
International School of Louisiana Feasibility Study

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Table of Contents

1. [Study Objectives + Work Plan](#)
2. Key Questions
 - a. [Community Engagement + Demand](#)
 - b. [Key Stakeholder Engagement](#)
 - c. [Governance](#)
 - d. [Policy](#)
 - e. [School Model](#)
 - f. [Talent](#)
 - g. [Operations + Financial Support](#)
 - h. [Facilities](#)
3. [Study Conclusions](#)

STUDY OBJECTIVES + WORK PLAN

Once senior leadership from New Schools for Baton Rouge and a partner organization have completed and 'signed off' on the 'partnership disclosure' phase of the diligence process, they enter the feasibility study phase. This approximately 90-day window allows Excellence Fund candidates to explore the feasibility of expanding their impact through opening a high quality school in Louisiana and doing so according to the identified desired timeline during pre-diligence.

NSBR serves as a strategic thought partner as the school operator delves into answering key questions. The Candidate allocates a project manager to lead this work; engaging both executive leadership from the school and senior leadership from NSBR for consultation.

Specifically, International School of Louisiana (ISL) is exploring a K-8 school launch in Baton Rouge.

ISL identified Susan Chapman, Chief of Staff, as the project manager to lead the work in coordination with Kara Maggiore, Senior Director of Strategy and Innovation at NSBR. Ms. Chapman and Ms. Maggiore crafted and adhered to the work plan linked below to maintain momentum on the study and ensure all stakeholders relevant to the study were able to participate. ISL and NSBR team members met every 1-2 weeks from February to May to reflect on and discuss the study's key questions and any other relevant information related to the expansion of ISL's impact in Louisiana.

Related Documents + Feasibility Study Questions:

→ [ISL - Feasibility Study Work Plan](#)

→ Questions:

- Who is the project manager who will lead this work? (This person needs to have sufficient time allocated to focus on working through these questions.)
- How frequently will they meet with the school's growth/expansion working group, including the organization's leader, to share key updates and gather answers to focus questions? (Every 2-3 weeks recommended to ensure alignment.)
- This person will also schedule a check-in with NSBR and a working group every 30 days (at minimum) to align on key concerns and challenges as well as probe on Baton Rouge specific context. (Bi-weekly check-ins recommended with NSBR Senior Director of Strategy and Innovation between larger group meetings.)

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND DEMAND

ISL leadership was engaged by New Schools for Baton Rouge to discuss regional expansion opportunities due to ISL’s unique immersion model and excellent academic results. In exploring the launch of a K-8 brick and mortar school in Baton Rouge, ISL is responding to two distinct needs in our education community. First, access to language immersion programs in the capital area is limited to selective admission magnet schools or private schools with costly tuition. Additionally, Baton Rouge and the Capital Region have long suffered from a lack of access to high quality schools.

As addressed in the Baton Rouge Context slides linked below, Baton Rouge has created a tale of two cities -- one for those able to access private and magnet schools and one for those left to contend with poor performing neighborhood schools. The City of Baton Rouge currently only has two high quality options for full language immersion starting in kindergarten. Baton Rouge Foreign Language Academic Immersion Magnet is a selective admission magnet school that has yearly application numbers far exceeding available seats; Baton Rouge International School is a private, selective admission school whose annual tuition is approximately \$11,000 per child for PK-12 families.

In contrast, ISL would be open enrollment for grades K-1 while for admission into grades 2-8 students would have to take a target (French or Spanish) language assessment. It would be the only open enrollment immersion school for kindergarten and first grade families in Baton Rouge and, as a Type 2 charter, could expand its impact to families living in neighboring parishes also lacking access to quality immersion programs. For example, approximately 40% of students enrolled in ISL’s schools located in New Orleans are residents of Jefferson Parish.

Not only does ISL’s model produce excellent results for students, but the difference the schools are making in creating culturally literate and globally-minded citizens regardless of student demographics has created an outsized demand for their schools. Below is a chart demonstrating the demand for ISL’s schools across the Greater New Orleans region in years that ISL has participated in the OneApp system.

Year	# of Applications (open seats)	Total Enrollment
2020-21*	1,362 (235 open seats)	1311
2019-20	2,021 (235 open seats)	1401
2018-19	2,081 (235 open seats)	1405

2017-18	1,166 (235 open seats)	1402
2016-17	1,316 (235 open seats)	1463
2015-16	1,819 (235 open seats)	1385

*ISL opted out of round 2 of the OneApp process.

ISL has an experienced, mission-aligned, in-house team that coordinates and manages all Marketing and Public Relations strategies and works with community organizations and advertising agencies to educate the public on ISL’s value proposition and recruit students. Karla Cochran, who has been with ISL since 2008, acts as the Director of Communications and Development and is responsible for overseeing all communications and development functions of the organization, including public relations, marketing, advertising, fundraising, grants, and communications management. Ms. Cochran ensures information is shared across campuses in a consistent manner. Externally she engages with the media and press and leads fundraising, grant, event efforts across ISL. In support of expansion to Baton Rouge, it will be necessary to add a member to Ms. Cochran’s team that will be dedicated to Baton Rouge operations.

ISL’s community engagement and recruitment efforts balance informing about and celebrating school choice while also highlighting the unique value add of ISL’s full immersion program. Through lessons learned after a failed launch in Jefferson Parish, ISL has been more intentional in how it introduces its model to families and places itself as an organization in the broader context of school choice in Louisiana.

Marketing efforts have included a robust annual strategic marketing plan executed during the application period -- typically October to May -- to attract diverse applicants. This plan has included printed material, e-newsletters, signage, as well as the use of billboard, streetcar, and bus shelter advertising, and radio ads in English and Spanish. Open Houses are scheduled at multiple ISL locations. If local health conditions prohibit in-person gatherings, these events transition to a virtual platform and are available on the school’s website for viewing on-demand. Social media is used to hold virtual tours as well as information and Q&A sessions.

Establishing good relationships with local neighborhood organizations has also been productive for ISL in building community presence and supporting recruitment efforts. It is recommended that ISL engage relevant community organizations and grassroots/grassroots influencers early in the launch process (16-18 months out) in raising awareness of its school model among families and building relationships in

the community. Once a location for the school is determined, ISL Family Liaisons will also engage with neighborhood organizations and surrounding Preschool and Head Start programs.

ISL will inform current families of expansion opportunities and ask for their support in engaging Baton Rouge families around what ISL’s immersion model can mean for their student(s) and families. Current families will also be used to advocate for ISL and promote the model among their personal and professional networks. The organization must be intentional in this because parent access to the school model is limited to ensure the immersion barrier is not broken.

While Baton Rouge and the broader region are familiar with immersion and high performing charters, one barrier ISL may face in promoting its school model is addressing parents’ early concerns about where their student(s) will attend high school as ISL only serves students through 8th grade. The table illustrates where past ISL students have enrolled in high school.

Selective Public School*	Orleans Parish Public Charter School	Other Parish or State Public School	Private/Parochial School
30%	33%	15%	22%

*This includes language immersion high schools.

To address this concern, it is recommended that ISL include alumni stories in its recruitment outreach to highlight the varied paths to success -- in high school, college, and beyond -- that have been available to its students due to their language immersion and academic programming . In fact, ISL currently employs four alumni as teachers in its New Orleans schools. Helping parents to envision their student(s)’ future will aid in assuaging fears around accessing high quality high school options.

NSBR’s primary enrollment support for schools is through the now NSBR-run EnrollBR platform. NSBR believes a single school choice window is good for families and makes access to quality schools more equitable. A single school choice window means:

- Families receive multiple reminders to make a proactive school choice
- Families are able to apply to more school options during a single application window
- Consolidated marketing efforts can better reach underserved families
- Schools of choice benefit from a consolidated marketing campaign
- Individual school efforts will reach a “primed” audience
- Consolidated reporting can also provide better market-wide trend data, allowing for more responsive tactics

With EnrollBR, unlike other common applications like New Orleans' OneApp, schools will be able to maintain their own waitlists and run their own lotteries. Throughout the Pandemic, NSBR sponsored additional virtual programming for families to learn more about participating schools and continues to be adaptable to unique circumstances affecting recruitment and enrollment efforts.

Related Documents + Feasibility Study Questions:

→ [Baton Rouge Education Context Slides](#)

→ [SY20-21 Enroll BR Launch Slides](#)

→ Questions:

- With whom have you spoken with in the Baton Rouge community that leads you to believe that this school is something that is desired in and will be beneficial to the Baton Rouge education ecosystem and the broader community?
- What concerns exist about being able to attract sufficient students? Who on your team is responsible for driving student demand for your school and creating a recruitment/enrollment plan and systems?
- What can you share in this 90-day window to show that there is sufficient student/family demand for your model?

KEY STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Aligned with the culture of ISL, an ISL education is a joint effort and commitment from teachers, students, and parents. These stakeholders become the organization's voice in the community and are a critical support mechanism for successful growth to a new region like Baton Rouge. ISL plans to conduct stakeholder engagement across various groups as appropriate via information and planning sessions. ISL has a foundation of successful replication in Orleans Parish as well as important lessons learned from an unsuccessful Jefferson Parish launch -- largely due to political interference -- to build upon and continue to successfully educate students by maintaining core tenets of the immersion model.

The International School of Louisiana Board of Trustees is dedicated to serving students through language immersion and is supportive of intentional expansion of ISL's impact in Orleans Parish and across Louisiana. While they are positively inclined toward expanding ISL's education model in new regions, the following questions from board members and senior leadership are anticipated in regards to growth in Baton Rouge:

- What is our growth capacity - financial and personnel?
- What do transportation requirements and costs look like in Baton Rouge?
- Where do we recruit teachers and leaders, and what in person connection will our current schools have to those staff members?
- What would facility options look like? Is there financial support for facilities?

NSBR is prepared to support ISL school and board leadership in any board informing and engagement efforts, including presenting to the Board on the historical educational and political context of Baton Rouge and the imperative for providing families with high quality school options.

ISL teachers and leaders understand the importance of school choice and the demand for high quality public education. Anticipated questions from this stakeholder group will revolve heavily around how this expansion will impact their schools and levels of support. ISL Leadership plans to reinforce that they are approaching this expansion opportunity with an intentionality and collaboration that mirrors the successful planning and launch of the West Bank campus. Likewise, reflections on a more impulsive Jefferson Parish growth decision, including the ownership and accountability throughout the school's closure, have led to a more thoughtful, collaborative process that includes the support of NSBR as a strategic thought partner and funder.

ISL does not foresee any issues regarding building trust and investment in further growth among current families. As has been done during previous growth, ISL will inform and engage current families to ensure they understand the immersion program and how expansion is beneficial to the current

schools as well as can advocate and promote the Baton Rouge school among their networks. One anticipated parent concern is that ISL may be taking on too much with the launch of a new Pre-K program in Fall 2023 and a related facility purchase in Orleans Parish in addition to a new K-8 campus in Baton Rouge. Much like with the teachers and leaders, ISL will focus on informing them of the intentional process by which the decisions were made and the logistics and progress of execution, including prioritizing a slow growth model in Baton Rouge, to assuage any concerns.

ISL recognizes State Superintendent Dr. Cade Brumley as a key influencer impacting the direction the organization is seeking to take, particularly with the plan to seek auto-replication as a Type 2 state-authorized charter school for the Baton Rouge campus. As is understandable with a leadership transition during a pandemic, recent communication and support from the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) regarding charter operations has been minimal to non-existent. ISL will require thought partnership and support from NSBR as to how they should best approach communicating their growth plans to Dr. Brumley to provide the clearest, most streamlined pathway forward. Other state education stakeholders include Dr. Kelli Peterson (Assistant Superintendent of Equity, Inclusion and Opportunities) and BESE members Kira Orange-Jones, Preston Castille, and Ronnie Morris.

While ISL will likely replicate as a Type 2 charter school -- best enabling them to execute potential growth with quality and fidelity to model -- leadership also understands the need for support from and collaboration with the local districts in which their students reside. ISL will engage and build relationships with East Baton Rouge Parish School Board members and other elected officials, educators, families, and community activists from Baton Rouge and surrounding districts. NSBR and its Board of Directors can play a key role in introducing the ISL board and leadership team to key district board and staff members as well as community influencers and organizers.

Related Documents + Feasibility Study Questions:

→ Questions:

- Are there regional and/or school level leaders in your organization that need to have questions answered to support this growth initiative? What questions do they need answered? How do you plan to engage them in the process to get their buy-in to move ahead with developing your growth plan by the end of the feasibility study?
- Aside from your leadership team and board, who are the key influencers that impact the direction of your organization? What questions do they need answered? How do you plan to engage them in the process to get their buy-in to move ahead with developing your growth plan by the end of the feasibility study?
- How have you engaged your current families to understand their desire for/questions about what expansion in or to Baton Rouge means for the organization and their student(s)? What questions do they need answered? How do you plan to engage them in

the process to get their buy-in to move ahead with developing your growth plan by the end of the feasibility study.

- Which other parties may have a relevant stake or perspective on your school opening?

GOVERNANCE

ISL's seven member board is composed of community members with diverse backgrounds, skills, and experiences, including current and former parents of ISL students. Grant Ligon (President) was a long-time member of the ISL community and board while his daughter attended ISL; he is a retired Financial Analyst who is actively involved in real estate investing. Other members include Chad Rice (Vice President), Lena Zaitseva McCloskey (Treasurer), Jade Brown-Russell (Secretary), Larissa Muetzel, Max Correa, Sarah Murphy, and Sharon Barthelemy.

As discussed in Key Stakeholder engagement, board buy-in and forward progress are not anticipated issues. Board members have expressed confidence in senior leadership's ability to make sound decisions and involve the board where appropriate. ISL's board engagement process will involve the methods already implemented: board education, open communication, and collaboration. NSBR will also continue to provide resources to the board to further support informed, sound decision-making.

Regarding governance structures ISL plans to add two to three board members from the Baton Rouge community and build a Baton Rouge specific committee that would lead on issues pertaining to the school. Board members participating in the governance discussion expressed the desire to prioritize having a Baton Rouge parent on the board as one of the additional board members.

ISL Board of Trustees culture directly reflects the culture of the school. Board members must adhere and commit to a mission that is characterized by diversity and community responsibility, a belief in ALL students' right to a quality education, and active participation and engagement in board and organizational activities.

To ensure a continuity of this culture and build a cadre of well-rounded, educated, connected, and supportive board members, ISL will use already existing connections and established relationships within the education and business communities. ISL uses a matrix of board demographics to determine skills and experience needed to maintain a diverse and self-sustaining board. NSBR can also play a role in connecting ISL to board members who are passionate about their mission and who will contribute positively to the organization, particularly from our yearly Changemakers cohort.

Related Documents Feasibility Study Questions:

→ [ISL Board of Trustees Website](#)

→ Questions:

- What questions will your board have to sign off on moving ahead with this growth initiative? How do you plan to engage them in the process to get their buy-in to move ahead with developing your growth plan by the end of the feasibility study window?

- How does the new school fit into the organization’s governance structure? Does your identified governance structure align with state policy?
- How will you build relationships with and recruit new board members from Baton Rouge and other identified growth regions to help build good will and add their community experience and other expertise areas to the organization?

POLICY

There are no academic policy barriers to ISL's expansion throughout the state. ISL has demonstrated academic excellence and strong student achievement since its first year of operation. Despite changes in state assessments and accountability metrics over past years, ISL's experienced, highly qualified team have continued to adapt in order to improve year after year, maintaining an overall letter grade of "B" or higher with a consistent A Progress Index since that scoring formula began in SY17-18. ISL has also demonstrated operational excellence, adhering to sound fiscal policies and meeting state compliance metrics, earning them a 10 year renewal in 2014-15.

In its expansion to Baton Rouge, ISL will ensure a transparent lottery process. ISL plans to participate in EnrollBR to ensure equity of access to the application process and will run a blind, randomized lottery per state policy for grades K-1. After grade 1, students must take a language proficiency exam before being enrolled in the program.

In its charter and in service of its diversity mission, ISL commits to serving a student population that, at a minimum, is 53% economically disadvantaged (ED). While the EBR Parish School System maintains an ~80% ED rate, broader city-wide demographics feature a rate of 30%, which is significantly lower than the Greater New Orleans area. As a comparison, BR FLAIM, an EBR immersion magnet school, currently serves 39.63% ED population, which is just shy of the 40% Title I funding requirement. In order to meet this ED % goal in Baton Rouge as well as receive critical Title I dollars, ISL may need to include some preferences for students who are ED in its initial lottery round

ISL seeks to expand to Baton Rouge through automatic replication under its current charter due to its academic and operational performance. Bulletin 126 policy regarding automatic replication is below.

521. Charter School Replication for BESE-Authorized Charter Schools

(Formerly §523)

A. A charter operator may open and operate up to two additional charter schools without making a formal application to BESE:

1. the average of the school performance scores of all Louisiana charter schools operated by the charter operator is equivalent to a letter grade of "B" or higher for the previous three school years; and
2. the average progress index of all Louisiana charter schools operated by the charter operator is equivalent to a letter grade of "A" for the previous three school years;
3. all BESE-authorized charter schools operated by the charter operator have earned designations of "Meets All Expectations" or "Meets Most Expectations" for financial and organizational performance as provided for in the charter school performance compact in each of the previous three years of operation.

B. If the charter operator contracts with a management organization, the state superintendent may consider all charter schools operating in Louisiana affiliated with the management organization in determining whether or not the charter operator meets the academic requirements above.

C. The new charter schools must serve the same grade levels and enrollment boundaries as one of the operator’s charter schools currently in operation that meets the eligibility criteria outlined above.

D. The type of charter schools the charter operator may open shall be determined as follows.

Charter School Meeting Eligibility Requirements	Permitted New Types of Charter Schools
Type 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · New Type 2; · May be a Type 2 conversion charter school upon receiving approval from the professional faculty, staff, and parents or guardians of the pre-existing school, as required in §507, and meeting the other eligibility requirements to apply for a Type 2 in §503; · May be a Type 5 subject to approval by the RSD to transform a school under the jurisdiction of the RSD
Type 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Type 4
Type 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · New Type 2, subject to the approval of the state superintendent; · May be a Type 2 conversion charter school upon receiving approval from the professional faculty, staff, and parents or guardians of the pre-existing school, as required in §507, and meeting the other eligibility requirements to apply for a Type 2 in §503; · May be a Type 5 subject to approval by the RSD to transform a school under the jurisdiction of the RSD

E. The charter operator shall notify BESE of its intent to open one or two additional charter schools pursuant to this Section at least 120 calendar days prior to the day on which each additional school shall enroll students.

F. At least 90 calendar days prior to the day on which each additional school shall enroll students, BESE shall enter into a charter agreement with the chartering operator for each additional school and shall notify BESE of its action.

G. The charter operator must complete all processes and required by law and BESE policy to open a school, including, but not limited to the procurement of all required permits, inspections and approvals necessary to safeguard student safety and welfare.

ISL currently meets the academic performance criteria outlined in bullet a as it has achieve an overall letter grade A or B each year of operation; however, ISL is unable to demonstrate compliance with the criteria in bullet b due to a number of factors outside of the organization’s control, including the pause of testing in SY19-20 due to the Pandemic and significant changes to the SPS formula in SY17-18. ISL

and NSBR should engage the LDOE, including Superintendent Brumley and Dr. Kelli Peterson, to determine how to best navigate the progress score and locale criteria.

Related Documents Feasibility Study Questions:

→ Questions:

- What are the key policy challenges that would keep your school from being successful?
- What circumstances would keep your local district (or the State if necessary) from being able to authorize your model?
- Do you foresee any authorizer accountability challenges with being an A-B school in compliance with state laws according to the following criterion? (See [charter school performance compact](#)) Which criterion do you foresee as challenging? How will you address these challenges in pursuit of academic excellence?
- Are there any special scenarios you are envisioning that would not be aligned with an open-enrollment, lottery-based (if necessary) student application process?

SCHOOL MODEL

The mission of the ISL is to provide a challenging education emphasizing language immersion, international awareness, the celebration of diversity and community responsibility. ISL is the only school chartered before hurricane Katrina fortunate enough to see continued success, growth, and thriving student population. The school provides French and Spanish language immersion and fosters global learners. In fact, it is the only school in Orleans Parish to offer language immersion in a language other than French with demand for Spanish immersion seats outpacing French immersion 3 to 1 (submitted applications).

Organizational History

ISL was founded in 2000 by a group of parents eager to improve public education in Louisiana. These parents had children in a French immersion program but were frustrated by the predominance of white, wealthy culture in the school and wanted to expand access to language immersion to families that reflect the New Orleans community at large. They envisioned a tuition-free, non-selective charter school that would cultivate diversity, inclusion, and equity. After being rejected in both Orleans and Jefferson Parish, the school was approved by the State as a Type 2 charter school.

Today, ISL educates students in Kindergarten through eighth across three campuses: Dixon (K-2), Uptown (3-8), and Westbank (K-5). ISL’s commitment to diversity and cultural literacy is evident in both their teacher and student populations. ISL employs over 200 staff members from 33 countries, fluent in 23 different languages, who work together to educate approximately 1300 students. See below for breakdown of ISL student demographics in comparison to EBR Parish School System (from 2/1/21 official state count).

School System	American Indian	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Hawaiin/ PI	White	Multi Race	ED %	SPED
ISL	<1%	1.47%	38.5%	29.82%	<1%	24.48%	5.42%	60.88%	6.4%
EBR	<1%	3.9%	71.49%	11.67%	<1%	11.36%	1.22%	79.41%	10%

In 2012 ISL opened a Type 1 charter school in Jefferson Parish after being invited by the local school board to apply. At the time, the Jefferson Parish school system planned to close all of their immersion programs; however, parents banded together to prevent the closure of the immersion programs, leaving ISL fighting for students and not able to fill seats. A requirement of late entry immersion was also a large part of the school’s failure to launch well. ISL voluntarily closed the school, relinquishing their charter, and was able to retain 75% of the school’s students at the other ISL campuses.

From their first day of school, ISL students learn core academic subjects in either French or Spanish. They learn a second language naturally, through everyday conversation and classroom instruction. Over 80% of students enter ISL at Kindergarten from English-speaking homes and leave in 8th grade as bilingual speakers, sometimes trilingual. ISL offers a full immersion experience in French or Spanish (Kindergarten through 8th grade), as well as Mandarin Chinese in middle school.

The City of Baton Rouge currently only has two options for full language immersion starting in kindergarten. Baton Rouge Foreign Language Academic Immersion Magnet is a selective admission magnet school that has yearly application numbers far exceeding available seats; Baton Rouge International School is a private, selective admission school whose annual tuition is approximately \$11,000 per child for PK-12 families.

In contrast, ISL would be open enrollment for grades K-1 while for admission into grades 2-8 students would have to take a target (French or Spanish) language assessment. It would be the only open enrollment immersion school for kindergarten and first grade families in Baton Rouge and, as a Type 2 charter, could expand its impact to families living in neighboring parishes also lacking access to quality immersion programs. ISL serves students from seven parishes across its three campuses in Orleans Parish.

Academic Performance

ISL works diligently to provide a challenging education emphasizing language immersion, international awareness, the celebration of diversity, and community responsibility. The critical work done by ISL has earned school, teachers, and students recognition, nationally and locally. ISL is among the first Louisiana State Certified Immersion Schools, is one of only two Spanish language immersion schools in the metro area, notably won the COSEBOC Excellence in Education award for the effective elimination of the gap in achievement scores for boys of color, and is the proud honoree of the 2015 Public Education Award for Exemplary Language Immersion Education, among other recognitions and awards. Performance on Louisiana state assessments is outlined in the table below.

School Year	SPS Score	PI Score (Growth)	Additional Notes
2018 - 19	84.2 B	95.3 A	<u>Academic Index</u> : 75.9 - In comparison, 84.6 is the highest AI in the NSBR portfolio; that school serves 40% less students who are economically disadvantaged than ISL does. <u>Recognition(s)</u> : Top Gains Honoree, Equity Honoree
2017 - 18	85.2 B*	98.9 A	<u>*Note</u> : A new SPS formula was implemented, putting more weight on “Mastery” level achievement versus the previous

			bar of “Basic”. Using the older formula, ISL would have achieved an SPS of 99 B. <u>Academic Index:</u> 76.5 (new formula) <u>Recognition(s):</u> Top Gains Honoree, Equity Honoree
2016 - 17	106.3 A	n/a*	<u>*Note:</u> Progress Index scores were implemented in SY17-18. Previously, growth was calculated and points (up to 10) were awarded based on a school’s demonstrated progress. ISL earned 7.6 points <u>Academic Index:</u> 97 <u>Recognition(s):</u> Top Gains Honoree
2015 - 16	100.6 A	n/a*	<u>Academic Index:</u> 96.2 <u>*Note:</u> Progress Index scores were implemented in SY17-18. Previously, growth was calculated and points (up to 10) were awarded based on a school’s demonstrated progress. ISL earned 3.8 points <u>Recognition(s):</u>

Curriculum + Instruction

ISL’s curriculum and instruction practices are grounded in their mission and model to promote language immersion and cultural literacy. In addition to core subjects, ISL offers cultural programming that allows students to engage with learning that balances more traditional educational best practices with innovation and variety.

ISL uses a mixture of rated and non-rated curricula due to their immersion model’s unique needs, particularly in grades K-2 when there is no instruction in English. For the past four years, Eureka math has been used in grades K-8. The ELA curriculum is teacher-created and makes use of materials from a number of resources, including some LA Tier 1 materials. There is close collaboration on ELA standards and instruction between target language and English ELA teachers.

ISL has an award winning middle school science teacher on staff who has led a multi-year project of designing phenomena-based science units. The ISL science curriculum includes quarterly "science weeks" that focus on experiential learning, with embedded math and language arts standards. ISL partners with area organizations focused on technology, ecology, biology, and other sciences to give students off-campus field experiences conducting research and experiments.

Near the end of the school year ISL holds “Fabulous Fortnight,” a two week period where middle school suspends traditional classroom instruction, and students engage in special classes that cover topics that range from cooking to arts to robotics. Teachers propose their Fabulous Fortnight specialty

at the beginning of the school year.

In celebration of its language immersion and cultural literacy mission, for the past decade ISL has held a once per semester celebration of language and culture with a culminating student performance event. Each class picks a country and delves into the history and culture of that country. An open house is scheduled for students and families to go from classroom to classroom (ie. country to country) to see the learning projects. On the last day of the school year, International Day is held as a culminating celebration of the year.

ISL uses standards based grading, a method of grading that measures student progress relative to specific learning standards. Each assessment students take has the tested standard(s) on it. To keep parents informed on student progress, bi-weekly reports are sent home that are aligned to progress reports and report cards. In order to onboard and invest parents in this grading method, ISL informs parents early on and incorporates it in all assessments, communications, etc. For report cards and reporting purposes, including student transcripts, ISL translates the standards based grading into letter grades.

In efforts to support more equitable, inclusive instruction, ISL works with Roots ConnectED -- a training program for schools built from Community Roots Charter School in New York. Work includes development in Universal Design for Learning UDL with a focus on equity and inclusion, especially in middle school through examination of social studies standards, co-teaching methods in grades K-2, and science instruction in grades 3-5. ISL also contracts with Achievement Network (ANet), a Tier 1 rated support, to assess and progress monitor students in grades 2-8 as well as to provide standards based, data driven coaching support to teachers.

K-5 Academic Model

In grades K-5 target language immersion is prioritized with no English language instruction in grades K-1 while grades 2-5 receive instruction in all core subjects in their target language and only have one hour of instruction in English Language Arts. Even intervention and special education supports are provided in target languages, making it important to grow special educators from within the ISL community.

Classrooms are self-contained and have a teaching assistant (TA) fluent in the target language to support the lead teacher. Students receive enrichment classes in visual arts, music, circus arts, and PE. Classes prepare and present target language performances to their peers during assemblies, which are attended by families.

6-8 Academic Model

In grades 6-8 major shifts occur for students. Their schedule shifts to a modified A/B 90 minute block

schedule in which they take ELA, science, and social studies in English as well as math and target language arts in either French or Spanish per the student's language pathway. All students also take mandarin chinese, physical education, and an additional student-chosen elective (options vary year to year).

Because students have been instructed primarily in target languages before entering middle school, students can often encounter challenges similar to students who identify as English Language Learners. Cognizant of this, teachers adapt curriculum and instruction to students' needs, including front loading vocabulary through intentional instruction.

Middle school students participate in an advisory led by a teacher that also acts as the primary contact for their students. Advisory focuses on study and social emotional skills, racial equity discussions, and community building circles.

Anticipated Challenges

There are no immediate or obvious challenges to replicating ISL's model in Baton Rouge; however, much of the organization's ability to replicate the model will rely on appropriately staffing up in the central office for regional support as well as being able to hire and properly onboard an aligned school leader and founding staff. If expansion moves forward, NSBR will need to support the identification and funding of a school leader at least one year prior to launch to allow for development, onboarding, and execution of launch.

Additionally, ISL has a Circus Arts program, which is an important part of their model and culture. All grades receive Circus Arts instruction, depending on staffing availability. In the early grades, ISL offers Circ Lit, which combines movement and literature to support early literacy and enhance both motor and brain development. Older students learn circus skills like juggling, acrobatics, and unicycling. In middle school, ISL has a performance troupe that participates in Muses and performs annually in the Kids' Tent at JazzFest. The program is led by a Circus Arts Coordinator that is trained in that branch of the arts, which will require either a new hire in Baton Rouge to replicate the program or the addition of some other kind of international performance art.

More discussion of instructional staff hires are included in the Talent section of this report.

Related Documents Feasibility Study Questions:

Questions:

- What is the competitive advantage and/or unique value add of your school model compared to other East Baton Rouge offerings?

- What challenges do you anticipate in transferring your model to Baton Rouge (if new to the region and/or state)?
- What challenges do you anticipate in replicating your model with fidelity and without sacrificing quality?
- What parts of the hybrid/virtual model implemented for Covid-19 pandemic do you plan on permanently incorporating into your model? What is the value add (to growth plans and instructional quality) of implementing these practices? What additional support do you need to implement these changes?

TALENT

Developing and retaining high quality talent is the driving force at ISL. Their primary resource for target language teachers remains the Louisiana International Associate Teacher Program in the World Languages Department of the LA Department of Education.

The organization also uses local teacher fairs, national job boards, and word of mouth referrals by current and former staff and families. Most teachers come by word of mouth and tend to stay longer. They onboard as assistant teachers then develop into teachers, etc. This is particularly true for the Spanish speaking community. ISL is a member of the American Association of School Personnel and sends job listings to them. The National Business Organization provides international applicants but visa status was a roadblock with that organization; ISL redirects those applicants to go through the World Languages Program at the LDOE.

Teacher Assistants for target languages vary by language track. It's easier to find bilingual/native spanish speakers. French it's hard to find native or bilingual French speakers. TA's vary in age, demographic, etc.; it is an appealing first job for people who studied french or spanish in college/university. On the French side, ISL is a good place for native speakers who otherwise would be in a predominantly english speaking community. They come to be with people who share their culture and identity and wish to learn and experience more within those cultures.

Turnover for target language teachers is naturally high due to visa and other restrictions. ISL has successfully applied for permanent residency for six to eight employees over the past five years with approximately 25% leaving within a year. Sponsoring for permanent residency is costly, so they have had to reevaluate their support of that process.

Regarding teacher certification, ISL's goal is to hire certified teachers -- approximately 60-70% of their teachers are certified. ISL has assisted teachers in getting certified. It is important for both the teachers and school. Parents look for certified teachers when making enrollment decisions. Teachers coming from foreign countries have a breadth of experience in their country but often their certification does not transfer to the United States. In this case alternative certification methods are engaged. Visa status is really important (even more important) than certification, but often a teacher can't have visa status without certification. Belgium, Spain, Mexico, and France have treaties with the US that include certification reciprocity. For Haiti and Honduras, specifically, ISL has to get them certified in order to sponsor them for H1 Visa.

Once teachers are hired, their first meeting is with HR, which guides them through orientation, including an introduction to ISL as an organization and any pertinent paperwork. Then they move to their assigned campus and meet with their school leader. Each school leader has a folder for new hires to study and reference that aids in the onboarding process; the binder includes campus specific information. Exit surveys are done when a staff member is leaving the organization for any reason. Employees meet with HR staff. In the interview HR reviews end of year closure and provides an opportunity to ask questions. ISL's goal is to make every exit a positive exit from school. At times, teachers return to the school when the exit is positive.

The current Talent/HR team consists of one HR manager and one payroll manager. With expansion to Baton Rouge, the team would need to add a member to work hand in hand with the Baton Rouge school leader, assisting them in interviews and other hiring processes. The school leader makes final hiring decisions and informs HR and Head of School of intent. Final salary and benefits offers go through those two offices.

NSBR will provide support through traditional and virtual job fairs and in providing value add through strategic support, including Heads of Talent collaborative, 1:1 targeted recruitment through Chief of Minds and other headhunters (rooted in Capital Region community, and other individualized support as needed).

Note: Will need a new teacher trainer for the new campus. Haven't had one before but various models that included things like mentor teachers (by GL or TL), small cohort of teachers meeting with mentor teacher. One lead French teacher at Dixon campus to support new French teachers to transition to ISL teaching model/culture.

Related Documents Feasibility Study Questions:

→ NSBR Talent Development Opportunities

→ Questions:

- What are the unique leader, teacher, and operational staff traits that you will look for when staffing your school? Given your growth plans and Baton Rouge's talent ecosystem, what do you see as the key challenges in staffing your school with enough qualified staff?
- What are the key challenges that would keep you from identifying a school leader at least a year before opening)?

OPERATIONS + FINANCIAL SUPPORT

As with other teams, Operations is a direct extension of ISL’s culture of excellence. Operations and finance team members boast deep, varied experience in their fields and demonstrate a commitment to the mission and vision of ISL.

Emily Thomas, ISL’s Chief of Operations, manages organizational and building operations, including human resources, facilities, information technology, and food services. Functions related to communications, grants, and admissions falls under the Head of Schools office rather than operations.

Mike Dunn (Dunn Financial Solutions) supports some financial operations, including managing the general ledger, preparing reports for the board and LDOE, managing grants, and working with auditors. He will also support any financial projections for NSBR funding opportunities.

Below is more information about expected MFP funding for the Baton Rouge school with conservative projections for economically disadvantaged and special education populations. With local sales tax revenue exceeding expectations, the total MFP amount may rise closer to \$12,000.

Local Revenue Sources, Charter School Allocations

Historical Data

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Level 1 Base	\$ 1,971	\$ 1,980	\$ 1,946	\$ 1,841
Level 1 Low Income and/or ELL	\$ 434	\$ 436	\$ 428	\$ 405
Level 1 Career & Technical	\$ 118	\$ 119	\$ 117	\$ 110
Level 1 Student With Disabilities	\$ 2,957	\$ 2,969	\$ 2,919	\$ 2,761
Level 1 Gifted & Talented	\$ 1,183	\$ 1,188	\$ 1,168	\$ 1,105
Level 2	\$ 256	\$ 262	\$ 236	\$ 148
Level 3 Continuation of Pay Raises	\$ 801	\$ 801	\$ 801	\$ 801
Level 3 Hold Harmless	\$ 436	\$ 406	\$ 409	\$ 407
Local Revenues	\$ 6,278	\$ 6,379	\$ 6,614	\$ 6,714
Base MFP, 40% Low Income, no SPED	\$ 9,916	\$ 10,002	\$ 10,178	\$ 10,074
Base MFP, 40% Low Income, 10% SPED	\$ 10,211	\$ 10,299	\$ 10,470	\$ 10,350
Debt Service & Capital Projects	\$ 920	\$ 928	\$ 944	\$ 953
Total MFP, 40% Low Income, 10% SPED, Facilities	\$ 11,131	\$ 11,227	\$ 11,414	\$ 11,303

Federal Revenue Sources

Revenue Projections via LDOE, per pupil	Per Pupil Estimate
IDEA (Calculated Using Total Enrollment, ages 3 - 21))	\$ 186.00
IDEA PRESCHOOL (Calculated Using Total Enrollment, ages 3 - 5)	\$ 38.00
CARL PERKINS (Calculated Using Total Enrollment)	\$ 15.00
Title I (Calculated Using Total Enrollment, ages 5 - 17)	\$ 555.00
Title II (Calculated Using total Enrollment, ages 5 - 17)	\$ 74.00
Title III (Calculated Using LEP Count) (Must generate \$10,000 allocation to be funded)	\$ 127.00

As a Type 2 charter school, ISL will be able to serve students in surrounding parishes. In projections it will be important to account for students who may receive lower per pupil funding than students residing in Baton Rouge. In an examination of surrounding parishes, MFP's were found to be comparable to Baton Rouge's funding with the northern EBR city of Baker's MFP being the least favorable. With the extensive demand and subsequent waitlist at BR FLAIM, an EBRPSS immersion magnet school, it is likely that ISL's students will primarily come from Baton Rouge with a small percentage coming from other parishes.

Operations and finance will be key in a successful launch of a Baton Rouge school. In the coming year, ISL's finance and operations teams will work with NSBR to create a 5-year projected budget for the school to demonstrate anticipated financial need. With ISL planning to launch with grades K-1 and adding a grade level each year after, it is anticipated that launch grant funds will be required across years 0 to 3 to support operation of the school with sustainability reached by year 4. When it provides Excellence Fund grants to schools, NSBR expects that schools demonstrate financial sustainability on public funding by year 4 of operation.

Related Documents Feasibility Study Questions:

→ Questions:

- What is the anticipated level of financial support that the school will need to get the school(s) up and running? To ensure success in running school?
- What key hires do you need to make and on what timeline to ensure effective operational support prior to and during launch?

FACILITIES

In discussions with the ISL team, two distinct facilities plans emerged as options for the K-8 school -- long-term leased space or a new build utilizing swing space in the early launch (year 1-2) years.

ISL currently leases three campuses across Orleans Parish. The Camp Street location is the preferred campus of the three current sites as it relates to design features. The West Bank campus has the highest monthly cost of approximately \$17,000 per month with the Camp and Dixon campuses costing xx and xx respectively. An internal facilities director manages all facilities staff, including in-house custodial staff, across the three campuses and oversees compliance with Orleans and/or state regulations.

A list of facility features to replicate ISL's immersion school model with fidelity include:

- Windows in classrooms and office spaces that open, which is culturally important for European teachers in particular.
- Large yard/green space that provides a shaded outdoor eating area, which has been a practice during Covid that leadership would like to maintain.
- Gymnasium space for physical education, student performances, and sports league participation (volleyball and basketball).
- Internal food service requires a full kitchen, and the cafeteria should seat 100-150 students during meal times.
- Administrative offices, including a special education office (for meetings and storage), as well as offices for full time service providers, which include a nurse, social worker, and speech language therapist.
- Teaching kitchens for cultural food demonstrations -- one or two that can be reserved for use by teachers.
- A multilingual library.
- The Covid-19 pandemic has made touchless refill water stations a preferred feature.

The following information is specific to classroom design needs, including number and type of classrooms:

- Each grade level has four sections (two French, two Spanish) of 23-26 students each.
- Typical Camp Street classrooms range from 650 sq ft to 800 sq ft. Leadership feels that the 650-750 sq ft classrooms are an appropriate size for instructional needs, with the larger classrooms for the K-5 self-contained classrooms.
- Sinks in K-5 self-contained classrooms at a minimum. Ideally sinks would be included in all classrooms.

- Small group breakout space of one room per every two grades for a total of four breakout rooms.

ISL's academic performance and financial security open a number of facilities financing pathways. NSBR also has a facilities branch of the organization that helps to fund and build facilities for high quality operators like ISL. The facilities arm of the organization is full service from helping to identify land/property to identifying favorable financing and providing grants to boost equity. NSBR is interested in exploring a new facility as well as for the Baton Rouge K-8 school.

Related Documents Feasibility Study Questions:

→ Questions:

- What is your facility plan for Baton Rouge growth/expansion? What support do you need from NSBR Facilities in order to successfully execute on your facilities plan?
- What challenges exist that would keep the facility from being student ready by school launch date?

STUDY CONCLUSIONS

ISL has a successful model that is providing a high quality education to students across the Greater New Orleans area. Demand for its open seats demonstrates parents desire for a high quality, culturally inclusive education focused on language immersion. Its immersion program would provide a unique value-add to students in Baton Rouge with only two other high demand schools -- one private and one selective admission magnet -- providing programming that is similar in nature to ISL.

In order to maximize the impact of the new school, the working group recommends seeking Type 2 charter replication under current BESE policy (Bulletin 126) which allows high performing Type 2 charters to open up to two new campuses without reapplying to the State.

To prepare for the successful launch of a K-8 school in Baton Rouge in fall 2023, the feasibility study working group recommends the following actions:

1. Engage the LDOE, including Superintendent Brumley and Dr. Kelli Peterson, to determine how to best navigate the *progress and locale* criteria in Bulletin 126 for automatic replication.
2. Contract with strategic consultants to map out the additions to and evolution of the CMO organizational structure as more central office positions are needed to support the growing number of schools.
3. Begin process to identify and hire a school leader for the Baton Rouge school with the leader beginning their training and onboarding in May 2022 to prepare for a fall 2023 launch. Assuming an on time, BESE-approved launch, NSBR will fund school leader participation during SY22-23 in the Attuned Incubator School Design Fellowship as part of a launch grant during year 0.

NSBR will fund the hiring of a consultant for organizational planning work at a cost of <\$20,000. A [timeline of partnership and further funding with NSBR](#) based on ISL's current launch plan is linked.