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## An Overview of CFA’s Characterization of Blended Learning

For background purposes, we will begin with an explanation of the design of our blended learning model. We will implement our courses within an arrangement designed around two flexible delivery modes: “Computer-based” and “Direct Instruction,” Our blended instruction comprises a variety of learning modalities, ranging from computer-based instruction, short lectures, seminars, group projects, placements, Internet, and self- access content such as print/video/TV/radio and face-to-face interactions. We will blend these modalities based on individual student needs and learning styles. We categorize our learning areas as: Computer-based Content Mastery, Direct Instruction Content and Social Skill Mastery, Career Skill Mastery and Assessment and Evaluation. The figure below shows instructional modalities associated with each learning area.

The primary difference in our delivery designations (Computer-based and Direct Instruction) lies in the location or *place* where we expect the greatest proportion of skill mastery to take place. Courses labeled “Computer-based” suggest an expected high proportion of skill development in the computer lab. Those labeled “Direct Instruction” suggest an expected high proportion of skill development outside of the computer lab, during face-to-face or interactions with the teacher and student peers. We will blend modalities for the four instructional areas in ways that allow implementation and skill mastery in a variety of settings, including the computer lab, traditional classroom, small group discussion rooms, one-to-one tutoring settings, and community-based sites including the student’s home, when necessary.

## 2.4a Response

**Review Committee Question: Please explain the rationale behind determining which classes students will take online and which will be taken in person.**

Our Math, Science courses follow our computer-based delivery mode. Once students become familiar with the technology and course format, they are expected to engage in self-directed learning. Our Humanities, English/Language Arts and Career Pathways courses will follow our direct instruction delivery mode. Realizing that the extent of a learner's self-direction will vary according to his/her individual ability level levels and learning styles, we have built extensive flexible time into the student’s day. This flexible time allows for the needed blend of direct instruction and computer-based classes.

The following provides rationale for our computer-based course designations:

1. **Math and Science Computer-based Course Rationale:** Research shows that math and science courses are difficult and growing more complex.[[1]](#endnote-1) One reason for the complexity is these courses focus more on the reasoning process than those in the social sciences. For example, in both math and science, it is not enough to know that an experiment or a formula works, students must know why and how it works. They need time, flexibility and various ways to ascertain the interconnectivity between facts that a computer-based delivery mode offers. When operated as computer-based, students have extended and repeated opportunities to essential master skills. In addition, there is a high degree of specificity that MATH Common Core State Standards, Next Generation Science Standards as well as PARCC, STAR and COMPASS assessment dictate that makes it clear what course content should be taught and how ELA courses and how they should be structured. The technology available through Edgenuity®, our selected course-management system, correlates computer-based activities with these standards and assessments, thus making it easier for teachers to address time constraints and varied learning styles without overlook the need to correlate learning activities with standards. In addition, management system guides and monitors student progress and gives both student and teacher feedback.
2. **English/Language Direct Instruction Course Rationale:** English/Language Arts learners need intense yet flexible exposure to a variety of learning modalities. Although English, classes are “a lot more discussion based than math and science classes, there is a high degree of specificity dictated by ELA Common Core State Standards and STAR, COMPASS and PARCC assessments that makes it clear what course content should be taught and how ELA courses should be structured. The technology in Edgenuity's® learning platform will help us do real-time monitoring of each student's progress. The system guides and monitors student progress and gives both student and teacher feedback. The teacher role in the computer based blended learning course environment is to review student progress. Researchers have devoted time and resources to examining the question, “What are ‘optimal’ conditions for effective language learning?” They identified and characterized the following optimal conditions:[[2]](#endnote-2)
3. Learners must interact in the target language with an authentic audience.
4. Learners must be involved in authentic tasks.
5. Learners should be exposed to and encouraged to produce varied and creative language.
6. Learners should be provided opportunities to interact socially and negotiate meaning.
7. Learners should have enough time and feedback
8. Learners should be guided to attend mindfully to the learning process
9. Learners should work in an atmosphere with an ideal stress/anxiety level
10. Learners autonomy should be supported

We expect our teachers to be faced with students who all have their own individual learning preferences, who come from different backgrounds, and who have different priorities and reasons for being at CFA. Any group of students can often be of mixed abilities with different goals or learning styles. Appropriateness of task can represent a significant challenge in these circumstances. Teachers know from experience that if the level in a language task is too easy, some students are unlikely to improve; if the task is too difficult, some students may simply give up. Similarly, tasks that do not address a student’s interests or learning style may fail to motivate, which is essential to language learning. Using the formative assessment data that the Edgenuity’s ® management system provides, teachers will keep abreast of students’ mastery levels on a daily basis. They can monitor each students student’s progress, identify struggling learners, temporarily move them to an appropriate face-to-face arrangement, and provide the direct instruction needed to master that skill. During direct instruction sessions, the teacher also encourages students and boosts confidence and motivation as needed. Upon mastery, the student moves back to computer-based instruction. The cycle repeats for each skill with which the student experiences difficulty. A student who experiences little or no difficulty mastering competencies in a course could have most to all content delivered on computer by on-screen instructors, through Edgenuity's course management platform. On the other hand, a student who experiences difficulty mastering competencies in a course could have a majority of the content delivered through a face-to-face instructional modality if the need presents itself. The rationale behind deciding that ELA courses should be offered as direct instruction within our blended learning arrangement is:

* Direct instruction allows ELA teachers to address the variety of learner needs and motivations on an individual level.
* Direct instruction provides an environment where many of the eight (8) items listed above can be addressed easier than in a computer-based environment.
* **Career Pathways Computer—Direct Instruction Rationale:** Our Career Pathways courses will be taught as dual-enrolled, direct instruction courses at local community college. Research shows that there are positive and negative attributes tolearning career and vocational skills on computer. The positive aspects some researchers cite are: flexibility; responsive teachers; materials and course design; access to resources; online assessment and feedback; increase in information technology skills; learning style; interaction with other students; communication; ease of use; and hybrid mix of face-to-face and computer-based online learning. The negative attributes cited are: access and technology; lack of self-motivation, time, and self-discipline and problems with the learning approach; assessment; lack of teacher responses; confusion; inadequate resources, etc.[[3]](#endnote-3) Literature that addresses student achievement and satisfaction with computer-based instruction also shows mixed reviews. Studies that focus on academic achievement conclude that online education can be at least as effective as traditional classroom instruction. Studies on student satisfaction with online computer-courses or programs report both satisfied and dissatisfied students. A majority of the studies conclude that computer-based instruction offers learners unparalleled access to instructional resources, far surpassing the reach of the traditional classroom, with the end results being learning experiences that are open, flexible, and distributed, providing for more engaging, interactive, and efficient instruction.[[4]](#endnote-4)  Since the research is inclusive, but appears to point to the advantages of teaching skills via direction instruction, we will operate our Career Pathways courses as blended direct instruction courses with computer-based applications as needed

The following provides rationale for our Direct Instruction course designation:

* **Integrated Humanities Direct Instruction Course Rationale:** Research shows that social studies are made more interesting and more readily enhanced through face-to-face contact.[[5]](#endnote-5) Thus, our primary reason for selecting a Direct Instruction arrangement. Our social science courses are direct instruction courses that afford students focused opportunities to personally engage in social and emotional activities that increase knowledge about real-life, governmental, historical and other social contexts. We will use cultural relevancy as an overarching theme to develop social science knowledge along with specific social skills. Included among these social skills are: the ability to read others accurately, make favorable first impressions, adapt to a wide range of social situations, and be persuasive, all which can influence the quality of these interactions. The development of these skills inherently necessitates face-to-face contact. Our teachers will integrate personal, moral, social, political, cultural, and academic knowledge and skills. For example, they will teach students about students’ cultural heritages and positive ethnic identity development along with math, science, reading, critical thinking, history, governmental operations and social activism. Moreover, our courses will be tailored to help students expand their personal networks, social skills which will also contribute positively to their career placement and advancement.

Our blended design also affords students many opportunities to develop skills in a computer-based environment. For example, students’ schedules incorporate opportunities for communication with peers, teachers and others via Digital Communication (Chat, E-Mail); Self-Access Content (Print-TV/Radio);Teacher-led Large & Small Group Seminars; Peer and Teacher Tutoring; Critical Thinking/Problem Solving Activities--Projects, Case Studies, Role Playing, Presentations, etc. Within our blended arrangements, our math, science and ELA teachers have numerous opportunities to collaboratively plan and interact to design and deliver integrated instruction that simultaneously develops personal, moral, social, political, cultural knowledge along with core academic skills and theoretical knowledge.

## 2.4d Response

**Review Committee Question 2.4d. Please clarify the students’ and teachers’ schedules.**

The table that follows provides details for students’ and teachers’ schedules. It provides: Daily Student Actions, Daily Teacher Actions including Teacher Preparation Time. It shows the following scheduled four 90-minute instructional periods daily, one Flex period and one Open Flex period.

* Computer-based Integrated Math
* Computer-based Integrated Science
* Lunch
* Direct Instruction Integrated Humanities (Including History and American Government)
* Computer-based and Direct Instruction Flex Time
* Direct Instruction, Dual Enrollment, Career Pathways
* Open Flex Time (30+ Minutes--after end of school day) for Teachers/Staff/Administrator Collaboration and Student Personalized Learning

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Student & Teacher Daily Schedules with Student and Teacher Actions and Room Assignments  Revised Version of Table 2.4.3. (Sample CFA Student Weekly/Daily Schedule) | | | | |
| Period | Computer Based Integrated Math | Computer-Based Integrated Science | Direct Instruction Integrated Humanities (ELA & Social Studies) | Direct Instruction--Career Pathways |
| 8:00-8:25 | Breakfast | Breakfast | Breakfast | Breakfast |
| Transition 8:25-8:30 |  | | | |
| Per 1  8:30 -10:00 (90 Mins) | Section 1   * Student Actions: Work on personalized learning plan; * Teacher Actions: Monitor and pull struggling students out for academic intervention (PullOuts) * Provide Integrated Instruction * Assess Students Progress * Tutor (1:1 and Small Group) (Rotate) * Special Education Teachers, Social Worker and other Support Staff work with students on Social/Emotional Development * Special Education Teachers, Social Worker and other Support Staff Actions: Work with students on Social/Emotional Development   Humanities Teacher Prepa**r**ation Time | Section 2 | Section 3  Teacher Action   * Provide integrated direct Instruction * Lead Large and Small Group Seminars, based on Student Need * Engage students in Computer-based Learning, including digital communication, Assess Student Progress including Digital Communication * Assess Student Progress * Administer self-prepared and computer-based exams. * Student Action: Complete critical thinking/problem solving activities—projects, case studies, and graduation portfolios. | Section 4  Off-site Dual Enrollment Course at Community College |
| Transition 10:00 – 10:05 |  | | | |
| Per 2  10:05 – 11:35 (90 Mins) | Section 4  Repeat Above  Science Teacher Preparation | Section 1 | Section 2 | Section 3 |
| Transition 11:35-11:40 |  | | | |
| Lunch 1  11:40 – 12:10 (30 Mins) | Lunch | Lunch | Lunch | Lunch |
| Lunch Transition 12:10-12:15 |  | | | |
| Per 3  12:15 – 1:45 | Section 3  Repeat Above  Math Teacher Preparation | Section 4 | Section 1 | Section 2 |
| Transition |  | | | |
| Per 4  1:50 – 3:20 | Section 4  Repeat Above  No Teacher Preparation | Section 3 | Section 2 | Section 1 |
| Flex Time  2:15 – 3:45 (90 Mins) | Section 1  Computer-based and Direct Instruction  Teacher Actions:   * Work with student PullOuts on remediation in one-to-one or small group settings; * Special Education Teachers, Social Worker and other Support Staff work with students on Social/Emotional Development * Plan and Review Integrated Instruction * Special Education Teachers, Social Worker and other Support Staff Actions: Work with students on Social/Emotional Development   Student Actions:   * Work in collaboration labs/rooms on Credit Recovery with as-needed assistance from teacher * Receive and Provide Peer Tutoring | Section 2 | Section 3 | Section 4 |
| Faculty/Staff Collaboration & Open Flex for Student (Daily) 3:50 – 4:20 | * Teacher/Staff/Administrators: Collaborate to review and assess student weekly progress, review student goal accomplishment and applicable standards accomplishment. * Teacher Actions: Collaboratively plan integrated activities * Students Actions: Open Lab--Can stay and work in Computer Lab or Collaboration Room on Personalized Learning, Credit Recovery with as-needed assistance from teacher aides, if available. 3:50 – 4:20 |  |  |  |

**Review Committee Question: Clarify how students will determine whether or not they need to attend the online class sessions. Clarify the statement “We will allow flexibility in attendance in computer based sessions only for those students who are on target.”**

As explained above, we designated some CFA courses as computer-based and others as direct- instruction. These designations are based on the location or *place* where we expect the greatest proportion of skill development and mastery of skills for the greatest proportion of skill development to take place.

In computer-based courses, students are not constrained to spend a given amount of time mastering a skill; they can then go directly to the test and take the assessment to demonstrate mastery. All students will take a mastery quiz at the beginning of the computer-based course through Edgenuity’s® course management system. If they master the skills for the course a set the percentage level, they take the course’s online summative assessment to demonstrate mastery of skills for the courses. If they do not demonstrate mastery, they can design their own course of instruction by selecting from a customized list of activities (sometimes called a playlist) available in Edgenuity® they wish to complete to master the skills. For example, they can select on-screen lectures, projects, case study, etc. They can go as fast as they need or can using different activities that meet their preference. A student who is moving through a course because he/she has not mastered the skills has the option of mastering the skills for a unit by taking a unit mastery test. If he/she masters the skills for the unit, the student may take the summative unit exam to demonstrate mastery and move to the next unit. With this arrangement, each student has a degree of control over how he/she develops skills through a customized, fluid schedule with different learning modalities.

**Review Committee Question: Clarify the statement “We will allow flexibility in attendance in computer based sessions only for those students who are on target.”**

“On target” students are those who demonstrate mastery of a majority of skills in a course. These students can be considered to exhibit high potential to complete the course within or before the end of a designated time frame. The teacher of record, at his/her discretion, may excuse the student from onsite attendance and allow the learner the flexibility to master skills for the remainder of units at a site other than the designated classroom/laboratory. This provision may be made to accommodate the needs of students who are on task in all courses and may have outside commitments such as jobs or family obligations. All students must complete summative mastery test in onsite classroom/laboratory to complete course requirements.

We recognize that some students and implementations may need substantial face-to-face support, and others may need minimal. Our blended arrangement for computer-based courses allows students to move flexibly through different learning modalities with the goal of optimizing their learning experience based on their preferences, specific needs and learning styles. The arrangement frees up a large portion of the teacher’s day and allows time for him/her to provide individualized assistance for struggling learners.

**Review Committee Question: Explain how students will receive real-time assistance while working on online classes.**

The Edgenuity® course management system shows mastery for each learner and provides teachers real-time data about each student’s progress. The teacher of record can then establish daily/weekly/future goals for the students and monitor progression toward the goals at any time. Time is built into the teacher and student’s day to pull students out of an online class and work with them directly in a breakout room. Using the real-time data, the course’s on-site teacher of record, support staff, or other adults as available will provide face-to-face assistance on an adaptive, as-needed basis through activities such as small-group instruction, group projects, and individual tutoring.

**Review Committee Question: Explain how many students will be in each class at a time and how many students will be in a computer lab at a time.**

We project a maximum of 22 students in a computer or direct-instruction class at any given time. During the first year of operation, each campus will have seven (7) certified faculty members per campus. This includes 3 core teachers, 3 special education teachers/social workers, and one (1) blended learning coordinator. We project a maximum student enrollment of 165 students, which provides a Student:Certified Teacher/Staff Ratio of 23:1. We project 8 separate instructional settings (direct instruction classrooms and computer-based labs) that comprises total of 170 student seats/stations available for 165 students. These figures translates to accommodations to be provided for a maximum of 21 students in a given laboratory or classroom at any given time. The table below summarizes the data.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| CFA Students/Teacher Ratio and Student Classroom/Laboratory Capacity | | | | | |
| Student Enrollment | Certified Faculty | Student: Certified Teacher Ratio | Available Student Stations | Instructional Classroom/Labs | Maximum Number of Students in a Computer Lab (or Classroom) at a Given Time |
| 165 | 7 | 23:1 | 170 | 8 | 21 |

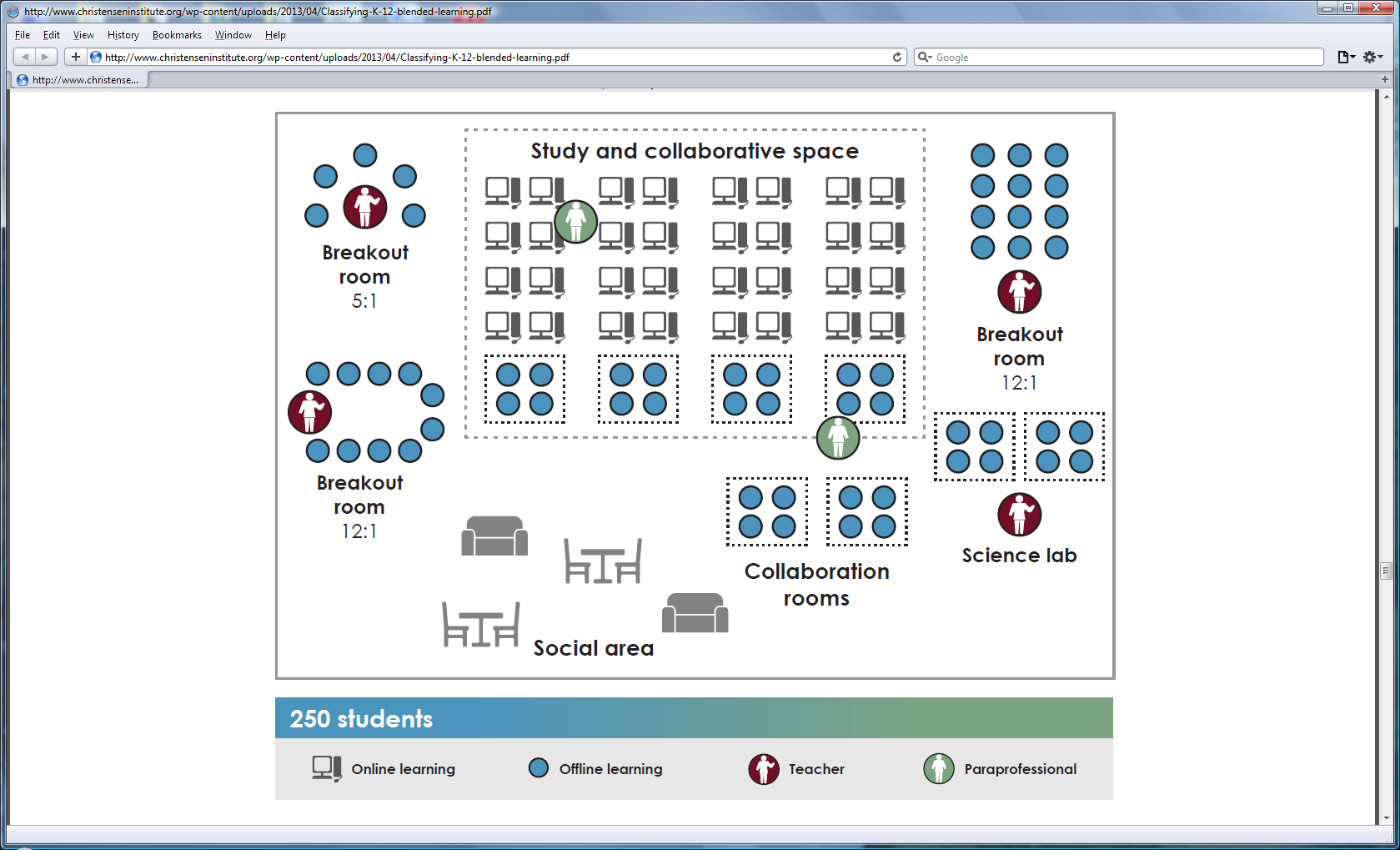
Page 23 of CFA’s original proposal provides a sample design for our computer-based classroom/laboratory (see figure below). Our design shows a computer-based lab with a centralized study and collaborative area that houses 24 computers. There are perimeter breakout rooms (large and small) around the classroom/laboratory where tutoring, seminars and other collaborative activities take place. Collectively, the breakout rooms will accommodate approximately 30 students on an as needed basis. One computer laboratory will have a breakout lab for science that will accommodate 8 students. A second computer-based room for ELA will have a breakout language lab that accommodates 8 students, the third will have a breakout math lab, and the forth lab will have a breakout for social science and career pathways. Each of the latter three breakout labs will also accommodate eight (8) students. A social area that accommodates approximately 8 students will serve as a café for informal discussion, projects discussions, presentations, critical thinking forums and other collaborative activities. We propose at least four (4) computer-based blended classroom/laboratories with breakout rooms and core subject labs social areas at each CFA campus. Collectively, the four labs will provide open seats for 96 students.

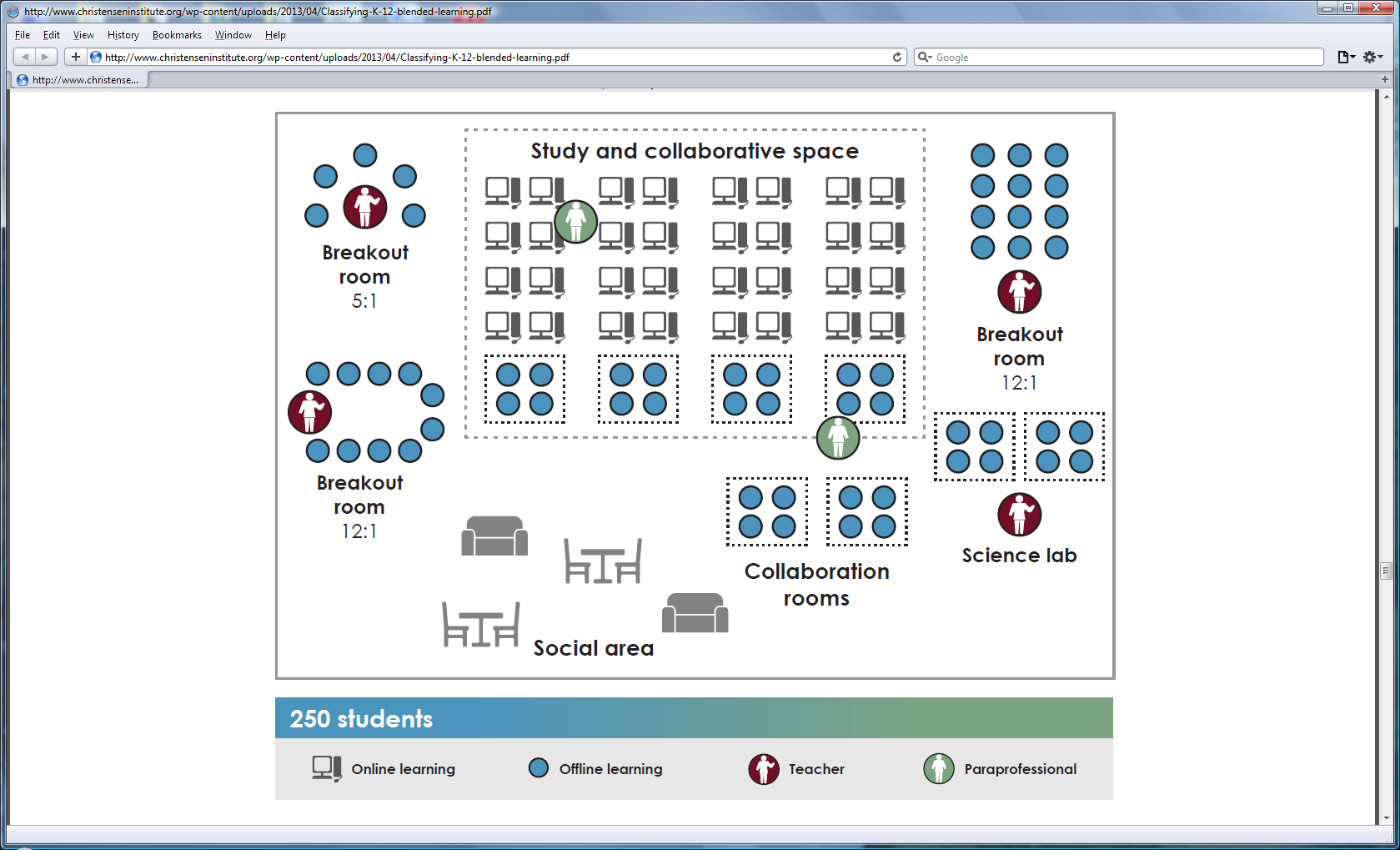
Four traditional blended classrooms that will each accommodate at least 22 students will be base- sites for direct instruction and related presentations. Each of these classrooms will have a breakout room that accommodates approximately 12 students. Direct instruction breakout rooms will be used for small seminars, informal discussion, projects discussion and review, critical analyses, group problem solving and other collaborative activities. The breakout rooms, laboratories, and social areas housed in the computer-based classroom/laboratories will be used for direct instruction on an as needed, as available basis. Collectively, the four direct instruction labs will provide open seats for 88 students.

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When all available computer-based and directed instruction students seats are counted, they total 184 (96 computer-based plus 88 direct instruction), which exceeds the 165 maximum student enrollment per campus that we propose.

Figure 2.1.3. CFA Classroom/Laboratory Design

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Source: Staker and Horn, http://www.christenseninstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Classifying-K-12-blended-learning.pdf, p. 13**.**

## 3.3a Response

**Review Committee Question 3.3a – What are the metrics for success in terms of operations and academics?**

The ongoing formative assessments built in Edgenuity’s® online curriculum will allow our instructors real-time monitoring of student progress. They will be able to tailor small group and one-on-one instruction to meet specific needs of students on a daily and weekly basis. The criterion-referenced assessments that continuously measure the success of our students will be the STAR Enterprise Assessment in reading and mathematics. We will measure individual student growth using the COMPASS® exam. Through Edgenuity®, we will offer COMPASS® test preparation courses to help students prepare for college entry. Year 2 and Year 3 students will sit for the COMPASS® test. The rationale is that if they do not perform successfully during Year 2, they will have a second chance during Year 3.

We estimate increases in the percent of students making growth necessary to reach the 50th percentile after one year of instruction at CFA. Therefore, we will measure ourselves based on the percent of students making typical growth. To do this we will use a value added analysis based on the Student Growth Percentiles (SGP) model. The SGP model uses the mean (or median) score as a normative measure of aggregate growth. If the mean SGP after a second administration and time lapse is significantly greater than 50, then the group of students performed better than expected, on average. If the mean SGP is significantly less than 50, then the group of students performed worse than expected, on average. Simple statistical tests will be used to determine if the mean SGPs for the two test are greater or less than 50. For the COMPASS®, we call this “catch up growth” for college readiness.

Students enrolled in Algebra II and or English III will be required to take the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), the computer-based K–12 assessment that measures competencies in Mathematics and English Language Arts/Literacy. The PARCC determines whether students are on track in their learning for success after high school and is mandatory in Illinois for all high school matriculating at the junior level.

Students who wish to continue to a four-year college or university will participate in the summative American College Test (ACT®) assessment prior to completion of high school requirements. To prepare students for the ACT®, we will offer the ACT Plan course for Year 2 students. One year later, these students will take the ACT test. Using this data, we will determine if the mean SGP is significantly different from 50 in any subject area. If it is above 50, we call this “expected gain.”

Our summative assessment will also include measures on internal items such as graduation portfolios, cross-curricular projects and assignments. We will use district wide rubrics to assess student progress on these internal items. Finally, with assistance from our partners (Gateway to College and Lumity) we will also administer a range of additional assessments including social/emotional surveys, career interest inventory, and learning styles inventory. We will use results of these assessments and inventories to construct interventions for under-performing students and address their need with tutoring, computer assisted skill building, and guided practice.

The academic goals that we set for our students will ensure that our students graduate prepared to meet the challenges of postsecondary education and pursue vocational/career pathways. The following academic goals are meant to be objective, measurable, attainable and linked to curriculum and instruction. Upon authorization ,we will adjust them as necessary to comply with CFA and other state standards:

* **Goal 1**--After attending our school for three years, seventy-five percent (75%) of CFA graduates will be prepared to enter City Colleges without need of remediation; Seventy percent (70%) of our graduates who take the ACT Test will score high enough to enter a four-year college

**Objective 1a--**Our students will develop into proficient readers using the following measurements.

* **Absolute Measurement A:** On the STAR Reading Assessment, 70% of students who have attended our school for two or more years, will attain a Lexile score of 800 or above, and will read at the grade level of 9th grade. 50% of students will attain a Lexile score of 800 with the same grade equivalent during the same time span. 90% of our students who have attended our school for three years will obtain a Lexile score of 1000 or more with the reading grade level of 9th grade or above.
* **Comparative Measurement B:** The percentage of our students who have attended CFA for two or more years will outscore students from within the CPS Options Network by at least 10% across all reading measurements. Thirty percent (30%) more of our unclassified students will read at the 9th grade level after two or more years of attendance.
* **Growth Measurement C:** Each Tier III and Tier II RtI student will make significant gains toward the goal of Tier I within a year of receiving blended instruction and specific reading interventions.
* **Growth Measurement D:** In an analysis of longitudinal growth, the average annual increase of Lexile scores among CFA students will average 5-10 points until 90% of our students reach a lexile score of 1000 or above.

**Objective 1b--O**ur s**tudents will demonstrate proficiency of skills and content knowledge in mathematics** using the following measures,

* + - **Absolute Measure A:** On the STAR Math Assessment, 70% of our students will attain a percentile ranking of 40 or more after attending our school for two or more years with a scaled score of at least 800. After three years, 90% of our students will attain a percentile ranking of 50 or more with a scaled score of at least 1000.
    - **Absolute Measure B:** All students who have attended our school for two or more years will have completed both algebra 1 and geometry coursework with 75% mastery.
    - **Comparative Measure C: S**tudents who have attended CFA for two or more years will outscore students from within the CPS Options Network by at least 10% across all mathematic measurements. Thirty percent (30%) more of our students than CPS Options Network students will have attained a scaled score of at least 900 on the STAR Math Assessment during the same time frame.
    - **Growth Measurement D:** Each Tier III and Tier II RtI student will make significant gains toward the goal of Tier I within a year of receiving blended instruction and specific math interventions.
* **Goal 2--**After attending our school for three years, eighty percent (80%) of CFA graduates will have earned 15 or more college credits by completion of their high school diploma

**Objective 2a--** Our seniors (students having 18 or more credits) will graduate at high rates annually within two school years.

**Objective 2b--** CFA will demonstrate high rates of student retention during the first 5 years of authorization (this is further defined as students who continue in another school even if they decide to leave our school). In other words, we reduce the recidivism of students stopping or dropping out of school.

* **Goal 3.**--After attending our school for three years, sixty-five percent (65%) of CFA Graduates will have earned an industry recognized training certificate by completion of their high school diploma

**Objective 3a**--A high percentage of our students will enter into vocational or post-secondary educational programs upon graduation from CFA annually.

**Objective 3b**—A high percentage of our completers will earn industry recognized certificates.

The table below correlates our goals with set measures, benchmarks and targets.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Table 2.3.a2. CFA Benchmarks and Academic Growth Measures | | | | | | | | | | |
| Related Goal | **Measure** | **Benchmark** | **Grade Level** | **Frequency Reviewed** | **Goal/Target (% Pass Rate or Score)** | | | | | |
| **Planning Year** | **2016-17** | **2017-18** | **2018-19** | **2019-20** | **Steady State** |
| Goal 1 | COMPASS® | On-track” for college readiness | All | Annually | -- | 60% | 65% | 70% | 75% | 75% |
| Goal 1 | COMPASS® Test | Catch Up Growth for College Readiness after one year | All | Annually | -- | 60% | 65% | 70% | 75% | 75% |
| Goal 1 | ACT® PLAN | College ready | Year 2 | Annually | -- | TBD | 18\* | 21\* | 22\* | 23\* |
| Goal 1 | ACT® Test | Expected Gain after one year | Year 2 and 3 | Annually | -- | 55% | 60% | 65% | 70% | 70% |
| Goal 1 | STAR and PARCC  (For Students Enrolled in Algebra II and/or English II)I | Meet AYP | All | Annually | -- | 65% | 70% | 75% | 75% | Meet AYP Annually |
| Goal 1 | GtC New Student/ Student Satisfaction Pre- and Post- Surveys | Highly Satisfied | All | Annually to students enrolled for at least two terms. | -- | Satisfied | Satisfied | Satisfied | Highly Satisfied | Highly Satisfied |
| Goal 2 | Earn College Credits after 3 Years of CFA Attendance | 15 or More College Credits | 3-Year Completers | Annually | -- | NA | NA | 80% | 85% | 85% |
| Goals 2 and 3 | College (2-Year and 4 Year ) Acceptance Rate | 75% of Completers by Year 5 | Com-pleters | Annually | -- | NA | 60% | 70% | 75% | 80% |
| Goal 3 | Completers Earning Industry Recognized Certificates | 75% of Completers | Com-pleters | Annually | -- | NA | 50% | 55% | 60% | 65% |
| \*ACT Plan score for 2017-18 is based on an average of the following four college-readiness benchmark scores, set by ACT for the Plan Test: English, 15; Math, 19; Reading, 17 and Science 21. Average PLAN scores are projected to increase each year after 2017-18. | | | | | | | | | | |

Upon Charter authorization, the Managing Director will present these goals to the CFA Board in order to be adopted and perhaps adapted with any accountability measurements from CPS. Further, these goals will help aid in the pro-active generation of ongoing professional development throughout our school year to drive our instruction. The goals will also be adapted into a monthly report to present to our CFA Board in an effort to gain support and insight from their perspective. Therefore, as a team, we will work diligently to meet and exceed the goals we have set for ourselves in an effort to provide the best possible learning environment and outcomes for our students.

3.3a – How will ensure clear lines of authority and decision-making?

CFA Board sets the context and boundaries for the Managing Director. The most critical element of context is set through the approval of the organization’s strategic plan. It also sets policies, which provide boundaries for the work of the Managing Director, and through the Managing Director, the entire organization.

The Board also uses the strategic planning process to set specific targets (goals or objectives) for the Managing Director, with milestones, and measures progress against them. The Board holds the Managing Director accountable for the attainment of those goals or objectives.

Below that, the Board cannot directly delegate work; that is the job of the Managing Director. The Board will ensure that the Managing Director has an accountability and authority framework in place throughout the organization so that appropriately sized objectives are delegated down the organization in such a way that they are consistent with the attainment of the CFA’s strategy.

The following table has high level operational metrics and goals that upon approval will be codified into an annual operational plan that we will be detailed to the level of process owner and stake holders with need supports.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Goal | Metric | Area | Owner | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 |
| CPS Contractual Performance Measurements |  |  | Senior Management Team |  |  |  |  |  |
| Compass Performance | % of students performing above the remedial level | Academic Services | DoE & Site Director |  |  |  |  |  |
| College Credit | % of Students Enrolled in College credit courses | Academic Services | DoE & Site Director |  |  |  |  |  |
| College Credit Gained | % of Students earning attempted College Credit | Academic Services | DoE & Site Director |  |  |  |  |  |
| Student Credit Gain | % of Students on track to achieve attempted credit | Academic Services | DoE & Site Director |  |  |  |  |  |
| Strong Student  Attendance | % of Students attend classes daily | Student Services | Site Director &  Resource Specialist |  |  |  |  |  |
| Strong Student  Retention | % of Students Retained Quarter over Quarter | Academic Services | DoE / Site Director |  |  |  |  |  |
| Strong Financial Condition | Balanced Budget | Financial Services | DFO | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Strong Financial Condition | Change in Net Assets | Financial Services | DFO | * > $0 | > $0 | > $0 | > $0 | > $0 |
| Strong Financial Condition | Average Days of Cash | Financial Services | DFO | 30 | 60 | 90 | 120 | 120 |
| Strong Financial Practices | Compliance with Debt Obligations | Financial Services | DFO | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Strong Financial Practices | Audit Findings | Financial Services | DFO | None | None | None | None | None |
| Strong Financial Practices | Financial Statement Reporting | Financial Services | DFO | Monthly | Monthly | Monthly | Monthly | Monthly |
| Strong Teacher Retention | % of High Performing Teachers Returning | Academic Services & HR | DoE &  Site Director | 80% | 85% | 90% | 90% | 90% |
| High Student Demand | # of Applicants Per Seat | Academic Services & Community Outreach | Managing Director & Site Director | 1.5 | 2.0 | 3.0 | 3.0 | 3.0 |
| Consistent Network Availability | Network Uptime | Operations | DFO | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Supportive Facility Condition | Staff Survey on Maintenance & Cleaning | Operations | DFO | 90% positive | 90% positive | 90% positive | 90% positive | 90% positive |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Table 2.3.a1. CFA School Measures (Options School) Quality Rating | | | | | | |
| **Performance Indicator** | | **Indicator Score & School Quality Rating Points**  **(of 5 possible; 4.0+ is Good Standing)** | | | | |
|  | | 2015-16  Planning Year | 2016-17 | 2017-18 | 2018-19 | 2019-20 |
| STAR Indicator | | | | | | |
| Average Growth Percentile on STAR - Reading | -- | | 4 | 4.5 | 4.75 | 5 |
| Average Growth Percentile on STAR – Math | -- | | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Percent Making Growth Targets on STAR - Reading | -- | | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Percent of Growth on STAR Math | -- | | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Progress Towards High School Graduation Indicators | | | | | | |
| 1-Year Graduation Rate | -- | | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Credit Attainment Rate | -- | | 4 | 4.5 | 4.75 | 5 |
| Stabilization Rate | -- | | 4 | 4.5 | 4.75 | 5 |
| Attendance Indicators | | | | | | |
| Average Daily Attendance | -- | | 4 | 4.5 | 4.75 | 5 |
| Growth in Attendance Rate | -- | | 4 | 4.5 | 4.75 | 5 |
| School Quality Rating Total Points | -- | | 4.4 | 4.7 | 4.9 | 5 |

CFA leadership will provide the board and respective board committees with periodic reporting on these goals and metrics. By leveraging the board committee structure to affirm these goals and monitor performance outcomes compared to these goals, the board will be able to hold CFA management accountable for expected quality of operational services and drive improvements, if necessary.

3.3c – What is your ethics policy and bylaws for the board?

See Attached

Interview Questions: questions from capacity interview left to ask.

In your own words, how do you intend to provide special education services for diverse learners?

What metrics and targets will you develop to monitor operational progress?

Please see above

How will the board recruit members with the necessary backgrounds and expertise? What are those areas?

CFA will seek individuals that first and foremost have a passion for serving our student population. It is extremely important that board members clearly understand the challenges that our students face and be willing to advocate for resources and policies that can influence and impact CFA’s ability to educate and develop our students. All members of the Board and senior management of the organization will seek to identify individuals that are likely candidates for Board membership. Initially CFA will utilizing social media, (i.e LinkedIn), word of mouth, and partner organizations to identify potential board candidates. CFA will create a board member application process, with support from Lumity, to allow potential candidates to get to know CFA as well as for CFA Board members and staff to get to know potential candidates.

CFA will seek board members with skills and abilities in the following areas:

1. Fund Development / Marketing
2. Program Compliance
3. Finance
4. Facilities

CFA will seek individuals with skill sets in each area and ask them to volunteer as a committee member and/or as an organizational resource.

How does the Board characterize its relationship with Gateways? Lumity? How will you evaluate their effectiveness?

CFA Board believes its partnerships with the Gateway to College National Network and Lumity is more than contractual. The CFA Board selected Gateways and Lumity as partners because of their experiences, track records, investment to enhance the likelihood of success of the CFA model and their demonstrated ability to partner. All three of our organizations worked jointly on the proposal submitted to CPS. During that process, we experienced Gateway and Lumity representatives to be collaborative and willing to challenge each other and strive for a higher vision.

CFA values the expertise of Gateway and their experience of working with over 50 other schools and colleges. Gateway has a rigor to their approach based on this deep expertise, yet, we appreciate their ability to be flexible to meet the unique needs of CFA. Gateway also brings continuous improvement systems to CFA which we embrace to ensure we are achieving our academic goals.

Lumity is a newer resource, and one that the CFA is excited to partner with. Lumity's unique approach to career readineness with an emphasis on STEM is refreshing. The idea of combining brain science, real world projects that benefit the local community, teamwork, while engaging the corporate community is refreshing, engaging and innovative. We see how CFA staff will grow and learn from this approach as well, keeping CFA on its cutting edge.

Written agreements will be administered with both Gateway and Lumity to outline expectations, deliverables and timelines (see attached draft MOUs). In addition, Gateway and Lumity have established evaluation tools to measure the impact of their programs and both organizations have agreed to have consistent representation at standing CFA team meetings to monitor progress toward performance goals. During the first year, monthly reviews will be held to ensure the partnerships are accomplishing the intended outcomes and flexibility in approach to ensure success.

Both organizations have agreed to joint fund development as appropriate.

The Board bylaws state that Connect Future Academies has status as a non-profit corporation. What are the possible implications of this status?

CFA was formed to address the educational and developmental needs of disconnected youth. CFA non profit status will allow us to focus on the charitable / educational activities of the corporation and not focused on the demands of creating profit and revenues as well as addressing the concerns of shareholders and investors.

CFA’s status allows us to access governmental and private resources traditionally reserved for charitable purposes and or causes.

Illinois charter school law says that "A charter school shall be organized and operated as a nonprofit corporation or other discrete, legal, nonprofit entity authorized under the laws of the State of Illinois." - so being a non-profit corporation is a REQUIREMENT of being a charter school in Illinois.  
   
In addition - being a nonprofit corporation is a requirement to become certified as tax exempt under 501(c)(3) of the internal revenue code (with a couple of tiny rare exceptions).

Is there sufficient segregation of duties to ensure that all assets are safeguarded and public funds are used properly?

The responsibility of financial oversight lies with the Board of Directors, which will establish a Finance Committee that oversees financial reporting on a monthly basis. The Board will ultimately ensure that the financial operation of CFA remains aligned with its mission and vision.

CFA’s Director of Finance and Operations (DFO), with the approval of the Board of Directors, will establish internal controls and financial and operational policies and procedures. The DFO is responsible for all matters pertaining to preparation and delivery of budget reports to the Board, in addition to day-to-day operations and compliance of all schools, according to financial policies and procedures of the CMO. The DFO will also establish CFA’s chart of accounts, as well as establish and implement an accounting software system.

Policies and procedures approved by the Board will establish authorized personnel for contract decision making and check signing. All checks written by the accounting staff will use pre-numbered check stock. The bank accounts will be monitored on a weekly basis to ensure that no fraudulent checks have been presented to the bank and paid. Upon receipt of the monthly bank statements, a reconciliation of bank to books will be completed using the software in the general ledger system.

The DFO will oversee the following services:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| In-House Services | Contracted Services |
| Budget and Financial Planning | Audit |
| Bookkeeping and Bank Reconciliations | Legal |
| Procurement and Payables | Payroll Processing |
| Human Resources | Insurance |
| Information Technology | Food Service |
| Security | Custodial & Maintenance |
| Printing and Office Operations | Waste Removal & Grounds |

In Year 3, it is anticipated that CFA will hire a Budget Manager, whose primary responsibilities will be to help the DFO and Managing Director develop the annual budget and to prepare monthly budget reports for presentation to the Board. Both the DFO and the Budget Manager are employed at the CO level and will be shared across all five locations.

Other relevant personnel that will report to the DFO include an Accounting Manager (beginning in Year 2) and a Payroll & A/P Clerk. The Finance & Accounting personnel will follow CFA’s policies and procedures, and compliance with these procedures is a part of the annual review process for all personnel.

Financial Reporting

The Finance Committee will meet each month in advance of regularly scheduled full board meetings. Full board meetings will include time for the DFO to present the monthly financial report. This financial report will include budget vs. actual income statement (statement of activities), as well as a balance sheet (statement of financial position), and a cash flow forecast. Financial reporting is summarized in the following table:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Report Type** | **Personnel Responsible** | **Frequency** |
| Income Statement - Budget v. Actuals Report | DFO & Budget Manager (when applicable) | Monthly |
| Balance Sheet | DFO & Budget Manager (when applicable) | Monthly |
| Cash Flow Projection | DFO & Budget Manager (when applicable) | Monthly |
| Annual Budget | DFO & Budget Manager (when applicable) | Annually |
| Audit | External party | Annually |
| IRS 990 | DFO & Budget Manager (when applicable) | Annually |

CFA’s records will be maintained in compliance with 105 ILCS 5/27A-5(f) and the Not-For-Profit General Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). CFA will submit reports at each of the state required reporting periods according to the procedures required by the Illinois State Board of Education, and/or by Chicago Public Schools.

Budgeting

The DFO will prepare a campus-level budget for each school in collaboration with the campus leadership. In addition, the DFO will work with the central CMO staff to prepare a central budget and will roll-up all campus and central budget information into a consolidated budget. A first budget draft will be developed by February prior to the beginning of the fiscal year on July 1. This draft will be used as a guide for the spring staffing and procurement process. A final fiscal year budget will be approved by the Board in June of each year.

Audits & Compliance

CFA will provide for a complete annual financial audit for each fiscal year by November 1 of the following fiscal year, according to Illinois Charter Law. The annual audit will be performed by an independent firm of Certified Public Accountants (CPAs), licensed to practice by the Illinois Board of Examiners. The audit will be provided to the State Board of Education with the IRS form 990 from the prior year.

The audit will include the state of all revenues, expenditures, and ending balances and will contain accompanying financial statements and other supplementary documentation typically provided by an independent auditor. Additionally, the annual audit report will include the auditor’s independent review of the fiscal policy and procedures of the school.

Legal Compliance

CFA will maintain sufficient records and policies to ensure compliance with all applicable local, state, and federal legal requirements, including the specific requirements of the Charter Agreement with Chicago Public Schools.

CFA will also use internal auditing procedures to maintain compliance with the Office of New Schools’ compliance chart and any applicable teacher certification requirements.

* How will the organization comply with the Freedom of Information Act? Will a FOIA officer be identified on staff and, if so, who will that be?

CFA’s Managing Director will be the designated FOIA officer for CFA. The Managing Director, within thirty days of a signed charter agreement with Chicago Public Schools, will complete the online FOIA certification training offered by the Illinois Attorney General and annually thereafter. All FOIA request will be responded to by the Managing Director in accordance with the state law in the appropriate time frame. All CFA board members and staff will be trained to promptly forward all request submitted under FOIA to the Managing Director. FOIA request will be date stamped upon receipt by the Managing Director and responded to (for most cases within 5 days) as dictated by state statue. The Managing Director in conjunction with CFA legal counsel will review the FOIA request and ensure the request does not fall under any areas of exemption.

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