



NOBLE

Expansion RFP Executive Summary

Noble Network of Charter Schools (Noble) respectfully submits this application requesting the approval of three new Noble campuses to serve Chicago’s students and families in greatest need of a high quality high school education. Noble has a strong fifteen-year history of successful charter school operation and today serves 10,000 students at sixteen campuses spread throughout Chicago in under-resourced communities.

Noble’s mission is to prepare low-income students with the scholarship, discipline, and honor necessary to succeed in college and lead exemplary lives, and to serve as a catalyst for education reform in Chicago. Noble achieves this mission through the commitment of our teachers and school leaders as they work closely with students to close the academic gap and build the foundation necessary for college success. When students begin their freshmen year at Noble, they are typically three to five years behind in reading and math. In just four short years, Noble scholars achieve an average improvement of over six points of academic growth between the start of freshmen year and their junior-year ACT. Additionally, we explicitly teach students self-discipline and help them develop key character skills necessary for college and career success such as dressing professionally, problem-solving, self-advocacy, being timely, being accountable and responsible one’s work, and treating others with respect.

Our vision is to equip every Noble student with the skills and supports they need to complete college and change their future trajectory. In our fifteenth year of operation, time and again we have seen our students rise to meet and exceed the high academic and behavioral expectations we set, and use these tools to achieve their college aspirations. Eighty-four percent of Noble graduates are first generation college students; for these families, our work has a profound impact on the future success of their child and the community expectations about what is possible through education. Last spring, 1,500 seniors graduated from nine Noble campuses with a 100 percent college acceptance rate and 90 percent enrolled in college for the fall. Year after year Noble high schools with junior classes consistently rank among the top ten of all open enrollment high schools in Chicago. Noble’s work is important to the communities we serve because Noble prepares students – academically, socially, and behaviorally – for success in college and beyond.

Given that applicants seeking to open new schools for the fall of 2016 must secure their own facility, we have begun with large target areas for each campus. Our design team is in the midst of a rigorous search of available properties and facilities in these target areas for properties that would meet our program’s educational, location and financial needs while also meeting community need. Once we are closer to securing specific locations for each campus, we will tighten each target area to identify specific student recruitment boundaries. We seek approval to open Noble campus 17 on Chicago’s southwest side and have identified a target area of Garfield Ridge, Archer Heights, Brighton Park, McKinley Park, New City, West Elsdon, Gage Park, Clearing, West Lawn, and the Chicago Lawn communities. Noble understands the strong demand for high quality educational options on the southwest side given the significant overcrowding of existing schools, especially with the large amount of elementary and middle schools

that feed into noticeably fewer high schools. In the past five years, Noble's expansion has taken us to Chicago's far south and southeast communities to bring a quality option closer to the families that need it most. We want to expand into the southwest side because the need is greatest and because we have a long history serving populations very similar to those that reside on the southwest side. We understand the challenges these families face to support their children and by bringing a Noble education closer to home, we can help these families stay in their community and still attain the education they need to support the brightest future for their child.

We look to the communities of Portage Park, Irving Park, Dunning, Montclare, and Hermosa on the northwest side as the proposed location for Noble campus 18. Much like the southwest side, we understand the general school overcrowding in schools serving these target communities. Last year Noble opened its farthest north and west campus in Belmont-Cragin and the demand for the campus has been extraordinary from local families. We hope to provide a high school option close to home for these families that helps enhance the safety and resources of their communities.

Finally we propose to locate our Noble campus 19 on the north side, and target the communities of Rogers Park, West Ridge, Uptown, Lincoln Square, Edison Park, Norwood Park, Jefferson Park, Forest Glen, North Park, Albany Park, and Edgewater for a campus. As our research and outreach deepens, we have learned that there are pockets of families on the north side who don't have the resources or voice to access the high quality education options that currently exist. Some of the education options aren't as strong as they could be and many families are sending their children outside of their communities to ensure they have a proper education within their means.

Noble is in the early stages of community engagement in each of these target areas, but has set forth a plan for each community to ensure that we connect with key community members and families with many diverse interests, experiences, needs and opinions about what their community needs. Our design team and community organizers will go deep into these communities in the spring and summer months and have begun our engagement with current Noble parents and alumni who live within the target areas. Given their firsthand experience with our work, they will provide valuable insight into how a Noble campus might best fit within their community to support its unique needs. Additionally, we are beginning to connect with Aldermen and seek their direction on next key connections, and are starting to attend community meetings for key stakeholders that we have identified through our research and existing partnerships.