

Catapult Learning – Request for Amendment

RFAs:

- 2.1: Please provide more specific detail regarding plans to track and support students for college and career, both while enrolled at the school and upon graduation.

While they are enrolled in the program, students approaching graduation will be supported with guidance and scheduling reminders about college-entrance exams such as ACT and SAT, college applications, and FAFSA submission. Catapult Learning also actively seeks articulation agreements with local post-secondary institutions and employers. We will work with students to ensure that they are ready for their next step after graduation.

After graduation, Catapult Learning will attempt to contact students semi-annually by phone and email to ascertain whether they are working or pursuing post-secondary education, offer advice, encouragement, and help students re-connect with our institutional network.

With the permission of CPS, Catapult Learning will also track students post-graduation via the National Student Clearinghouse, which reports on enrollment and degree attainment for over 90% of post-secondary institutions in the U.S.

- 2.1: Please provide more specific detail regarding plans to support students who are enrolled and not engaged?

For students that are enrolled and not engaged (low attendance), their teacher calls the student (or home number) to determine reason of absence. If students do not answer or respond to the messages, we will arrange after seven absences.

For students who are disruptive or not engaged in learning, teachers will initially pull student aside for conservation. If issue continues, student will be referred to social worker or guidance counselor for investigation of root causes.

- 2.2: Provide the following student performance and demographic data listed on pages (47-49 of the RFP) for each of the 22 schools/programs. Data should be reported separately for each school/program.

Demographic Data:

- # and % of students qualifying for Free- and reduced-price lunch (FRL)
- # and % of English Learners
- # and % of Students with Individual Educational Plans (IEPs)
- # and % of students in Temporary Living Situations

These metrics are not currently calculated within our student information system and reside in the partner district data warehouse. Catapult Learning would be capable of storing and reporting these metrics for CPS upon request and with the appropriate Memorandum of Understanding and Data Sharing Agreements in place.

- # and % of African American, Hispanic, Caucasian, Asian American, and other students

Ethnicity (Snapshot – 5/20/15)	Count	Percent
American Indian or Alaska Native	1	<1%
Asian American	15	1%
African American	685	53%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1	< 1%
Caucasian	354	27%
Hispanic	230	18%
Total	1292	100%

Ethnicity (5/20/15 Snapshot)	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian American	African American	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	Caucasian	Hispanic	Grand Total
Dougherty	0%	0%	96%	0%	4%	1%	100%
Duval	1%	3%	56%	1%	40%	6%	100%
Hillsborough	1%	0%	68%	0%	31%	56%	100%
Marion	0%	1%	40%	0%	59%	18%	100%
Muscogee County	0%	0%	86%	1%	13%	0%	100%
Thomas	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Grand Total	0%	1%	64%	0%	33%	13%	100%

Ethnicity (5/20/15 Snapshot)	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian American	African American	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	Caucasian	Hispanic	Grand Total
Dougherty							
Duval							
Hillsborough							
Marion							
Muscogee County							
Thomas							
Grand Total	1	16	725	1	375	148	1272

Performance Data for SY13-14 and SY14-15:

- Average (or median, if average is not available) student growth percentile on the STAR Assessment. Score report must be produced by vendor and indicate magnitude of growth (*For example: School Level STAR Reading / STAR Math Growth Reports*)

Currently data only exists for SY14-15 on the STAR Assessment so no magnitude of growth can be calculated. The average student growth percentile in the Spring of SY2014-15 is 11.40 in Math and 11.44 in Reading.

Catapult Learning plans to continue using the STAR Assessment in SY15-16 so that longitudinal comparison can be provided.

- Student Attendance (average daily attendance) as reported by the District and/or State

The Student Average Daily Attendance is 34% across all Catapult Academy programs.

- Expulsion Data (# and % of students expelled) as reported by the District and/or State

Currently no student expulsion have been reported for the 2014-15 school year by the District and/or State

- 2.3: Option Schools at CPS are required to use the STAR Reading and Math Assessments at BOY, MOY, and EOY in addition to the PARCC Assessment. What additional assessments would Catapult use and what would be the purpose of each?
 - o Provide an example from one of the existing schools where data indicated improvements at the school were needed. Describe the process, including the stakeholders involved, that was used to arrive at the conclusion and what steps were taken to improve the school.

Catapult Academy does not plan to use formal assessments other than the STAR assessments. Catapult Academy already employs STAR assessments in programs even where not required by the school district.

• 2.4: Please provide more specific detail regarding differentiation both online and in-person; please describe how these complementary supports support students who are struggling. We are aware that in-person teachers will likely have certification for ELA and mathematics. Please provide more specific detail regarding the instructional strategies to support students in content areas other than the content areas in which in-person teachers are certified.

Differentiation is built into online learning in a number of ways, but the implementation of a fully-online program can leave students feeling isolated and unseen. We have built a blended model so that we can draw upon the combined assets of online learning and in-person teaching, and so that we can provide instruction above and beyond core academics, in areas of foundational skill-building, test-readiness strategies, and life and job skills.

An effective online learning system provides differentiated teaching and learning in a number of ways:

At the simplest level, students can move through a course at a pace that works for them as individuals. They can move slowly through sections that are confusing, and they can repeat sections as many times as they need to in order to understand the concepts being taught. This alone is a breakthrough for students who may have felt rushed through material (in one subject or perhaps all of them). The staff encourages students to work at a rigorous and efficient pace in order to graduate, but that pace is very much an individual matter—individual to the student and individual to the course (some students may be able to move more quickly through math and science courses, but need more time in history and language arts, or vice versa).

Many students struggling in a traditional classroom feel unable or unwilling to stop their teacher to ask for help or explanation. It singles them out and be very embarrassing. Even when students *do* raise a hand to ask a question classroom, they are unlikely to face the wrath of their peers by asking a second question, or saying, “I still don’t understand.” In online learning, students can reach out for help whenever they need it, via email (if they are content to move to another course and wait for a response) or instant message or telephone (if they need immediate assistance). In this model, no one else knows what questions the student is asking, or how often the student may be repeating the question. There is no social pressure to keep one’s head down and pretend to understand.

When escalation beyond a text-based response, or even an email or IM conversation, is necessary, teachers can work with individual or groups via Adobe Connect to put issues or questions on an web-based, interactive whiteboard, to work out problems in the same way that they would at a blackboard in a traditional classroom

For core academics, the on-site staff come into play as guides and tutors—watching students’ body language as they work on their courses, looking over their shoulders to see what they’re working on, and checking their notes. On-site teachers can work individually with students who may be feeling stuck or going astray, or who may be drifting off-task. They can do this on-the-spot, as students are at the computer, or they can pull a student aside for some on-on-one, off-computer assistance. This help students feel supported online and offline—by their core teachers and by the site staff who know them and see them every day. This can be done in individual tutoring sessions or as part of small-group instruction. Because these on-site teachers also run the small-group instruction sessions on foundational math and reading skills, they are in a perfect position to be able to modify and shape this instruction to address the needs and challenges they see their students facing in their core academic work.

• 2.5: Please provide more specific detail regarding the unique recruitment and selection strategies to find high-quality on-line and on-site teachers. Please provide data to support estimates that salaries are appropriate and competitive.

All teachers, both online and in-person, will go through a rigorous interview process. Applicants will be asked questions that reveal how they think as educators, what their experience is with blended learning environments and how much experience they have in working with at risk students. Questions could include:

- What skills have you acquired in your present job that make you the right candidate for this job?
- Describe a recent event concerning blended learning in your job that really challenged your capabilities and how you solved it.
- What tasks in your present teaching position do you consider to be a waste of time?
- Do you consider yourself an efficient teacher? Why?

In addition, applicants will be required to teach a 10-minute lesson to the interviewer.

Catapult Learning currently employs over 30 full-time teachers in the greater Chicago area in our intervention program. Because of this, we think that we will be able to find qualified candidates at our rate of pay.

Please provide more specific detail regarding how you will differentiate evaluations for teachers working online vs. in person.

Every adult who works with a student in Catapult Academy plays a specific and unique role as a member of the Academy and as a creator and sustainer of our culture of “achieving beyond expectations.” Each role requires its own flavor of initial training, ongoing support, and evaluation.

For the subject-area specialists who teach online, a large part of the performance evaluation is actually an analysis of data. Every aspect of instruction and student interaction creates some kind of artifact or data that can be reviewed by site managers and the design team, from an accounting of daily login and logout times to assignment grades to a detailed record of every email and message sent between the teacher and her students. We are able to measure these aspects of performance against the expectations we set and provide feedback, training, or course-correction as necessary. This analysis also contributes to annual performance evaluations.

In addition, we have developed a performance rubric that site-based staff and the design team can use to evaluate teacher quality, drawing upon the standards and rubrics for online teaching developed by iNACOL, the international association for online teaching and learning. The rubric delineates a variety of teacher competencies, and then provides samples of teacher and student behaviors for each competency, to help evaluators determine whether the teacher has achieved that competency. One example of a teacher competency and supporting behaviors is included below:

We have also developed a detailed performance rubric to assist site-based staff in evaluating the on-site teachers. Different sections of the rubric are used to evaluate different aspects of the on-site teacher’s role. A general instructional rubric is used to assess performance in delivering small-group instruction, whether in foundational skills or as part of the job and life-skills curriculum. Competencies in this rubric are derived from our Five-Strand Design, and are aligned with the major teacher evaluation systems used across the country, based on the work of researchers like Charlotte Danielson and Robert Marzano.

A different section of the rubric, focusing on the “live” aspect of blended learning, is used to evaluate the teachers in their role as tutor/helper/lab facilitator. Competencies in this rubric have been derived from our experience working in blended classrooms and our review of the research in the field. An example of one of these kinds of teacher competencies is included below under 3.3.

• 3.1: Transportation plan states that passes will be provided to students but the retention campaign states that a bus pass is a reward for 100% attendance; how does the school plan to provide equal access to transportation? In Chicago, we will not use bus passes as attendance incentives. For students in need of transportation help, Catapult Academy will provide transit passes to ease transportation needs and increase attendance. Catapult Academy will comply with Illinois State transportation laws. Our plan may include bus service, subsidized public transportation, and/or participation in the state’s Parental Transportation Reimbursement program. Catapult Learning will look for other options to ensure effective, efficient transportation of students. School staff will supervise the transportation of students, as necessary.

• 3.1: Please provide more specific detail regarding the planned operational performance goals and metrics. Please see our expanded table of operational metrics below.

Metric Area	Goal	System	Lead	Frequency
Weekly student enrollment snapshots	Essential to operational resource management	GeniusSIS	Principal	Weekly
Student demographic record audits	Accurate student records	GeniusSIS	Principal	Weekly
Course-progression monitoring (e.g. time-on-task, student login frequency, enrollment duration)	Appropriate and engaging learning activities	GeniusSIS + Apex LMS	Principal	Bi-Weekly
Student admission streamline monitoring (e.g. course-selection tracking, time-in-processing queue, etc.),	Smooth admission & course enrollment	GeniusSIS	Principal	Weekly during high enrollment periods; Otherwise Bi-weekly
Documentation compliance monitoring	Program accountability	GeniusSIS	Principal	Bi-monthly
Support desk ticket tracking	Provide quality support for stakeholders in Catapult Academy	Catapult Support Desk Software	Corporate IT department	Weekly
On-Site IT service calls	Provide quality IT infrastructure support for Next Generation blended learning	Catapult Support Desk Software	Corporate IT department	Weekly

• 3.2: Please explain why you plan to collect student IEP information prior to enrollment and what you plan to do with that information.

Student IEP information is collected at the time of registration. No student will be denied admittance based on having or not having an IEP.

• 3.3: Please provide the specific plan through which the school leader will be evaluated; please include any performance expectations.

Upon hiring, Board will provide the school leader with a specific set of goals and objectives which are directly related to initial responsibilities and a timeline of benchmarks to be achieved. On or about day 60, the leader will receive an initial evaluation of the achievement of the goals and objectives established for this first period of employment. At that point, the school leader will receive additional objectives and recommendations and assistance for other goals or objectives which may be incomplete given the timeframe which has been outlined. Performance expectations will partially depend on the experience the school leader brings to the position and on the responsibilities and duties of the position. Typical Performance Expectations are:

School/Organizational Climate - Communicate with staff, students, and parents in a clear and effective manner, demonstrating skill in working with students, staff, and parents to successfully resolve conflict.

Personnel Management & Internal Communications - Maintain regular and effective communication with the Corporate office and work closely with corporate staff to develop teamwork approach for increased efficiency and to insure compliance in all areas.

Administration and Fiscal/Facilities Management - Effectively work with the Facilities Project Manager, and Corporate office in administration, fiscal/facilities management areas, and real estate operations.

Professional Growth, Development and Practices - Be an appropriate role model by demonstrating professionalism and concern and respect for the dignity and human worth of staff, students, community members, and people in general. Comply with and demand compliance from staff of all applicable state and federal statutes, local board policies and administrative guidelines, and all appropriate code of ethics.

Instructional Management - Monitor the instructional program by reviewing teacher lesson plans, observing classroom instruction on a regular basis, conferencing with staff, and carefully analyzing assessment data related to student academic performance. Provide educational leadership focused on improving student performance and program effectiveness.

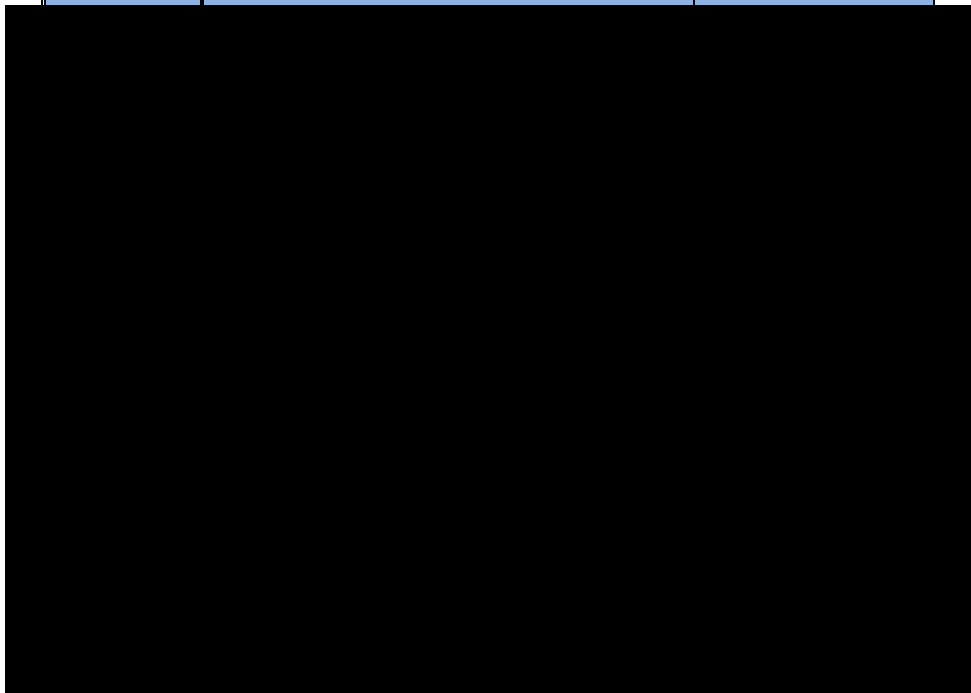
Throughout the school year, the school leader will meet with the Regional Director, Education Quality and finance Department. These meetings will occur on a regular monthly basis to review the previous and future month. Planning documentation will be maintained as well as ongoing performance reviews similar to the 60 day evaluation. Additional data such as survey results from school staff, students and parents will also be reviewed. These will be filed with the school leader, Regional Director and Territory Vice President for review prior to the end-of-year evaluation.

- 4.2: Please provide specific detail regarding the assignment of responsibilities for financial controls.

Catapult Learning has accounting operations in place including the production of periodic financial reports, maintenance of an adequate system of accounting records, and a comprehensive set of controls and budgets designed to mitigate risk, enhance the accuracy of the company's reported financial results, and ensure that reported results comply with generally accepted accounting principles or international financial reporting standards.

The table below indicates the spending authority by role for those associated with Catapult Academy programs.

Level of Authority	Title	Maximum Dollar Amount Authorized
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Each Catapult Academy program site will have its own operational budget, tracking expenses by category.