

New Schools Request for Proposals Request for Amendments (RFA) for the Noble Network of Charter Schools

1. Principal candidate David Oclander is identified in the proposal but did not attend the capacity interview. As the applicant team described the autonomy given to school leaders in determining each school's instructional design and curriculum development, please provide a brief design narrative from Mr. Oclander describing his plans for the campus he will lead, including the following:
 - a. Vision for the school;
 - b. Instructional focus; and
 - c. Key program elements, including any identified curriculum products or programs of study.

RESPONSE: David Oclander is no longer designated as a principal candidate for one of our three proposed schools. Therefore Noble is unable to provide further information on items a, b and c.

2. Please provide a status update with regard to identifying and securing the school leaders for the remaining two proposed campuses. Please describe the process and timeline for the new leaders to design their new campuses, including the specific timeline for program and curriculum development.

RESPONSE: Noble's new Head of Schools, who will oversee all Noble principals, has taken over the hiring process for campus leadership and seeks to select and place campus leaders for all three proposed schools by August 1st. It is highly likely new campus principals will be internal hires. With over 50 campus-based leaders working under our principals, we're confident that we have the internal talent necessary to lead expansion campuses to outstanding results. Selected candidates will begin their year-long principal internship in the fall semester of 2015 and over the course of the coming 2015-2016 school year, they will develop their program, hiring key founding staff and supporting instructional staff in the development of campus curriculum in the spring and summer of 2016.

3. Please provide documentation (Network Map) of the learning standards that are set at the network level and provided to each campus, along with documentation and/or a description of any other non-negotiable educational components that the network sets for its campuses.

RESPONSE: Noble has successfully expanded our network while improving academic performance because of our flat, autonomous model. Strong leaders with significant autonomy, coupled with clear accountability and a student centered atmosphere informed by relevant and current data, is the foundation of Noble. The programs that are mandated at the network level for the academic pieces of our work are few; our non-negotiables include: adherence to the Staff Handbook and Student & Parent Handbook which define the elements of our culture (dress code, discipline, academic expectations, etc.), school year calendar, school schedule requirements, interim assessments, and promotion requirements (academic, enrichment, and wellness). See the attached pacing plans (previously provided for Tier 1), which are created at the network level and provided to all campuses as their roadmap for learning standards tied to network assessments. We have also included assessment documents from our Muchin College Prep campus that demonstrate explicitly how network-wide interim assessments are aligned with the network-wide standards outlined in the pacing plans. The assessment materials from Muchin include: an assessment for freshmen from quarter 1 of the current

school year (grade and quarter identified respectively in the tag 9.1); a map of key college readiness standards (CRS) tied to each question in the assessment (Test Map); quarter 1 open-ended response (OER) portion of the assessment; and a grading rubric for the OERs from the quarter 1 assessment.

4. Please submit four sample ninth-grade unit plans that specifically identify the standards to be taught as well as instructional resources and strategies.
 - a. Provide one English language arts and one mathematics sample plan aligned to the school model being developed by Mr. Oclander.

RESPONSE: Please see item one above. Mr. Oclander is no longer a principal candidate for one of Noble's proposed campuses. We have no information to provide at this time in response to this question.

- b. Provide one English language arts and one mathematics sample plan from another Noble campus with a different instructional focus.

RESPONSE: Most Noble campuses have a similar instructional focus and all build their curriculum based off of the network pacing plans and best practices that have been shared among our campuses and across the high school sector over the years. We have included sample English language arts and math unit plans from two of our campuses that provide a good view into the curriculum at our schools, as well as supporting instructional resources such as lesson plans, quizzes, and worksheets.

5. Please provide a detailed startup plan and timeline that includes key operational and incubation metrics and goals for either the school that Mr. Oclander is planning to launch, or the startup plan used by one of the schools that recently opened in SY 2014-15.

RESPONSE: Please see the attachment titled Activities and Timeline for New Campus Openings for key activities, milestones, deadlines and responsibility for activities that are crucial for successful planning, incubation and operation of every Noble campus.

6. Describe the evaluation and accountability plans for the network leadership team. Please specifically address the following in your response:
 - a. Provide the tool that is used for the CEO's annual evaluation and describe the process for evaluating the CEO, including how the tool is used, who participates in the evaluation, and how the results are communicated to the board as a whole and with the CEO.

RESPONSE: The process for evaluating the CEO is done by the board chair, using the attached tool. The board chair and the CEO develop the annual goals, and then the board chair measures the results against the goals at the year-end. The board chair goes over the results with the CEO and then together they come up with areas for improvement in the following year and develop new goals for the following year. The board chair shares the evaluation of the CEO with board members and other stakeholders.

- b. What are the evaluation protocols and metrics used to evaluate the performance of chief-level staff? Who conducts these evaluations, and how frequently?

RESPONSE: Chiefs are evaluated twice a year by the Assistant Superintendent and each chief has a Performance Management document. A sample document is attached, but it is

customized for each chief.

7. In board meetings, explain the process that the board uses to determine when non-board members are asked to leave the room, the topics that might trigger such a decision, and explain how this action is carried out in a manner compliant with the Illinois Open Meetings Act.

RESPONSE: Noble works to remain compliant with the Illinois Open Meetings Act requirements and does not usually go into a closed session that would require non-Board members to leave the room. Topics that might require a closed session include: hiring, evaluating, terminating or disciplining of specific employees, student discipline, probable, pending or existing litigations, etc. If there is a need for a closed session, a quorum must first be present. A motion will be made to move to a closed session that also states the rationale for it, and then a vote will be taken by roll call in open session to approve going into a closed session. Thorough records are taken in the closed session and the Board will return to an open session once the matters in question have been properly discussed.

8. The governance plan, as presented, does not include a specific provision for parents or community members to hold seats on the network's board. Describe the specific mechanism(s) that ensure appropriate access for parents and community members to provide feedback or express objections or concerns directly to each of the following:
 - a. A specific school – **RESPONSE:** Every Noble campus has its own Parent Advisory Council (PAC) which provides a direct line for parents to communicate with school leadership and support school initiatives. PACs meet at least monthly, sometimes more frequently depending on the campus, and are open to all parents or guardians of students attending the campus. The PACs were created to give parents an outlet to not only voice their feedback and concerns, but also to get more engaged and work alongside the campus to improve the high school experience for all students. Outside of the PACs, parents and guardians are in regular communication with their student's advisor, who works closely with their families to support students' needs. Feedback and objections are often first shared directly with the Advisor and may also be taken directly to the principal, whether via phone, email or during scheduled or unscheduled visits. Parents and community members also utilize the contact form on each campus website to voice concerns or praise to the campus. Also submissions are received by either the principal or a member of campus leadership, who are required to respond to these inquiries.
 - b. The network office – **RESPONSE:** Parents and community members also have the option to submit concerns, complaints or positive items through Noble's network website. These submissions are shared always shared with the respective campus leadership and then may be shared the Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent/Head of Schools where needed to provide appropriate oversight of campus management. Noble employees two Community Organizers whose work is focused on engaging both the communities that our current campuses serve, and those we seek to expand into. The Community Organizers play many roles internal and external to our campuses; they seek to further engage parents in their campus while also sharing their interests and concerns with campus and network leadership. Our Organizers also build relationships with community members, organizations, churches, local legislators, business owners and other neighboring schools to support our campuses and help them become more engaged and supportive of their communities. The work of our Community Organizers offers an outlet for feedback from the community while also building partnerships within the community.
 - c. The governing board – **RESPONSE:** All meetings for Noble's Board of Directors are publicly

posted at the start of our fiscal year, well in advance of the first meeting on Noble’s website. As quarterly meetings approach, notice of meeting logistics is posted at our campuses to further share the information with our parents and allow them the opportunity to attend. Parents and community members are welcome to attend Board meetings, and have in the past. Each meeting opens with a section for public comment to solicit feedback from parents, guardians and community members.

9. The enrollment plans included in the proposal narrative have a significantly larger freshman class in year one than in years two through four, and do not include any assumptions around attrition. However, during the capacity interview, the applicant stated that the network has a goal of 90% student retention (October to October), and is currently trending at about 88% across the network.

- a. Please describe how attrition affects your budgeting process, especially since the capacity interview indicated that Noble Street schools do not backfill in grades 11 and 12.

RESPONSE: We allow for some attrition in budgeting for the campuses, but hope to minimize attrition. We do backfill in the tenth grade if needed to make budget. Also, while we don’t usually backfill in the eleventh or twelfth grades, we would do so (and have done so in the past) if attrition is higher than anticipated.

- b. Provide the rationale for the year one enrollment bubble: is it reflective of an enrollment strategy you have operationalized at existing schools or is it a practice that you intend to begin to operationalize with the proposed new campuses?

RESPONSE: We plan for these campuses to be in housed in private facilities, and year one is relatively quite expensive with facilities costs are that fixed (i.e. rent is the same in year one as year four). The enrollment bubble in year one helps with the initial rent. We plan to operationalize this with proposed new campuses in private facilities.

10. During the interview, the applicant described the negative revenue shown in each individual school’s budget as the result of an equalization process. Briefly describe the process for equalization of both revenues and expenditures.

RESPONSE: The negative revenue listed in the budget templates are the NNST fee (negative revenue to the campuses) and Transfer of Funds to RA (negative to the campuses). It is not related to equalization. On a per student basis, equalization is the net of network revenues less the items below – this result is the dollars available for campuses to budget on their controllable expenses. Each campus receives the same dollar amount per student enrolled. This equalizes the differences in expenses that vary between campuses and are not controlled by the campus. As a result, no student is penalized for attending any campus because they might go to a campus with higher rent or more depreciation, etc.

Examples of Equalized Expenses:

- NNST(main office)Fee
- Maintenance CAPEX
- Debt Service
- Campus Occupancy Expenses
- Other (Insurance, Depreciation, etc.)
- Technology (network)