergent situation on campus. Works with ED to quickly identify plan.
7. Immediately responds to and oversees any staff or student injuries. Quickly assesses situation and contacts emergency personal if necessary. If emergency medical treatment is not necessary, ensures first aid or follow up is provided. Follows up with incident report process and workers compensation reporting if necessary and by end of day. Reviews all staff injuries to ensure employee was acting in course and scope of job when injury occurred.
8. Responsible for understanding and maintaining compliance of stakeholder's contract standards. This includes reading and understanding current contracts, training assigned staff and notifying ED of any possible infractions.
9. Supervises assigned staff including documenting their performance, development, training and other issues. Ensures all assigned staff is in compliance with training, credentialing and performance issues are being addressed.
10. Possesses program and model knowledge of Excel policies and systems and manages and trains other staff effectively.

11. Supports professional growth of all faculty, staff and managers. Identifies areas of training and improvement for individual and overall staff and works with Leadership Team to make sure mandatory and identified training as well as trainings in developments in related fields are provided.
12. Oversees building maintenance, facility operations and transportation issues.
13. Exhibits professional conduct with school colleagues, students and their parents in accordance with Excel policies, procedures and work rules.
14. Performs other duties as assigned and to be determined based upon Excel needs and business requirements.

Position Requirements

- Master's Degree in Education or related field (or Bachelor's degree and experience that has been achieved and is equivalent to the required education, experience and required knowledge)
- Three years teaching experience or experience working in a school setting
- Two years of progressive supervisory and/or administrative experience
- Experience working with at-risk youth

EXCEL

Job Description

Position:	**Principal**	**Department:**	**Education**
Supervisor:	**DPS Instructional Superintendent**	**FLSA Status:**	**Exempt**

Job Purpose

The principal is the overall academic leader of the campus and responsible for promoting growth in students' learning by setting clear goals for the academic program, allocating resources to instruction, managing the curriculum, monitoring lesson plans and evaluating teachers. The principal supervises all teachers and other instruction staff. The principal ensures compliance with all contract standards which specifically describe deliverables for student academic growth as outlined in the service agreement with the District by developing and monitoring campus improvement planning activities.

Essential Functions

1. Understands and implements Excel's philosophy, policy and procedures relating to conduct, discipline, educational and attendance outcomes for students and staff.
2. Complies with all federal and state guidelines for students receiving special services, including special education, bilingual education, and homelessness.
3. Directs the development, selection, evaluation and implementation of instructional programs and educational materials.
4. Provides direction and leadership in the assessment and identification of the instructional curriculum goals and objectives, while establishing a strategy to address academic needs of all students.
5. Possesses solid curriculum knowledge with an understanding of school district and state educational guidelines. Fully understands and complies with federal and state educational guidelines.
6. Continually evaluates and refines methods of instruction in accordance with the educational goals and objectives of Excel and student needs.
7. Communicates with outside agencies such as parents, school districts, other agencies as directed and as needed.
8. Interprets and effectively disseminates instructional and education trends and other pertinent data to staff, parents and community groups while assisting in the support and development of policies and procedures.
9. Participates in the selection process of new employees and is responsible for maintaining adequate educational staff and ensuring that Excel is meeting staffing requirements as it relates to certification and specified content area.
10. Understands the Excel model and works with behavioral staff to promote a team environment that focuses both on educational success and behavioral management.

11. Evaluates the teachers' performance on a timely basis including documented observations, informal feedback and utilizing the formalized performance management system that addresses individual achievements and identifies areas of development.
12. Supervises assigned staff including documenting their performance, development, training and other issues. Ensures all assigned staff is in compliance with training, credentialing and performance issues are being addressed.
13. Possesses knowledge of the JFF model of instruction and effectively implements in our academic program.
14. Possesses knowledge about the Rounds Model and effectively implements to ensure that teachers receive constructive feedback from others about teaching and learning in their classrooms.
15. Responsible for understanding and maintaining compliance of stakeholder's contract standards. This includes reading and understanding the current contract as it applies to educational services, training assigned staff and notifying Executive Director of any possible infractions.
16. Possesses knowledge about the principles of student assessment, assessment procedures with emphasis on alternative assessment methods and assessments that aim to improve and demonstrate student learning.
17. Performs other duties as assigned and to be determined based upon Excel needs and business requirements.

Position Requirements

- Master's Degree in Education
- Current Principal Certification
- Three years teaching experience
- Two years of progressive supervisory and or administrative experience
- Experience working with at-risk youth preferred

EXCEL

Job Description

Position:	**Special Populations Director**	**Department:**	**Special Education**
Supervisor:	**Executive Director**	**FLSA Status:**	**Exempt**

Job Purpose

The Special Populations Director is responsible for implementing and maintaining the ESL and special education programs and services in compliance with all District, State, and Federal laws, rules, and policies, and with Excel's objectives; provides written support and/or conveys information; serving as a resource to parents, school personnel and the local district; and maintains adequate staffing to ensure objectives of programs and services are achieved.

Essential Functions

1. Understands and implements Excel's philosophy, policy and procedures relating to conduct, discipline, educational and attendance outcomes for students, staff and parents.
2. Directs the development, selection, evaluation and implementation of ESL and special educational programs and educational materials.
3. Provides direction and leadership in the assessment and identification of the curriculum goals and objectives, while establishing a strategy to address specific academic needs of students with disabilities and ELL students.
4. Possesses solid curriculum knowledge and understands school district, federal and state educational requirements and guidelines and performs on-going evaluations and refines methods of instruction in accordance with the educational goals and objectives of Excel.
5. Supervises assigned staff and documents their performance, development, training and other issues. Ensures assigned staff is in compliance and performance issues are addressed.
6. Works closely with teachers and staff members of the local school district to facilitate I.E.P. meetings and processes for the purpose of implementing and maintaining special education programs and services of Excel.
7. Coordinates with outside agencies to provide services to students and staff for the purpose of offering appropriate services.
8. Advises Director regarding special education, ELL, and other assigned matters.
9. Prepares documentation and reports data to Excel and to the District for the purpose of providing written support, conveying information and complying with Federal and State regulations.
10. Ensures compliance in the areas of upholding and enforcing school rules, administrative policies, and state, municipal and federal regulatory guidelines.
11. Attends all required leadership, team and professional meetings and participates in the development of strategies for continuous school improvement.
12. Exhibits professional conduct with school colleagues, students and their parents in accordance with Excel policies, procedures and work rules.

13. Performs other duties as assigned and to be determined based upon Excel needs and business requirements.

Position Requirements

- Master's Degree in special education (or Bachelor's Degree with relevant experience)
- Current instructional certificate in Cognitive, Behavior or Physical/Health Disabilities
- Three years teaching or working in a school setting
- Experience working with ELL populations preferred
- Three years management experience preferably in juvenile justice or mental health setting
- Experience working with at-risk youth preferred

EXCEL

Job Description

Position:	**Director of Student Services**	**Department:**	**Student Services**
Supervisor:	**Executive Director**	**FLSA Status:**	**Exempt**

Job Purpose

The Student Services Director is responsible for utilizing leadership, advocacy, and collaboration skills to promote student success; provide preventive services, and respond to identified student needs by implementing a comprehensive school counseling program that addresses academic, career and personal/social development for all students in accordance with the goals and objectives of Excel. The Student Services Director serves as the principal campus liaison for all community outreach and parental engagement activities and, in addition, is responsible for leveraging appropriate community and government-based services that address student barriers to academic achievement.

Essential Functions

1. Understands and implements Excel's philosophy, policy and procedures relating to conduct, discipline, educational and attendance outcomes for students, staff and parents.
2. Directs the development, selection, evaluation and implementation of school counseling, admission, attendance programs, and student and parent support programs. Uses motivational techniques and strategies in the development and continued improvement of a school wide counseling, admissions attendance, and student and parent support program.
3. Provides direction and leadership in the assessment and identification of the curriculum goals and objectives, while establishing a strategy to address specific academic, career and behavioral needs of all students.
4. Possesses program knowledge and understands the school district code of conduct procedures, state statutes and comprehensive school counseling plan guidelines.
5. Offers ongoing evaluation and refinement of behavioral intervention methods in accordance with the operational goals and objections of Excel.
6. Supervises assigned staff including documenting their performance, development, training and other issues. Ensures assigned staff is in compliance and performance issues are addressed.
7. Interprets and effectively disseminates school counseling trends and other pertinent data to staff, parents and community groups while assisting in the support and development of policies and procedures.
8. Implements an effective referral and follow up process.
9. Organizes and maintains a calendar and sufficient documentation of activities and services provided to all students.
10. Ensures compliance in the areas of upholding and enforcing school rules, administrative policies, and state, municipal and federal regulatory guidelines.
11. Attends all required leadership, team and professional meetings and participates in developing strategies for continuous school improvement.

12. Exhibits professional conduct with school colleagues, students and their parents in accordance with Excel, procedures and work rules.
13. Performs other duties as assigned and to be determined based upon Excel needs and business requirements.

Position Requirements

- Master's Degree in Education, Social Work or related field (or Bachelor's degree and experience that has been achieved and is equivalent to the required education, experience and required knowledge)
- Three years management experience providing student support services
- Experience working in a school setting preferred
- Experience working with at-risk youth preferred

EXCEL

Job Description

Position:	**Academic Coordinator**	**Department:**	**Education**
Supervisor:	**Executive Director**	**FLSA Status:**	**Exempt**

Job Purpose

The Academic Coordinator is responsible for organizing the master schedule, and providing roster updates to teachers and team leaders and maintaining the official rosters and student records. The Academic Coordinator also visits classrooms; offers instructional coaching and model lessons for teachers; facilitates common planning time; and effectively implements the Rounds Model for instructional coaching. Additionally this position is responsible for successful completion of all required standardized testing, monitoring grade books and acting as a liaison between Excel and outside agencies, families and community partners.

Essential Functions

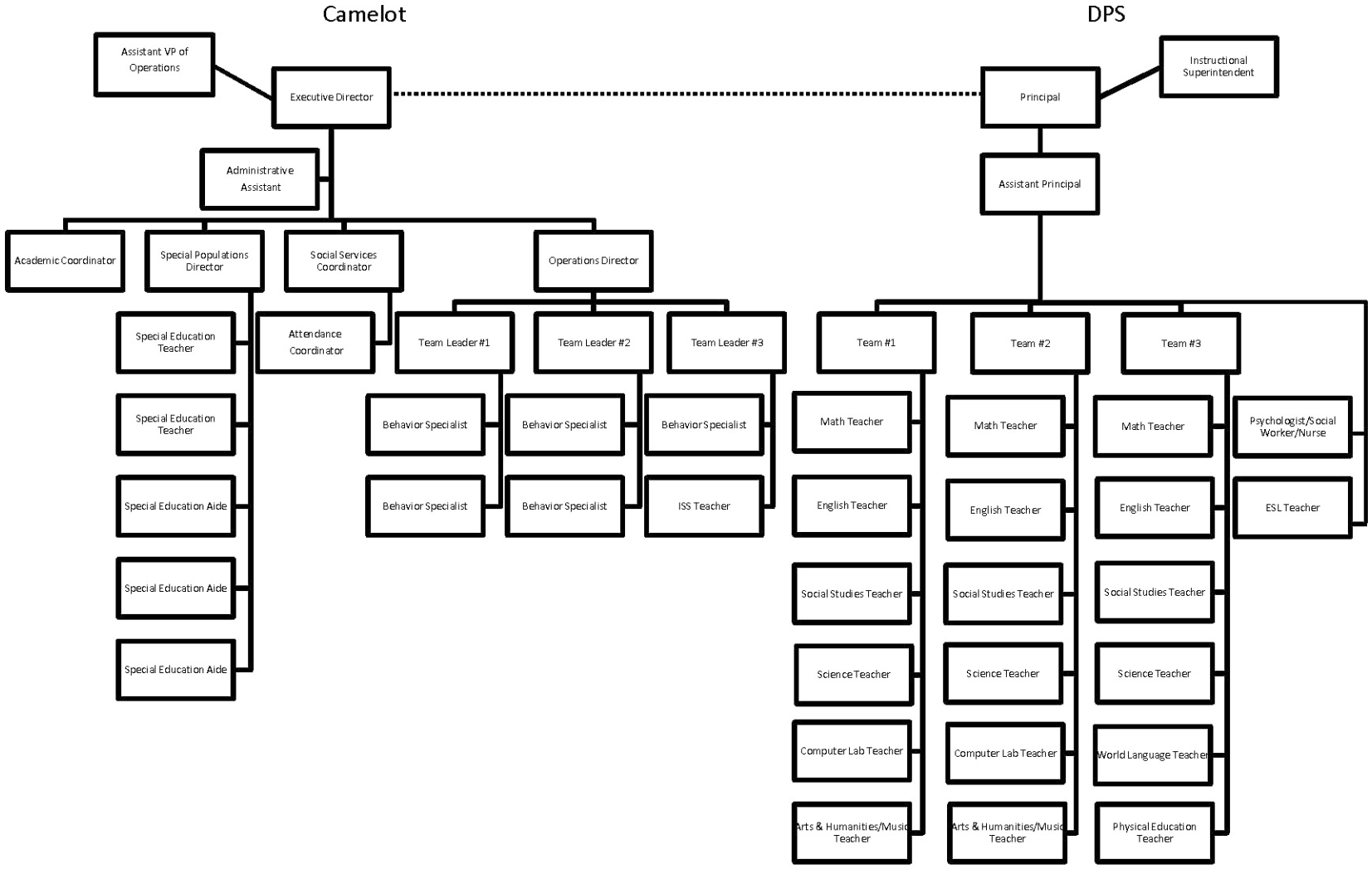
1. Understands and implements Excel's philosophy, policy and procedures relating to conduct, discipline, educational and attendance outcomes for students and staff.
2. Oversees implementation by all instructional staff including reviewing lesson plans and providing formal and informal feedback. Monitors instructional staff daily to provide coaching, accolades, different academic approaches.
3. Oversees the administration of all standardized assessments and testing on or before deadline, interprets test data and develops instruction based on results.
4. Organizes updates and maintains the master schedule and student roster. Distribute changes and updates as needed with immediacy to teachers, team leaders and leadership team.
5. Communicates with outside agencies such as parents, school districts, other agencies as directed, and as needed.
6. Understands the Excel Model and works with behavioral staff to promote a team environment that focuses both on educational success and behavioral management.
7. Possess knowledge of the JFF model or instruction and effectively implements our academic program.
8. Verifies students are meeting all required related services designated in their IEPs.
9. Possesses knowledge about the Rounds Model and effectively implement as part of Teacher's feedback and growth.
10. Identifies areas of training and develops schedules and implements instructional professional development including mandatory trainings, and identified trainings in educational development.
11. Trains all staff on the instructional strategies and facilitates the Rounds Model.
12. Provides support, professional development, training, and/or mentoring to new or struggling teachers**.**

13. Attends all required leadership, team and professional meetings, and participates in the development of strategies for continuous school improvement.
14. Exhibits professional conduct with school colleagues, students and their parents in accordance with Excel policies, procedures and work rules.
15. Performs other duties as assigned and to be determined based upon Excel needs and business requirements.

Position Requirements

- Bachelor's Degree in Education, Master's Degree Preferred
- Current instructional certification
- Three years of teaching experience
- Experience working with at-risk youth preferred

Excel Academy Organizational Chart
For Full Capacity at 375 students



April 2013

Appendix D: Waiver Requests for Excel School Innovation

Table I –Policy Waivers Called for by the Innovation Plan

DPS Board Policy	Description	Waiver Request
BDFH	**School Governance, Collaborative School Committees**	The school will adhere to policy BDFH with the exception being: the Quality Management Team will provide strategic direction in support of the school by developing a locally created "school's improvement plan" (SIP). This is separate from the improvement plans called for in statute and district policy. To address the policy requirements, an Excel Advisory Council will be established with representation from students, parents, community, faculty, administrators and classified staff to enhance student achievement and school climate by overseeing development of the school UIP.
Existing Policy	There shall be at each school a collaborative school committee with representation from parents, community, faculty, administrators and classified staff. Purposes and Scope: The purposes and scope of a collaborative school committee shall be: • to enhance student achievement and school climate by engaging the school community in collaborative efforts supporting the school and District's goals. • to provide strategic direction in support of the school's mission and vision as stated in the School Improvement Plan (SIP). The SIP, with the school's program design, should serve as the strategic plan for the school. • to be in compliance with state and federal law, regulations of the Colorado Department of Education, applicable U.S. District Court orders, the District Affirmative Action plan, the DPS/DCTA Agreement, other contracts and District mandates. Meetings of a collaborative school committee will be open to the public. Notice of these meetings will be posted in appropriate public places. A copy of the agenda will be publicly posted and made available one working day before the meeting and the minutes from the meeting will also be publicly posted and made available. The collaborative school committee will: • work collaboratively with the school community that includes the building principal, teachers, staff, students, parents, civic and business leaders, service and neighborhood representatives, and other community members; • focus on the CIP as its primary responsibility at the school;	

DPS Board Policy	Description	**Waiver Request**
	• use Multiple Measures and align resources to support the SIP and the school's program design; • provide guidance, evaluation and approval for the SIP; • provide guidance, evaluation, and approval for the annual school budget to insure its alignment with the SIP and the school's program design; • act as the School Improvement and Accountability Council (SIAC) for the building; • establish relationships with parents, community members, civic, service and neighborhood organizations to increase involvement in the school and provide a forum for community input; • provide guidance, evaluation, and approval for the use of the staffing allocations provided by the District as it relates to the SIP, school budget, and school program design, including consultation regarding adjustments that may be made due to pupil-count issues; • participate in the principal-selection process by interviewing candidates and recommending candidates to the superintendent; • participate in the principal's annual evaluation by giving input on the principal's involvement in and support of the collaborative committee process; • review, and when appropriate, approve discipline and safety procedures; • review, and when appropriate, revise the school calendar and/or schedule; • make recommendations regarding any changes to the school design to the District Board of Education through the building principal. The collaborative school committee will not: participate in the day-to-day operations of the school; be involved in issues relating to individuals (staff, students, or parents) within the school; be involved in personnel issues (School Personnel Committee will stand alone in the current DPS/DCTA contract).	
Proposed Replacement Policy	Each year, prior to the start of a school year in August, Excel devotes a significant amount of professional development time toward reviewing program outcomes from the previous year and clarifying baseline measures for each program. From this analysis of the data, campus leadership teams, working with campus staff, set performance benchmarks for the upcoming school year. Strategies, responsibilities, and timelines for each objective complete the Campus Improvement Plan (CIP), which is each campus's strategic operational plan for the school year. Responsibility for the SIP lies with the Quality Management Team (QMT) comprised of the school leadership (principal, executive director, director of special populations, director of operations, director of special services, academic coordinators and team leaders) which meets on campus monthly to monitor and evaluate progress on the indicators. Separate from the locally developed CIP, the school principal, in	

DPS Board Policy	Description	Waiver Request
	consultation with the school's instructional superintendent, will be responsible for the development of the school's Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) as specified by Colorado Statutes. Although separate, the CIP and the UIP should be developed in collaboration so that ideas and strategies presented in both documents are consistent. Excel will comply with the intent of policy BDFH in the following manner: The school will establish a school accountability committee called the Excel Advisory Council (EAC). The EAC will provide valuable input to the function of the QMT. This Council will consist of at least seven members as follows: (I) The principal of the school or the principal's designee; (II) At least one teacher who provides instruction at the school; (III) At least three parents or legal guardians of students enrolled in the school; (IV) At least one adult member of an organization of parents, teachers, and students recognized by the school; and (V) At least one person from the community (VI) At least three students from student government of the School. If the DPS Board chooses to increase the number of persons on a school accountability committee, Excel will ensure that the number of parents and students on the EAC exceeds the number of representatives from the group with the next highest representation. A person may not be selected to fill more than one of the member positions identified above in a single term. If the board determines that the members of a school accountability committee should be appointed, the appointing authority shall, to the extent practicable, appoint persons to serve on the EAC who reflect the student populations that are significantly represented within Excel. Members of the EAC shall annually select from among the parent representatives elected to the committee a member to serve as chair or co-chair of the committee. (3) If a vacancy arises, the remaining members of the EAC shall fill the vacancy by majority action. If, after making good-faith efforts, a principal or an organization of parents, teachers, and students is unable to find a sufficient number of persons who are willing to serve on the Excel Advisory Council, the principal, with advice from the organization of parents, teachers, and students, may establish an alternative membership plan for the EAC, which plan shall reflect the membership specified in paragraph (a) of subsection (1) of this section as much as practicable. The Excel Advisory Council will have the following powers and duties: (a) To recommend to the Executive Director and Principal of its school priorities for spending school moneys. The Executive Director shall	

DPS Board Policy	Description	Waiver Request
	consider the EAC's recommendations and take them into account in formulating budget requests for presentation to the DPS school board. The Executive Director will send a copy of its recommended spending priorities to the Excel Advisory Council for their review and consent. (b) To advise the principal concerning the preparation of a school's Unified Improvement Plan or UIP), and to submit recommendations to the principal, and superintendent, concerning the contents of the performance or improvement plan; (c) To advise the local school board concerning the preparation of a school priority improvement or turnaround plan, if either is required pursuant to section 22-11-210, and to submit recommendations to the local school board or the institute concerning the contents of the plan; (d) To meet at least quarterly in a joint meeting of the Quality Management Team to discuss whether school leadership, personnel, and infrastructure are advancing or impeding implementation of the public school's performance, improvement, priority improvement, or turnaround plan, whichever is applicable, or other progress pertinent to the public school's accreditation contract with the local school board or the institute; (e) To provide input and recommendations on an advisory basis to district accountability committees and district administration concerning: (I) Principal development plans for their principal pursuant to section 22-9-106; and (II) Principal evaluations conducted pursuant to section 22-9-106.	
CFBA	General School Administration, Evaluation of Evaluators (pertaining to superintendents and those responsible for evaluations of professional staff).	The School requests a waiver from policy CFBA. The school principal is responsible for the evaluation of all DPS teachers and will be evaluated by an instructional superintendent. Camelot staff will be evaluated by Camelot-based supervisors (who will be exempt from the requirements of this policy) with feedback provided by the school principal.
Existing Policy	All persons who evaluate professional staff members shall possess an administrative certificate issued by the Colorado Department of Education and shall have received education and training in evaluation skills approved by the department. Issuance or renewal of an administrative certificate requires that the applicant has received such approved education and training in evaluation skills. Evaluation instruments for all professional staff administrators shall include a section dealing with their evaluation skills. The Superintendent or his/her designee shall review all evaluations done by professional staff administrators and when necessary shall discuss with them procedure and form. The Superintendent's evaluation skills shall be part of his evaluation by	

DPS Board Policy	Description	Waiver Request
	the Board of Education. As part of its ongoing review, the District Personnel Performance Evaluation Council shall seek evidence that evaluators are implementing the process in a fair, professional and credible manner and shall report its finding and recommendations to the Board of Education.	
Proposed Replacement	The campus principal will manage formal evaluation of all DPS teachers and will report to the superintendent or his/her designee (instructional superintendent). The principal will provide feedback on the performance of Camelot employees, but will not be their formal evaluator. The principal's qualifications, certification and experience are those required of DPS principals. The executive director is usually reassigned from other schools within the Excel system and may hold administrative certifications from other states but most certainly has experience in administration and school supervisory roles with at-risk students.	
GBEBA	Personnel, Staff dress, accessories, and grooming for Certificated Staff and Non-teaching Staff	The School adheres to policies GBEBA, GBEBA-R and GBEBB with the exception being: those days designated by the principal as being "dress-down" days or "theme" days.
GCCAF	Personnel, Instructional staff sabbaticals	The School will not allow for staff sabbaticals.
Existing Policy	A sabbatical leave of absence is interpreted as a leave from active duty (an interruption of service) with the Denver Public Schools granted for professional improvement. A sabbatical leave may be granted by the Board of Education upon the recommendation of the superintendent. The employee shall have completed, immediately prior to the leave, at least five consecutive full school years in active service as a regularly appointed contract employee in the Denver Public Schools…Teachers who are granted sabbatical leaves of absence shall not receive credit for teaching service for the semester or year while on leave…A sabbatical leave may be for one year, one semester or a portion thereof…An employee on sabbatical leave shall be paid at one-half of his annual salary rate. Upon return, the employee shall be placed on the appropriate step of the salary schedule as though he had not been on leave…An employee on sabbatical leave may not engage in remunerative work during the school year except for approved fellowship grants…A sabbatical leave may be followed by a regular leave of absence without pay or increments for one additional year. The employee shall agree to return to employment with the Denver Public Schools for one full year in the event of one-half year of absence or less or two full years in the event of a full year leave or more than one semester…Requests for sabbatical leaves shall be received by the	

DPS Board Policy	Description	Waiver Request
	superintendent in writing in such form as may be required by the superintendent no later than November 1 or April 1 preceding the semester.	
Proposed Replacement Policy	The school will not grant or seek approval of sabbaticals for personnel or instructional staff. Considering the smaller learning community of 375 students: having instructional personnel absent for a length of time could have a negative impact on students, the school climate and the school culture.	
GCID	Professional Staff Training, Workshops and Conferences	School will have flexibility to identify and manage professional development opportunities as appropriate
Policy language/summary	Attendance by school personnel at professional meetings shall be justified by meaningful guidelines or rationale for such attendance. Such guidelines or rationale may differ by department but shall be well-defined and understood by appropriate personnel. An understanding of reasonable expenses should be developed prior to travel. The budgetary allocation of departmental travel accounts shall not be construed as automatic approval for expenditure. Travel outside the continental United States shall be considered only as an exception.	
School's Replacement Policy	For purposes of this policy, the "department" capable of establishing guidelines and rationale for attendance of school personnel at professional meetings will be the Excel Advisory Council. This will be important for ensuring teacher PD that is aligned to the needs of the school community. Excel Academy may require staff participation in professional development beyond that of a typical district-run school. Required attendance at professional development trainings will include training before the start of the academic calendar as well as dedicated professional development days when school is cancelled for students, but maintained for staff. The school principal in consultation with the Excel Advisory Council will identify shared professional development events based on the needs of the school. Additionally, as part of the teacher evaluation process, all teachers will work collaboratively with their evaluator to develop a personalized professional development plan that identifies any particular needs related to implementation of the proposed educational model. The professional development opportunities subsequently identified for teachers will be driven from their PD plan. Professional development will be tied directly to the learning needs of the students, and will incorporate support for teachers to develop expertise with teaching classes in an intensive pathways school. The school calendar for teachers will be set in the spring of the preceding academic year and will highlight the additional professional development days. These days will be required participation for classroom teachers and part of their base salary. Professional development instances provided outside of the school's	

DPS Board Policy	Description	Waiver Request
	published staff calendar will either be optional for teachers or teachers will be provided with extra duty pay for participating.	
IC/ICA	Instructional Program, School Year/School Calendar	The School will similarly follow the DPS calendar with the option to change as needed.
Existing Policy	Prior to the end of the school year, the Board of Education shall determine the length of time during which district schools shall be in session during the next school year. The number of days of planned teacher-student instruction and of teacher-student contact shall meet or exceed the requirements of state law. The district calendar for the next school year shall be prepared and presented to the Board for approval in the spring of each year. The Board authorizes the administration in each school building to issue a school calendar based on the district calendar and in accordance with the required number of days (hours) adopted by the Board. All calendars shall include the dates for all staff inservice programs scheduled for the coming school year. The district shall allow public input from parents and teachers prior to scheduling the dates for staff inservice programs. A copy of the calendar shall be provided to all parents/guardians of students enrolled in district schools. Any change in the calendar except for emergency closings or other unforeseen circumstances shall be preceded by adequate and timely notice of no less than 30 days.	
Proposed Replacement Policy	Prior to the end of the school year*, Excel Academy* shall determine the length of time during which *Excel Academy* shall be in session during the next school year. The number of days of planned teacher-student instruction and of teacher-student contact shall meet or exceed the requirements of state law and *the DPS Board-approved district calendar*. *The Excel Academy calendar* shall include the dates for all staff in-service programs scheduled for the coming school year *that are not identified on the DPS Board-approved district calendar*. A copy of the calendar shall be provided to all parents/guardians of students enrolled at Excel Academy*. The calendar will also be published on the school's web page*. Any change in the calendar except for emergency closings or other unforeseen circumstances shall be preceded by adequate and timely notice *to students and parents*.	
IJOA/IJOA-R	Instructional Program, Field Trips	The school will adhere to policies IJOA & IJOA-R with the exception being: the School may also use contracted bus services (other than DPS transportation) for field trips.
IKB	Instructional Program,	The School requests a waiver from

DPS Board Policy	Description	Waiver Request
	Homework	policy IKB.
Existing Policy	Parents should expect their children to have regular homework assignments and should question the lack of such assignments. Elementary school: The amount, length and type of homework at the elementary school level may vary…but the minimum amount assigned shall be as follows: Kindergarten and grade 1- 10-15 minutes, one or two days per week Grade 2- 10-20 minutes, two days per week Grade 3- 15-25 minutes, two days per week Grade 4- 15-30 minutes, two to three days per week Grade 5- 20-30 minutes, three to four days per week Middle school: A minimum of five hours of homework per week High school: The expected minimum amount of homework shall be 10 hours per week in grades 9 through 12.	
Proposed Replacement Policy	The School will establish its own guidelines for the amount of homework assigned. This will be determined by the student's IEP and/or individual graduation plan. Excel's rigorous instructional day and increased teacher-to-pupil contact hours may, in some cases, reduce the amount of homework assigned.	

Table II– Analysis of State Statutory Waivers Called for by the Innovation Plan

State Statute	Description	Waiver Request
Sec. 22-9-106	Human Resource Management: Personnel Evaluations	Evaluation of DPS teachers and principals at Excel Academy will be consistent with the LEAP system or any future district-managed teacher evaluation system.
Existing Policy	All of the teacher and principal effectiveness legislation.	
Proposed Replacement Policy	Teacher and principal evaluations at Excel Academy will be based on LEAP (or any future system DPS will use) so that the currently legislated requirements for teacher and principal effectiveness are fully met. In any circumstances where existing policies differentiate between probationary and non-probationary staff, the school will comply with the requirements described for probationary staff.	
Sec.22-32-109(1)(f)	Human Resource Management: Staff Hiring, Compensation	Clarifying that the School will manage the hiring process for teachers and other designated DPS personnel.
Existing Policy	22-32-109. Board of education - specific duties. (1) ...each board of education shall have and perform the following specific duties: (f) (I) To employ all personnel required to maintain the	

State Statute	Description	Waiver Request
	operations and carry out the educational program of the district and to fix and order paid their compensation...A board of a district of innovation…may delegate the duty specified in this paragraph (f) to an innovation school,	
Proposed Replacement Policy	Excel Academy is not seeking a waiver from this policy. Rather it is clarifying board's delegation of the duty to the school. The principal, in consultation with the school leadership, will select teaching staff directly. Rates of pay will remain consistent with the district schedule and policies.	
Sec.22-32-110(1)(h)	Local Board Powers Concerning Employment Termination of School Personnel	
Statute Description	22-32-110. Board of education - specific powers. (1) In addition to any other power granted … each board of education of a school district shall have the following specific powers, to be exercised in its judgment: (h) To discharge or otherwise terminate the employment of any personnel. A board of a district of innovation…may delegate the power specified in this paragraph (h) to an innovation school	
School's Replacement Policy	(h) To discharge or otherwise terminate the employment of any personnel. The DPS board delegates the power specified in this paragraph (h) to Excel Academy	
Sec.22-32-126	Human Resource Management: Personnel, Authority of principal	The School will establish guidelines for employment requirements and articulate the responsibilities of its principal consistent first with the contract between Camelot and DPS, second, consistent with evaluation methods used by the school's instructional superintendent, and finally within the terms of the innovation plan.
Existing Policy	22-32-126. Principals - employment and authority (1) The board of education may employ through written contract public school principals who shall hold valid principal licenses or authorizations and who shall supervise the operation and management of the school and such property as the board shall determine necessary. (2) The principal shall assume the administrative responsibility and instructional leadership, under the supervision of the	

State Statute	Description	Waiver Request
	superintendent…for the planning, management, operation, and evaluation of the educational program of the schools to which he is assigned. (3) The principal shall submit recommendations to the superintendent regarding the appointment, assignment, promotion, transfer, and dismissal of all personnel assigned to the school under his supervision. (4) The principal shall perform such other duties as may be assigned… (5) (a) The principal or the principal's designee shall communicate discipline information concerning any student enrolled in the school to any teacher who has direct contact with the student in the classroom and to any counselor who has direct contact with the student. Any teacher or counselor who receives information under this subsection (5) shall maintain the confidentiality of the information and does not have authority to communicate the information to any other person. (b) Each school district shall include in its discipline code adopted in accordance with section 22-32-110 (2) procedures to inform the student and the student's parent or guardian when disciplinary information is communicated and to provide a copy of the disciplinary information to the student and the student's parent or guardian. The discipline code shall also establish procedures to allow the student and the student's parent or guardian to challenge the accuracy of the disciplinary information.	
Proposed Replacement Policy	(1) The board of education may employ through written contract public school principals who shall hold valid principal licenses or authorizations and who shall supervise the operation and management of the school as outlined below: **The principal is the overall academic leader of the campus and responsible for promoting growth in students' learning by setting clear goals for the academic program, allocating resources to instruction, managing the curriculum, monitoring lesson plans and evaluating teachers**. The principal supervises all teachers and other instruction staff. The principal ensures compliance with all contract standards which specifically describe deliverables for student academic growth as outlined in the service agreement with the District by developing and monitoring campus improvement planning activities. **<u>Essential Functions, Principal</u>** 1. Understands and implements Excel's philosophy, policy and procedures relating to conduct, discipline, educational and attendance outcomes for students and staff.	

State Statute	Description	Waiver Request
	2. Complies with all federal and state guidelines for students receiving special services, including special education, bilingual education, and homelessness. 3. Directs the development, selection, evaluation and implementation of instructional programs and educational materials. 4. Provides direction and leadership in the assessment and identification of the instructional curriculum goals and objectives, while establishing a strategy to address academic needs of all students. 5. Possesses solid curriculum knowledge with an understanding of school district and state educational guidelines. Fully understands and complies with federal and state educational guidelines. 6. Continually evaluates and refines methods of instruction in accordance with the educational goals and objectives of Excel and student needs. 7. Communicates with outside agencies such as parents, school districts, other agencies as directed and as needed. 8. Interprets and effectively disseminates instructional and education trends and other pertinent data to staff, parents and community groups while assisting in the support and development of policies and procedures. 9. Participates in the selection process of new employees and is responsible for maintaining adequate educational staff and ensuring that Excel is meeting staffing requirements as it relates to certification and specified content area. 10. Understands the Excel model and works with behavioral staff to promote a team environment that focuses both on educational success and behavioral management. 11. Evaluates the teachers' performance on a timely basis including documented observations, informal feedback and utilizing the formalized performance management system that addresses individual achievements and identifies areas of development. 12. Supervises assigned staff including documenting their performance, development, training and other issues. Ensures all assigned staff is in compliance with training, credentialing and performance issues are being addressed. 13. Possesses knowledge of the JFF model of instruction and effectively implements in our academic program. 14. Possesses knowledge about the Rounds Model and effectively implements to ensure that teachers receive constructive feedback	

State Statute	Description	Waiver Request
	29 15. from others about teaching and learning in their classrooms. 16. Responsible for understanding and maintaining compliance of stakeholder's contract standards. This includes reading and understanding the current contract as it applies to educational services, training assigned staff and notifying Executive Director of any possible infractions. 17. Possesses knowledge about the principles of student assessment, assessment procedures with emphasis on alternative assessment methods and assessments that aim to improve and demonstrate student learning. 18. Performs other duties as assigned and to be determined based upon Excel needs.	
Sec.22-63-202	Human Resource Management: Personnel, Contracts in writing, duration	
Existing Policy (paraphrased)	Contracts shall be in writing, amount of notice required by a teacher/principal who intends to resign, when a position can be re-opened, penalties for resigning outside of the window, no direct placement requirement, priority hiring preference for effective/satisfactory teachers, management of displaced teachers, and disclosure of why contracts were terminated.	
Proposed Replacement Policy	All employees identified in the contract managed by Camelot will not be covered by this policy. Non-probationary teachers transferring from another DPS school will have their non-probationary status retained and will be managed consistent with existing district procedures governing non-probationary status (except for any other district or state waiver replacements specified in this plan) by the principal at Excel Academy. All other teachers hired by Excel Academy will be hired on an annual contract and will not be eligible for non-probationary status. Offer letter contracts will be in writing and will reflect these terms as they relate to each teacher's individual situation. The school principal will have full authority to either accept or reject direct placements from the district on an individual basis.	
Sec. 22-63-203	Human Resource Management: Probationary Teachers – Renewal and Nonrenewal of Employment Contract	
Statute Description	Tenure - how established, treatment of probationary teachers, time, ability to not renew contracts,	

State Statute	Description	Waiver Request
School's Replacement Policy	Any teachers who are not previously hired from a DPS school with non-probationary status will be hired according to an annual contract and Excel Academy will not recognize probationary or non-probationary status for these employees as a result. As it relates to non-probationary consideration, these teachers will retain any existing years of service accumulated prior to joining Excel Academy should they choose to apply for other district teaching positions, but they will not earn extra years of service while teaching at Excel.	
Sec. 22-63-206	Human Resource Management: Personnel, Transfer of teachers	The School requests a waiver from Sec.22-63-206.
Existing Policy (paraphrased)	Specifies that schools are not required to accept transfers from the Chief Admin Officer of a district, but if they do, specifies the manner in which compensation should be handled.	
Proposed Replacement Policy	School will have the authority to decide whether to accept transfers of any staff from the district on a case-by-case basis. In situations where the school is being asked to receive a teacher for which there was not mutual consent, the salary expense will not be drawn from the school's budget so long as the school has not released teachers into the priority hiring pool in the current or previous year where said teacher fails to secure a mutual consent placement and therefore becomes a direct placement at another district school.	
Sec.22-63-301	Human Resource Management: Personnel, Grounds for dismissal.	
Existing Policy	Specifies reasons for why a teacher could be dismissed.	
Proposed Replacement Policy	All teachers dismissed mid-year shall be entitled to a review process consistent with the proposed replacement policy specified for 22-63-302. All teachers other than teachers employed under a non-probationary status while teaching at Excel Academy can only be dismissed mid-year if the dismissal is for cause. All DPS teachers teaching at Excel Academy other than teachers employed under a non-probationary status will be employed on an annual contract and can have their contracts "non-renewed" for any reason. Any teacher who will not be returning for the next school year will be notified of this decision prior to the end of the current school year.	
Sec. 22-63-302	Human Resource Management: Personnel,	The School requests a waiver from Sec.22-63-302. The school will implement

State Statute	Description	Waiver Request
	Dismissal procedures/judicial review	DPS policy GDQD-R (and any future revisions) in its place.[9]
Existing Policy	Detailed process for teacher dismissals.	
Proposed Replacement Policy	I. Dismissal Procedures For Employees -These procedures are an effort to maintain fair and equitable treatment for all school employees. -These procedures do not change the at-will employment status of classified employees. A. No employee will be dismissed until he/she has been notified by one of his/her supervisors of the supervisor's intent to recommend dismissal to the Superintendent or his/her designee. The supervisor will inform the employee of the grounds for the recommended dismissal and will give the employee a reasonable opportunity to respond. B. If the supervisor decides to proceed with the dismissal recommendation, the supervisor will provide the employee with written notice of the ground(s) for the dismissal recommendation and the employee may request a post-termination hearing before an administrator (designated by the Superintendent or his/her designee) in the Human Resources Department. The employee must request the post-termination hearing within three (3) scheduled working days of the last day of work. 1. If the employee does not request the post-termination hearing within three (3) scheduled working days, the termination will be considered final. The recommendation for dismissal of employees who do not request a post-termination hearing will be forwarded to the Superintendent or his/her designee for final action. If the Superintendent or his/her designee does not uphold the supervisor's recommendation for dismissal, then the employee shall be entitled to back pay. 2. If the employee makes a timely request for a post-termination hearing, then the Human Resources administrator shall conduct the hearing within ten (10) scheduled working days of the receipt of the request for hearing, unless extraordinary circumstances require additional time. i. The Human Resources administrator shall review the supervisor's decision in order to determine if there are facts that demonstrate that any of the ground(s) specified in the notice of dismissal	

[9] GDQD-R provides a process in the event that a teacher is dismissed, that provides timely notice to a teacher, an ability to have the decision reviewed through a post-termination hearing before an HR Administrator, and for non-probationary teachers, to have an added review (at the teacher's request) before an impartial hearing officer.

State Statute	Description	Waiver Request
	recommendation provided the employee are present. The Human Resources administrator shall issue a decision in writing affirming, modifying, or reversing the dismissal recommendation. The decision shall be rendered within five (5) working days of the hearing, unless extraordinary circumstances require additional time. ii. If the Human Resources administrator affirms the dismissal recommendation, the recommendation will be forwarded to the Superintendent or his / her designee for final action. If the Superintendent or his/her designee does not uphold the recommendation for dismissal, the employee shall be entitled to back pay. iii. The Human Resources administrator's review concludes the dismissal procedures for individuals employed with DPS for less than two years. C. If the Human Resources administrator affirms the dismissal recommendation, an individual employed with DPS for two or more years may request a hearing before an impartial hearing officer. (As noted above, individuals employed with DPS for less than two years are not entitled to the hearing before an impartial hearing officer.) An individual employed with DPS for two or more years must request the hearing within ten (10) working days of the decision by the Human Resources administrator. The hearing officer will review the dismissal recommendation in order to determine if any of the ground(s) specified in the dismissal recommendation notice provided to the employee are present. This hearing officer will not be a district employee. The following procedures shall apply to the hearing before an impartial hearing officer: 1. When a request for a hearing is received, the Superintendent or his/her designee, shall appoint a hearing officer skilled in the arbitration of labor relations matters and shall notify the Superintendent or his/her designee and the employee of the name of the hearing officer appointed. The hearing officer shall arrange the date and time of the hearing with the employee and a representative of the district. 2. The hearing officer so appointed shall have the authority to establish hearing dates and to make all the necessary procedural rules. The hearing shall be strictly confined to whether any of the ground(s) specified in the dismissal recommendation notice provided to the employee and affirmed by the Human Resources Administrator are present. 3. The parties shall exchange exhibits and witness lists at least five (5) working days prior to the commencement of the hearing. 4. Pertinent information not privileged under law in the possession of the district shall be made available to the employee at his/her	

State Statute	Description	Waiver Request
	request. 5. The employee may be represented by legal counsel at the hearing. 6. The hearing officer will issue a written recommendation to the Superintendent or his/her designee and the employee within fifteen (15) working days after the close of the hearing. The hearing officer's recommendation shall set forth detailed, written findings of fact. If the findings of fact demonstrate that any of the ground(s) specified in the notice for dismissal recommendation provided to the employee are present, the hearing officer is without authority to recommend the reversal of the dismissal recommendation. If the findings of fact demonstrate that none of the ground(s) specified in the notice for dismissal recommendation provided the employee are present, the hearing officer will have authority to recommend reversing the dismissal recommendation. The hearing officer's report shall be advisory only and shall not be binding on the Superintendent or his/her designee. 7. All hearings conducted by the hearing officer shall be confidential. 8. The Superintendent or his/her designee shall act on the hearing officer's report within ten scheduled working days, and his/her decision shall be final and shall terminate any rights of the employee under this policy. If the Superintendent or his/her designee does not affirm a dismissal recommendation, back pay and associated benefits may be restored, if applicable. 9. The cost associated with employment of the hearing officer shall be paid by the district. The district shall be responsible for its legal costs, and the employee shall be responsible for paying his/her legal costs, if any. 10. An official stenographic transcript of the hearing may be made at the request of the district or the employee, and a copy of any request shall be made available to the hearing officer. The person requesting a stenographic transcript shall pay the cost, except, if the other party requests a copy of the transcript, the entire cost of the stenographic transcript shall be shared equally by both parties.	
Sec.22-32-109 (1)(n)(I)	Instructional Program, Schedule and Calendar	The School requests the ability to modify the instructional program, schedule and calendar as needed in order to meet student needs.
Existing Policy	22-32-109. Board of education - specific duties. (1) …each board of education shall have and perform the following specific duties: (n) (I) To determine, prior to the end of a school year, the length of time which the schools of the district shall be in session during the next following school year, but in no event shall said schools be	

State Statute	Description	Waiver Request
	scheduled to have fewer than [varies by grade level] hours of planned teacher-pupil instruction	
Proposed Replacement	Prior to the end of the school year, *Excel Academy* shall determine the length of time during which *Excel Academy* shall be in session during the next school year. The number of days of planned teacher-student instruction and of teacher-student contact shall meet or exceed the requirements of state law and *the DPS Board-approved district calendar*. *The Excel Academy calendar* shall include the dates for all staff in-service programs scheduled for the coming school year *that are not identified on the DPS Board-approved district calendar*. A copy of the calendar shall be provided to all parents/guardians of students enrolled at Excel Academy*. The calendar will also be published on the school's web page*. Any change in the calendar except for emergency closings or other unforeseen circumstances shall be preceded by adequate and timely notice *to students and parents*. State law establishes the school year as 1080 hours of planned teacher-student instruction for high schools. Excel Academy will exceed that amount with a longer instructional day. At Excel Academy, it will be a requirement for students to be engaged in learning for a longer school day; class periods are lengthened to one hour and twenty minutes in duration, providing a full Carnegie credit unit of 120 hours per course. Students will be required to accumulate 240 credits toward graduation and complete a senior community service project to meet graduation requirements.	
Sec. 22-32-109(1)(n)(II)(A)	Instructional Program, Teacher pupil contact hours	The School requests a waiver from Sec.22-32-109(1) (n) (II) (A).
Existing Policy	22-32-109. Board of education - specific duties. (1) …each board of education shall have and perform the following specific duties: (II) (A) The actual hours of teacher-pupil instruction and teacher-pupil contact specified in subparagraph (I) of this paragraph (n) may be reduced to no fewer than one thousand fifty-six hours for secondary school pupils, no fewer than nine hundred sixty-eight hours for elementary school pupils, no fewer than four hundred thirty-five hours for half-day kindergarten pupils, or no fewer than eight hundred seventy hours for full-day kindergarten pupils, for parent-teacher conferences, staff in-service programs, and closing deemed by the board to be necessary for the health, safety, or welfare of students.	
Proposed Replacement Policy	Prior to the end of the school year, *Excel Academy* shall determine the length of time during which *Excel Academy* shall be in session during the next school year. The number of days of planned teacher-	

State Statute	Description	Waiver Request
	student instruction and of teacher-student contact shall meet or exceed the requirements of state law and *the DPS Board-approved district calendar*. *The Excel Academy calendar* shall include the dates for all staff in-service programs scheduled for the coming school year *that are not identified on the DPS Board-approved district calendar*. A copy of the calendar shall be provided to all parents/guardians of students enrolled at Excel Academy*. The calendar will also be published on the school's web page*. Any change in the calendar except for emergency closings or other unforeseen circumstances shall be preceded by adequate and timely notice *to students and parents*. State law establishes the school year as 1080 hours of planned teacher-student instruction for high schools. Excel Academy will exceed that amount with a longer instructional day. At Excel Academy, it will be a requirement for students to be engaged in learning for a longer school day; class periods are lengthened to one hour and twenty minutes in duration, providing a full Carnegie credit unit of 120 hours per course. Students will be required to accumulate 240 credits toward graduation and complete a senior community service project to meet graduation requirements.	
Sec.22-32-109(1)(n)(II)(B)	School Calendar	The School will adhere to Sec.22-32-109 (1) (n) (II) (B) with the exception of an earlier teacher start date in alignment with the Innovation Plan. This allows new teachers to receive ten days of induction and professional development and returning teachers to receive five days of professional development before the student start date.
Existing Policy	22-32-109. Board of education - specific duties. (1) …each board of education shall have and perform the following specific duties: (B) Prior to the beginning of the school year, each district shall provide for the adoption of a district calendar which is applicable to all schools within the district…A copy of the calendar shall be provided to the parents or guardians of all children enrolled…Such calendar shall include the dates for all staff in-service programs. The] school administration shall allow for public input from parents and teachers prior to scheduling …staff in-service programs. Any change in the calendar…shall be preceded by adequate and timely…of not less than thirty days.	
Replacement Policy	Prior to the end of the school year, *Excel Academy* shall determine the length of time during which *Excel Academy* shall be in session	

State Statute	Description	Waiver Request
	during the next school year. The number of days of planned teacher-student instruction and of teacher-student contact shall meet or exceed the requirements of state law and *the DPS Board-approved district calendar*. *The Excel Academy calendar* shall include the dates for all staff in-service programs scheduled for the coming school year *that are not identified on the DPS Board-approved district calendar*. A copy of the calendar shall be provided to all parents/guardians of students enrolled at Excel Academy*. The calendar will also be published on the school's web page*. Any change in the calendar except for emergency closings or other unforeseen circumstances shall be preceded by adequate and timely notice *to students and parents*. State law establishes the school year as 1080 hours of planned teacher-student instruction for high schools. Excel Academy will exceed that amount with a longer instructional day. At Excel Academy, it will be a requirement for students to be engaged in learning for a longer school day; class periods are lengthened to one hour and twenty minutes in duration, providing a full Carnegie credit unit of 120 hours per course. Students will be required to accumulate 240 credits toward graduation and complete a senior community service project to meet graduation requirements.	
Sec.22-32-109(1)(cc)	Human Resource Management: Personnel, Dress code for Employees	The School adheres to Sec.22-32-109(1) (cc) with the exception being: those days designated by the principal as being "dress-down" days or "theme" days.
Existing Policy	22-32-109. Board of education - specific duties. (1) …each board of education shall have and perform the following specific duties: (cc) To adopt a dress code policy for teachers and other school employees.	
Proposed Replacement Policy	The School will adhere to district dress code policies with limited local autonomy in order for the principal to designate some days as being "dress-down" days or "theme" days.	
Sec.22-32-109(1)(jj)	Human Resource Management: Personnel, Principal Development or training	The School adheres to Sec.32-109(1) (jj) with the exception being: the School will supplement the DPS professional development of the principal.

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Existing Policy	22-32-109. Board of education - specific duties. (1) …each board of education shall have and perform the following specific duties: (jj) To identify any areas in which one or more of the principals of the schools of the school district require further training or development. The board of education shall contract for or otherwise assist the identified principals in participating in professional development programs to assist the identified principals in improving their skills in the identified areas.	
Proposed Replacement Policy	In addition to any professional development identified by the instructional superintendent for Excel Academy, the principal will receive additional training and development to align with the innovation school model as may be deemed necessary by the Quality Management Team, which may include development in the following areas: 1) Excel's Mission and Vision, 2) Single School Behavioral Culture, 3) Culture of Commitment, 4) Jobs for the Future Common Instructional Framework , 5) Curricular Alignment, 6) Four Key Dimensions of College Readiness, 7) Vigilant Use of Data to Drive Instruction, 8) College Readiness Standards, 9) Career Awareness, and 10) Response to Intervention.	
22-63-203.5 Portability of non-probationary status	Human Resource Management	
Existing Policy	Beginning with the 2014-15 school year, a nonprobationary teacher, except for a nonprobationary teacher who has had two consecutive performance evaluations with an ineffective rating, who is employed by a school district and is subsequently hired by a different school district may provide to the hiring school district evidence of his or her student academic growth data and performance evaluations for the prior two years for the purposes of retaining nonprobationary status. If, upon providing such data, the nonprobationary teacher can show two consecutive performance evaluations with effectiveness ratings in good standing, he or she shall be granted nonprobationary status in the hiring school district.	
School's Replacement Policy	Excel Academy will employ all teachers,other than existing DPS teachers who have existing non-probationary status, according to an annual contract and will not recognize probationary or non-probationary status for these employees as a result. This includes teachers hired into the school from outside of the district who came with an existing non-probationary status. As it relates to non-probationary consideration, these teachers will retain any accrued years of effective teaching service	

State Statute	Description	Waiver Request
	accumulated prior to joining Excel Academy should they choose to apply for other district teaching positions, but they will not earn extra years while teaching at Excel. Formal teaching evaluations using DPS systems will be tracked and monitored by the school and will be a portable part of a teacher's file.	

Table III– Analysis of Waivers From the DCTA Collective Bargaining Agreement Called for by the Innovation Plan

DCTA Article	Description	Waiver Request
Article 1-7, DCTA	Definitions – School Year	*School year will be school year as established by Excel Academy and it may be different from the district-defined school year.*
Article 5-4, DCTA	School Leadership Team	
Existing Policy	Each school will have a School Leadership Team (SLT) consisting of the principal, the association representative, a teacher appointed by the principal, and a minimum of 3 teacher representatives … elected annually by a majority of the faculty voting by secret ballot The SLT will make decisions by consensus. A consensus is either a unanimous decision or a majority decision that the entire SLT, including the dissenters, will support. Their responsibilities shall include: a. Collaborate in the development of the School Improvement Plans; b. Review and collaborate on the design of and schedule for the professional development c. Review and collaborate on the implementation of the District's instructional program …including prioritizing and sequencing activities within the work week;…f. Collaborate to implement best instructional practices	
Proposed Replacement Policy	Responsibilities identified for the School Leadership Team will be assigned to the Excel Advisory Council who will fulfill the same duties in compliance with the state regulations or as outlined in the existing article.	
Article 8, DCTA	Professional Standards	
Existing Policy	Multiple sections including SLT, Contract year, 40 hour work week, planning time, teaching loads, non-teaching duties, lesson plans, classroom interruptions, class coverage, emergency school closings, teacher-in-charge, and transportation of students.	
Proposed Replacement Policy	Excel Academy will follow article 8 with the following exceptions: School leadership team will be replaced by the Excel Advisory Council. Contract year, planning time, and teaching load will be based on the Excel Academy identified school calendar and student schedule.	
Article 13, DCTA	Assignments, schedules, and transfer	Excel Academy will use school-directed recruitment and hiring processes to allow greater flexibility in the timing, recruitment, and selection of teaching candidates.
Existing Policy	10 Pages. Sections include: Timelines with the HR process, Hiring through Personnel Committee, Reduction in Building Staff (RIBS), Voluntary Transfers, In-Building Bidding, Posting Vacancies, Applications, Selection Procedure, Assignments/Placements.	

DCTA Article	Description	Waiver Request
Proposed Replacement Policy	Excel Academy will waive Article 13 to prevent school from accepting direct placement that is not a mutual consent. Excel Academy will also implement a locally-directed recruitment and hiring process to allow greater flexibility in the timing, recruitment, and selection of teaching candidates. Excel Academy will continue working with the district's assigned HR partner to ensure that all hiring and selection practices are consistent with HR policies that are not otherwise waived out of in the plan (including federal and state hiring policies).	
Article 10, DCTA	Performance Evaluations	Excel Academy will follow formal teacher performance evaluation protocol as defined in LEAP (or whatever future DPS equivalents may be).
Existing Policy	12 page process which includes: defining evaluators, documentation, records of teaching, observations, interview data, written communication, sequence of evaluation, pre and post observation conferences, evaluation data review conferences, performance ratings, completion of evaluation, remediation, conducting a remediation plan, PD plans, special evaluations, personnel performance evaluation council.	
Proposed Replacement Policy	Excel Academy will conduct formal teacher performance evaluations consistent with LEAP (or whatever future DPS equivalents may be). If it is determined through the evaluation process that a teacher is in need of remediation at any point throughout the year, the school leader and teacher will meet to discuss an appropriate remediation plan. The plan will include: an appropriate timeline, specific measurable goals for the teacher, and appropriate supports for the teacher. If at the end of the remediation period, the school leader decides that the individual is not meeting performance expectations, then the teacher may be subject to termination.	