

I. EMSA PROPOSAL: COVER SHEET & ENROLLMENT PROJECTION¹

Name of proposed school: Elgin Math and Science Academy

Primary contact person: Kerry Kelly

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Phone Number: 847-666-7453 Email: adamgray921@gmail.com

Name of team or entity currently applying: Elgin Charter School Initiative

Names, roles, and current employment of all persons on applicant team:

Full Name	Current Job Title and Employer	Position with Proposed School
Kerry Kelly	Lawyer, Steffen & Kelly	Founding Board President
Adam Gray	Office Manager, H & R Block	Founding Board Treasurer
Doree Haight	Senior Manager, Sears Holdings; owner/manager of The Haight private events space	Founding Board Member, Secretary
Dennis Verges	Director of Finance, SCREEN North America Holdings	Founding Board Member
Kevin Echevarria	CEO, PKE Enterprises, Inc.	Founding Board Member
Gary Swick	Instructor, Northern Illinois University; retired high school science teacher D300	Founding Board Member
Petrecia Shales	ESL Teacher, U-46	Lead Teacher

¹ The format of this proposal follows the Illinois State Charter School Commission's Model Charter School Request for Proposals, released August, 2014 and can be found [here](#).

Adriana Barriga	Dual Language Teacher, U-46	Lead Teacher
Dr. Risé Jones	Executive Director and Founder, Hamilton Wings	Academic Excellence
Rev. Janie McCutchen	Pastor Second Baptist Church, Retired U-46 Social Worker	Development & Outreach Comm.
Melanie Gibb	Adjunct Professor, Judson University	Development & Outreach Comm.
Laura Sterba	Sr. Manager E-commerce, Learning Resources	Development & Outreach Comm.
Keith Rauschenberger	President, Rauschenberger Financial Advisors	Finance Committee
Sandra Young	Child Care Provider, Volunteer	Development & Outreach Comm.

As described throughout this proposal, EMSA will partner with the national education non-profit, EL Education, which provides the school’s educational model, substantial school design support, strategic planning and professional development support to ensure the model’s effective implementation. However, EMSA will not be contracting with any third-party education service provider (ESP) or a Charter Management Organization (CMO) for management of the school.

School opening information:

Opening Year	New Start or Phase-in/Takeover	*Geographic Community	Opening Grades	Grade Levels at Full Enrollment
2018	New School	School District U-46	K-3	K-8

Model of focus of Proposed School (e.g., Arts, College Prep, Dual-Language): EL Education, Math & Science

Proposed Principal/Head of School Information: will hire after approval

Enrollment Summary:

Grade Level	Number of Students					
	Year 1: 2018	Year 2: 2019	Year 3: 2020	Year 4: 2021	Year 5: 2022	At Capacity: 2023
K	50	50	50	50	50	50
1	50	50	50	50	50	50
2	50	50	50	50	50	50
3	50	50	50	50	50	50
4		50	50	50	50	50
5			50	50	50	50
6				50	50	50
7					50	50
8						50

Facility:

The proposed address for the proposed school: 1600 Dundee Ave, Elgin, IL 60120

Address of alternative proposed school site: 5N443 School St, Wayne, IL 60184

Address of third alternative proposed school site: Radow Building, 515 Sports Way, Elgin, IL; or an alternative U-46 site.

Host District or Districts:

The Illinois School District of Districts in which the students your school intends to serve resides:
U-46

II. EMSA PROPOSAL: SCHOOL OVERVIEW

1. Mission and Vision
2. Educational Need and Anticipated Student Population
3. Education Plan/School Design
4. Community Engagement
5. Leadership and Governance
6. Enrollment Summary

1. Mission and Vision

At Elgin Math and Science Academy (EMSA), students will experience the WOW and WONDER of learning. Our mission statement:

At EMSA, students and teachers will reach their highest potential through active exploratory learning and social responsibility.

Our vision statement:

At EMSA

- *We welcome individuals of all backgrounds and abilities to our K-8 school.*
- *We nurture children's natural curiosity.*
- *Our students are leaders in their own learning.*
- *Our teachers and students hold high standards for their own work.*
- *Our students are critical thinkers who excel in math and science.*
- *Our students develop the skills to be responsible individuals.*

Our mission embodies three important concepts: that EMSA students and teachers are explorers, stewards and embrace the growth mindset. As we will develop the whole child, we have chosen six habits of scholarship that reflect these values and will be embraced and celebrated at our school: **Courage** and **Curiosity** go towards being an explorer. **Respect** and **Responsibility** are traits of a good steward. **Craftsmanship** and **Perseverance** reflect the growth mindset.

At EMSA, we know that students reach their highest potential through intentional and thoughtful instructional practice. Starting with the leadership of the school, we model the social responsibility to create powerful educational outcomes for all our students in three-dimensions of student achievement: mastery of skills and knowledge, development of character and the ability to produce high-quality work. As active contributors to a better world, EMSA students will learn to be engaged citizens through a program that asks for their best each day and shows them the way.

Integral to our program will be our partnership with EL Education (formerly known as

Expeditionary Learning). EL Education formed from a partnership between Harvard Graduate School of Education and Kurt Hahn's Outward Bound in 1991. Outward Bound's focus on teamwork, courage, and compassion was combined with Harvard's active approach to learning. Today EL Education partners with more than 150 schools and 4,000 teachers, serves over 50,000 students in 30 states, and mentors thousands of other teachers through professional services work. EL Education is considered one of the most innovative and successful approaches to education. EMSA had to apply and be accepted into the EL Education program, and we are excited to offer this incredible model to U-46 where it will be unique among elementary schools.

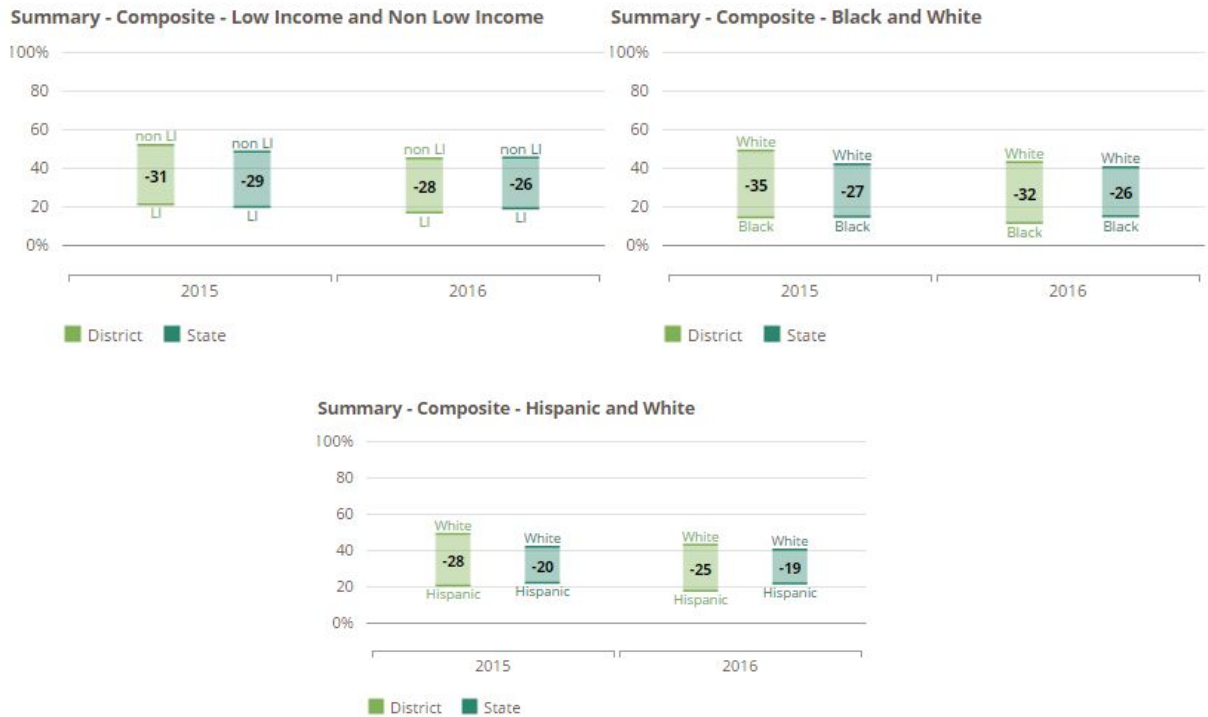
At EL Education schools, students go on Learning Expeditions: real-world interdisciplinary studies where students acquire the extensive knowledge and skills necessary to produce an ambitious and substantial final product to be unveiled at a public exhibition. EMSA's Learning Expeditions will be in-depth investigations that incorporate intellectual, service, and artistic dimensions, with a focus on math and science. Expeditions develop academic skills, critical thinking, problem solving, and deep knowledge of content. All EL Education schools recognize their students and teachers as "crew, not passengers." "Crew" means that students are active participants, collaborators and leaders in their own learning, rather than "passengers" (passive receivers of information). Students in EL Education schools are engaged in a learning adventure, honing complex skills and mindsets through in-depth studies and producing work that contributes to the community. Our team is proud to bring this exceptional opportunity to the deserving students of U-46.

2. Educational Need and Anticipated Student Population

If approved, EMSA will open in August of 2018 as a tuition-free public school that will have no admission requirements other than residency within the school district. EMSA will open with 200 students in grade levels kindergarten through third, two classes per grade, and twenty-five students per class. Each year, the classes will advance a grade as a new kindergarten class enters, so that by 2023 we will have 450 students in grades kindergarten through eighth. Starting with a smaller student body will allow us to develop a strong school culture. Our school culture will be driven by our habits of scholarship: **Courage, Curiosity, Responsibility, Respect, Craftsmanship, and Perseverance**. Student and teacher leadership in these habits will be recognized and celebrated. At EMSA, we will also establish high expectations for authentic, complex and well-crafted student work. By opening small (K-3 instead of K-8) and with younger students, it will be easier to instill these expectations as the norm. As students progress to upper level, they will help to instill these values in younger students and foster a school culture driven by the habits of scholarship.

The impetus for starting EMSA grew from a desire among design team members to create a diverse school that provided an exceptional and unique education to students of varied races and ethnicities, socioeconomic and language backgrounds. In our community, school results

currently show proficiency levels below the state average and a 39% college-readiness rate². In addition, our district suffers from persistent academic achievement gaps by race and income level, as evidenced by standardized test data disaggregated by income and race on the Illinois Report Card (from ISAT and PARCC). Current gaps are illustrated in the data below from the Illinois Report Card showing PARCC scores in 2015 and 2016.



In both years, the achievement gaps between low income and non-low income students as well as the racial achievement gaps between black and white and between Hispanic and white students were greater than the gaps for the same subgroups at the state level, with the racial achievement gaps exceeding those at the state level by six to eight percentage points. Though these achievement gaps narrowed slightly in the district from 2015 to 2016, in actuality, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations on PARCC decreased in the district overall and among low income, black and Hispanic students from 2015 to 2016: from 21% to 17% of low income students; from 14% to 11% of black students; and from 20% to 18% of Hispanic students.

We recognize the hard work of District leaders and educators to improve student achievement and applaud recent changes like the addition of full-day kindergarten and we are committed to helping the district close the achievement gap. We believe in the importance of offering different models to meet the needs of different learners. As we describe throughout this proposal, we firmly believe that the EL Education model, implemented with fidelity at EMSA,

² [Illinois Report Card](#)

offers a unique model that will appeal to many students and will engage and support students from across racial, income and language backgrounds to achieve at high levels. Feedback that EMSA received from families during visioning sessions confirmed the desire for a diverse school with high expectations and supports to help all students excel. Although we anticipate that our student population will be driven in part by the school's location, we will make a concerted effort to attract and serve a diverse student population, as originally envisioned. We want to offer families in our community an opportunity to experience one of the highest rated and most exciting curricula available in our country--preferably at one of the most beautiful sites in our area--as a free, public school.

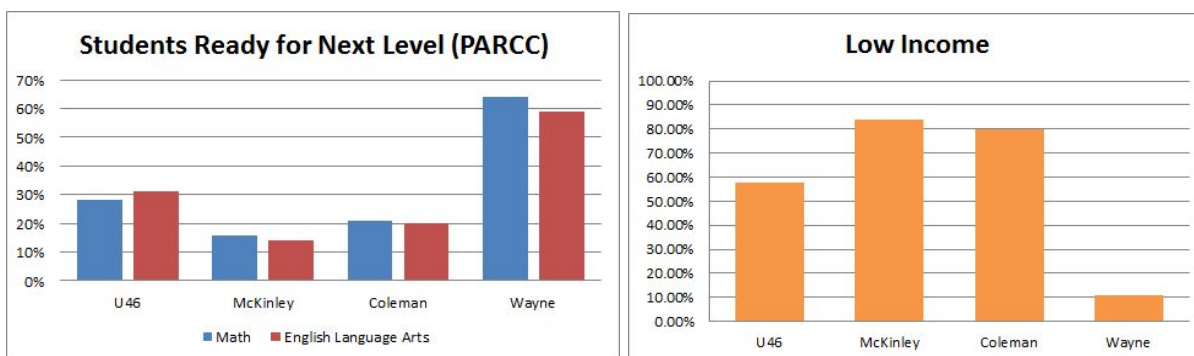
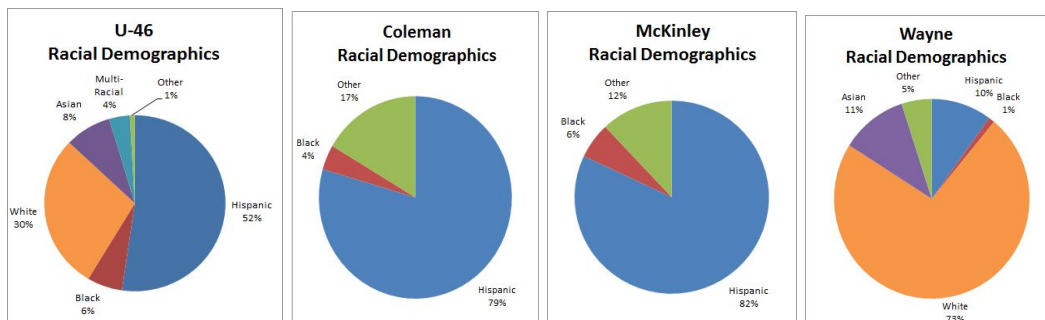
U-46 serves a diverse population of around 40,000 students, located within a 90 square-mile area. All U-46 students entering the grades we serve will be eligible for our school; if we have more interested students than seats available, then the students will be determined by a lottery. U-46's student population is diverse. The following chart is based upon U-46's "Facts @ a Glance 2016-17" on its website.

Demographic	% at U-46
Hispanic	52.3%
White	28.5%
Asian	8.3%
Black	6.3%
Multi-Racial	3.7%
Low Income	57.8%
Limited English Proficiency	28.4%
IEP/Special Education	13.3%

EMSA believes that the demographic percentages described in the above district-wide chart would be a fair predictor for its own demographics. However, if EMSA is located in Elgin, we would expect a higher percentage of students who are Hispanic, Black, Low Income, and/or with Limited English Proficiency. These students are our target audience and they have inspired us to bring this school to the Elgin area.

At McKinley Elementary School, which is about 1.5 miles from our proposed Elgin site, 82% of students are Hispanic, 6% are Black, 84% are low-income, 60% are English Learners eligible for bilingual services, and 21% have a disability. At Coleman Elementary School, which is a half-mile from our proposed Elgin site, 79.5% of students are Hispanic, 4% are Black, 80% are low-income, 56% are English Learners, and 14% have disabilities.

In contrast, at Wayne Elementary School, which is our second proposed site, 73% of students are white, 10% are Hispanic, 11% are Asian, 1% are Black, 11% are low-income, 7% are English Learners, and 13% have disabilities. Source: ISBE Illinois State Report Card 2016.



Our partner, EL Education, is committed to serving school populations wherein at least 40% of students are from low-income households, defined as eligible for federally funded free-and-reduced priced lunch (40% FRL). EMSA’s goal is to enroll 60% of our student body from low-income households. We anticipate that our students’ educational needs will vary greatly because we will focus our recruitment efforts on diverse populations (low-income, ELL’s, students of color), especially in Elgin, and we also anticipate interest in our program from a cross section of the U-46 population.

The range of educational needs that we will likely experience can be deduced from the range of proficiency scores between students at two of the sites we are considering, Elgin and Wayne. All U-46 schools administer the relatively new PARCC assessment which measures a range of performance levels of students in regard to grade-level standards: “did not meet,” “partially met,” “approached,” “met,” and “exceeded.” Students who “met” or “exceeded” standards are deemed ready for the next grade level. Based upon the PARCC 2016 test results, at McKinley Elementary only 16% of the student body is “ready for the next level” in math (compared to the District’s 28%) and only 14% in English Language Arts (31% at the District level). A much higher percentage of students “did not meet” standards at McKinley than the District (e.g., in ELA 29% vs. 19%). At Coleman Elementary, 21% of its students are “ready for the next level” in ELA and

20% in math are ready. At Wayne Elementary, 64% of its students are “ready for the next level” in ELA and 59% are ready in math. Source: ISBE Illinois State Report Card 2016.

EMSA is committed to meeting the needs of all of its students. To enable our hiring and curriculum planning, EMSA has loosely based its anticipated student body on the district percentages. However, EMSA will also be prepared for a higher-than-district percentage of English language learners and low-income students based upon the neighboring schools’ statistics. We plan to hire at least one bilingual endorsed teacher per grade and will require that our other teachers be ESL (English as a Second Language) endorsed. We have estimated a special education population of approximately 15% (slightly higher than the District average of 13.3%), which would equate to thirty students in the first year of our operation. The State requires a ratio of one special education teacher per 20 students, thus we anticipate at least 1.5 FTE for our Special Education Case Manager/teacher, both of whom will be special education endorsed. Additionally, our classrooms will have teaching assistants to provide supports for ELLs, special education and other students needing remediation and enrichment.

EMSA’s vision includes welcoming students of all backgrounds and abilities and giving them the skills to reach their highest potential. We recognize that many of our students will come with learning needs and challenges. Students from a background of poverty generally enter kindergarten with a tremendous word gap compared to their middle class peers. The test scores of students in U-46 at Coleman and McKinley, which have a high proportion of low-income students, are dramatically lower than those of students’ at Wayne, which has a small percentage of low-income students. As it is central to our mission to serve our community, we chose a curriculum that will help close skills gaps and meet the needs of students by intervening with a comprehensive literacy curriculum. To close the literacy achievement gap, our students will do deep work--developing language and critical thinking skills while building foundational skills of literacy: vocabulary, broad content knowledge, decoding and encoding, phonemic awareness, syntax and fluency. In grades K-2, we will dedicate three hours every day for English Language Arts--this is one hour more per day than District schools. In grades 3-5, we will spend two full hours in ELA plus one hour of either science or social studies that ties in with the ELA.

This additional time and focused approach will allow us to support students who are entering with ELA skills below grade level and to accelerate students who are at or above grade level. We can accomplish this with our EL Education curriculum because our program provides a rich, stimulating, and challenging array of reading materials, learning labs, and projects. The teacher will have many prompts and resources at his or her disposal for developing language, cracking the alphabetic code and for building deep content knowledge on engaging subjects.

Success in math and science is often reliant on proficient reading skills, which also supports our emphasis on ELA in the early years of school. Nationally and statewide, there is a recognized need for more students who excel in math and science to enter related fields. Our program will help give our students, many of whom will be at-risk, an excellent foundation in math and

science. EL Education's curriculum of hands-on, exploratory learning will develop a lifelong love and appreciation for both subjects. At EMSA, we will dedicate between one and a half and two hours daily for math instruction and exploration. We will spend approximately one hour daily, through our linked literacy modules or learning expeditions, in science for three quarters of the year (the fourth quarter will be a social studies focus).

In addition to academics that embrace both rigor and joy, EMSA will develop systems and structures to meet the diverse social emotional needs fitting our students' development. We have budgeted for a full-time social worker at our school to support students to develop the positive skills to deal with stress, support self-control and appropriate coping mechanisms for stress. We also have budgeted a full-time nurse to help meet the health needs of our students. Across the school, our "Crew" structure of daily check-ins with social and emotional components and team building helps build stability and trust. Our focus on a positive and purposeful school and classroom culture will benefit all students, including students of color and students from low-income backgrounds.

One of the assets of our school to support this unique culture and our students' positive learning environment is the campus itself. We have identified as our preferred location the former Fox River Country Day School (FRCDS) property because it will provide our students direct, daily contact with nature. This can have a profound effect on students, and can be especially beneficial to low-income urban students who may not have much exposure to forests and natural outdoor areas ([Strife and Downey 2009](#), Strife and Downey 2009, "Childhood Development and Access to Nature: A New Direction for Environmental Inequality Research"). The importance of nature in education is emphasized by EL Education: "A direct and respectful relationship with the natural world refreshes the human spirit and teaches the important ideas of recurring cycles and cause and effect. Students learn to become stewards of the earth and of future generations" (EL Education 8th Design Principle - The Natural World). The FRCDS site is adjacent to the 27-acre Fox River Forested Fen Forest Preserve, which encompasses an ecosystem of oak forests, an extremely rare forested fen which contains rare white cedar groves. The Fox River is very near this site as well. In addition to the impressive natural surroundings, the facilities have been designed for education. The K-6 building boasts soaring ceilings that reflect the forest outdoors, as the rest of the building celebrates education and children with its thoughtful design. The other buildings on the site (gymnasium, dining hall, art barn, and administration/middle school) are historically and architecturally significant. This combination of pristine wilderness and notable architecture makes this site a truly iconic gem of the Fox Valley region. This campus has been used for education for more than 100 years but we will be the first to offer a free public education at this special location.

This site is also closest to the at-risk families that EMSA hopes to serve. In visioning sessions, parents from diverse backgrounds expressed strong interest in the FRCDS site for the reasons stated above. Several Black and Latino parents and grandparents highlighted the value of a site that was at once geographically close to their homes (and therefore, more easily accessible to students and parents) while also providing a sense of separation and safety from the urban

environment, due to its placement within a large, wooded campus.

3. Education Plan/School Design

EMSA will be unique among U-46 elementary schools because its focus will be on math and science, and because it will be a school based upon experiential, inquiry-based pedagogy through our partnership with EL Education. Additionally, EMSA will be implementing principles and practices that promote a growth mindset in students.

EMSA chose the EL Education model, in part, because of EL Education's commitment to improve outcomes for all students in all school settings. EL Education, a non-profit education partner, provides a curricular foundation with massive supports and training for teachers and staff. It is not a charter management organization (CMO), thus EMSA will hire its own Principal and staff and make all internal decisions. EL Education works across the country with K-12 public district schools and public charter schools. It supports research and practices that can be implemented in every school. Many EL Education charter schools have resulted in public/private partnerships at the state and district level to support success for all students. For example, in Kenosha, Wisconsin the positive impact of an EL Education charter school, Harborside Academy, has resulted in a partnership with Kenosha Unified School District to provide school improvement services to support six Title I elementary schools. In the state of New York, successful charter and district partnerships in Rochester, Buffalo, and New York City have resulted in a state partnership through which EL Education constructed and provided Common Core State Standards (CCSS) curriculum and professional development to over 100,000 teachers in order to support implementation of EL Education's ELA curriculum first available through EngageNY. EL Education's CCSS curricula is available free of charge to any school, district or individual through EL Education's Common Core Success online resource <http://commoncoresuccess.EL Educationucation.org/> (curricula is also available through the Engage New York site <https://www.engageny.org/>).

The EL Education model is recognized as one of the Nation's most innovative and successful educational design models.³ In the credentialed EL Education schools, most of which are located in urban settings and serve high proportions of low-income and minority children, students showed dramatic improvement in the high-stakes tests used in their districts.⁴ A summary of the achievement data across the EL Education network of schools can be found in the EL Education overview publication (Attachment 1).

The EL Education model transforms curriculum, instruction, assessment, and school culture and makes academic success possible for all students, including "at-risk" students, namely students from racial minority and low-income groups that have historically underperformed in comparison

³ See, e.g., "Expeditionary Learning Receives \$12M Investing in Innovation Grant" (Attachment 2).

⁴ "Students in EL Education Schools Outperform Their Peers" graph. The graph illustrates a 12-point percentage increase for low-income EL Education students reaching ELA proficiency compared to their demographic peers. [EL Education By The Numbers](#) See also EL Education Overview, Attachment 1.

to their white or more affluent peers. The results of EL Education programs with at-risk populations have been found to be “statistically significant [and] meaningful, and appear to be greater than the effects of other interventions that have been designed to serve similar purposes and student and school populations.”⁵ Recent studies have supported this research, by showing that EL Education schools “are making significant, substantial and sustained progress toward closing city-wide achievement gaps for populations of chronically underachieving students.”⁶ This independent study found that EL Education schools closed achievement gaps in ELA for African-American, Hispanic, low-income students, and English language learners in the cities of New York and Rochester. Another independent study concluded that the magnitude of the “positive impact estimates” suggests that the EL Education schools studied are “substantially increasing student achievement.”⁷

Other studies of EL Education have found dramatic increases in students’ levels of engagement and motivation, as demonstrated by high attendance and low rates of disciplinary problems.⁸ In 2013, EL Education was deemed a “highest-rated validation level” by U.S. Department of Education which awarded EL Education a \$12 M “Investing in Innovation Grant.”⁹ EL Education schools ensure that all students have access to a rigorous pre-college preparatory curriculum, and regularly analyze the curriculum to check alignment to standards and opportunities for all students to meet those standards.

EMSA’s hands-on Learning Expeditions will serve EMSA’s students well. Research shows that content-based literacy not only deepens students’ world knowledge, but also rapidly accelerates their literacy learning. Reading and listening to a series of texts on the same topic can yield four times the vocabulary growth (Landauer and Dumais 1997; Adams 2009). Learning important content -- whether about animal defense mechanisms, human rights, or Shakespeare -- also propels students’ motivation and engagement, which in turn makes them willing to read more and work harder. Content-based literacy is critical for all students, but particularly important for English language learners and for students who did not have an opportunity to build significant vocabulary and content knowledge in the early years: building literacy skills while learning meaningful information, rather than experiencing isolated and decontextualized language instruction (Liben 2015 [Webinar](#)).

Studies have shown that English language learners and low-income students benefit from the type of integrated curriculum, active pedagogy, and college bound culture supported by EL Education (EL Education) and embodied by EMSA. The National Research Council has

⁵“Comprehensive School Reform and Student Achievement: a Meta-Analysis, 2002” Conducted by The Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed At Risk (CRESPAR). CRESPAR is a national research and development center supported by a grant (No. R-117-D40005) from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), U.S. Department of Education.

⁶ UMass Donahue Institute, “Expeditionary Learning Analysis of Impact on Achievement Gaps” (2011).

⁷ [Mathematica Policy Research](#), “Impacts of Five Expeditionary Learning Middle Schools on Academic Achievement,” July 8, 2013.

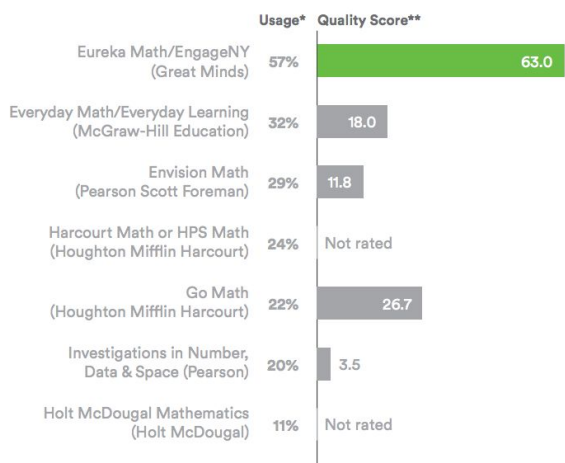
⁸ Mountain Measurement, Inc., 2010. [Mountain Measurement Study](#)

⁹ Attachment 9 , “Expeditionary Learning Receives \$12M Investing In Innovation Grant.”

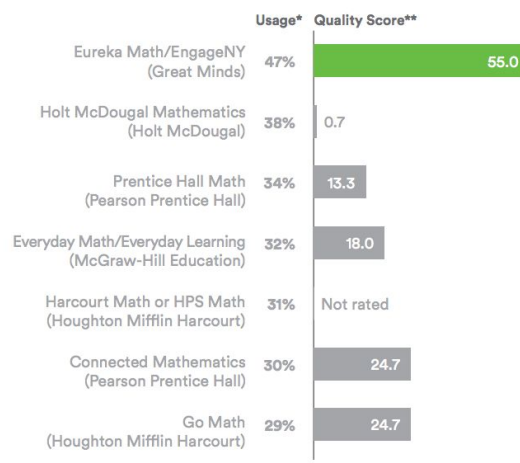
concluded that effective science education requires the integration of content knowledge with scientific inquiry and engineering design practices.¹⁰ “Knowledge and practice must be intertwined in designing learning experiences in K-12 science education.”¹¹ EMSA’s science program will be unique within the District because it will be integrated with the ELA lessons; our science will be active, problem-based, and relevant to the community.

For our math program, EMSA students will spend 1.5-2 hours per day engaged in mathematical exploration and problem solving. Our math curriculum will be centered on Eureka Math (offered by the nonprofit *Great Minds*), which “connects math to the real world in ways that take the fear out of math and build student confidence — while helping students achieve true understanding” (<https://greatminds.org/math> 12/22/16). EdReports.org, an independent nonprofit that rates K–12 curricula, gave Eureka Math “top marks for its focus/coherence, rigor, and usability” ([EdReports](https://edreports.org)). Eureka Math’s curricula for elementary grades averaged 63.0 out of 70 possible points, while the next most-used curriculum, Everyday Math, averaged 36.0. In middle school, Eureka Math scored 55.0 points on average, while Holt McDougal Mathematics, the next most popular program, scored less than 1.0 (*Ibid.*). Both Eureka Math and EL Education’s Science modules are aligned with standards (CCSS and NGSS). EMSA’s Learning Expeditions will be aligned with state standards; they are mapped with the CCSS or NGSS as the Expeditions are developed. Taken together our curriculum offerings will provide our students with an effective and engaging math and science education.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CURRICULA



SECONDARY SCHOOL CURRICULA



*Usage based RAND Corporation national teacher survey published in April 2016, which looked at both middle and high school curricula.

**Average Score by Grade based on EdReports.org findings published in March and October 2015 and in February, April, and May 2016. For each grade, there are 70 possible points. EdReports.org ratings looked only at middle school curricula.

Source: [Eureka Math Tops in U.S.](#)

¹⁰ National Research Council (NRC). 2012. *A Framework for K-12 Science Education: Practices, Crosscutting Concepts, and Core Ideas.*, pp. 80-82.

¹¹ NRC 2012, p. 11

Our chosen curricula are proven to be effective with low-income and minority populations. For EL Education students who are low-income, there is a 12-percentage point increase for reaching ELA proficiency compared to their district peers. For students who are Black or Hispanic, there is a 10 and 12-point increase. The Eureka Math program, is credited for significantly higher math scores for New York City students--who are predominantly minority and low-income--compared to students in other cities in New York State.¹²

Also, our first choice facility selection of the FRCDS property in Elgin would allow us to best serve the our targeted student population because it is geographically much closer than our second choice of Wayne Elementary, which would translate to less bus and travel time and easier accessibility for parents. The FRCDS property would also lend itself to our science focus and benefit our students by providing daily access to high quality nature.

4. Community Engagement

Our current application for a charter school builds upon our efforts of two years ago. Then, families were overwhelmingly supportive of our EL Education model (then called Expeditionary Learning). More than 250 families had registered their children as potential students at EMSA. More than 500 individuals had indicated their support of EMSA by signing a statement of support. In the last few months, we have added more than 150 interested students and supporters. By the time EMSA submitted its application in 2014, our team had presented our plan to dozens of institutions and service agencies such as Elgin Community College Trustees, Judson University President, Elgin Chamber of Commerce, United Way, and multiple service agencies and neighborhood groups.

This year, our EMSA Design Team has renewed and strengthened our community relationships. We have partnered with the Boys and Girls Club of Elgin to help inform their families about our proposed school and to explore future partnerships such as facilities sharing. We have also discussed partnerships with MEOF (Multicultural Educational Outreach Foundation) and other local agencies and nonprofits. In August, nearly seventy-five community leaders and individuals attended EMSA's visioning session at the Fox River Country Day School (FRCDS) property, including the YWCA, Elgin Public Museum, Elgin Area Historical Society, Kane County Forest Preserve, Kane County Board, U-46 School Board, Elgin City Council, Judson University, Elgin Chamber of Commerce, Boys and Girls Club and Centro de Informacion. EL Education School Designer and Green Schools National Network Executive Director Dr. Jennifer Seydel led attendees through the session which culminated with vision statements for EMSA and community uses of the property:

1. Focus on environmental sciences (community gardens, tree city, climate, outdoor ed, economics) to educate students and community.

¹² [Hechinger Report 1/18/14](#)

2. To outreach to all types of students (need, language, geography, e.g.) will require collaboration and investment in nature, math & science; this will benefit the community by bringing an interconnectedness.
3. EMSA as a Learning Lab at the FRCDS property would set a high standard of learning for our community by conserving and improving the campus and environment, exposing a diverse student body to this environment and creating a central learning space for the school district.
4. EMSA as a place where people of all races, economic backgrounds, and creeds come to one location to champion math and science, would serve as a laboratory for curriculum and best practices.
5. Sustainable living in a global environment as expeditions: purposeful learning; partnerships with food coop, e.g.; inquiry-based, interactive learning; authentic audience will give students purpose; develop sense of place (nature, culture, community).

EMSA plans to capitalize on this strong showing of community support and pursue a creating a community center at our location.

This past fall, EMSA invited the community to two information sessions, both held at The Haight in downtown Elgin. More than 100 attendees shared their hopes and concerns related to their children's education, debated the importance of the location of the school, and strategized what should be included at EMSA. Attendees highly favored the Fox River Country Day School site because of its natural setting and location in Elgin. Some indicated their willingness to attend EMSA regardless of its location. Many voiced their concern that a distant location would be hard on the students (too much time commuting) and the parents; some indicated they would be unwilling send their children the distance to Wayne or Bartlett. The EMSA Design Team believes that the FRCDS location will allow us to best serve the low-income and minority children in the Elgin area that includes McKinley and Coleman.

Parents voiced their hopes to see EMSA build critical thinkers, supply more technology resources, value transparency, let children play outside, demonstrate that every child matters, collaborate with businesses and social agencies, incorporate hands-on active learning, assign less homework, nurture curiosity and willingness to take risks, make science and math relevant, and more. EMSA has plans to implement all of these ideas.

EMSA has tentatively committed to partnering with several local agencies to enrich opportunities for our students and the community: Boys and Girls Club of Elgin, Shared Harvest Elgin Food Cooperative, Elgin Public Museum, Friends of the Fox, and Multicultural Education Outreach Foundation. When we are approved, EMSA will continue to pursue meaningful partnerships with businesses, colleges, and social agencies.

EMSA will also continue to cultivate its relationship with U-46 and envisions sharing best practices with U-46, such as: curricula, teaching and intervention techniques, CCSS and NGSS curricula alignment, EL Education training, MTSS, and any other aspects of its educational

programs in which U-46 would be interested. If EMSA is housed at the FRCDS, we also commit to working with the district to identify ways in which students and staff from other district schools can access and utilize the site. One of the foundational practices of EL Education is to share resources, materials and approaches with partner districts, and EMSA looks forward to a close collaboration with U-46 in furtherance of this aim.

5. Leadership and Governance

In 2012, founding design team members established the Elgin Charter School Initiative (ECSI), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization to plan and govern EMSA. The current design team has built upon the progress made by the founding design team. Six of the current design team members will continue members of the Founding Board of EMSA: Kerry Kelly, president; Adam Gray, treasurer; Doree Haight, secretary; Kevin Echevarria; Gary Swick, and Dennis Verges. Their resumes can be found at Attachment 3. Following authorization, they will recruit up to eight additional members. EMSA's Board of Directors will include a broad array of backgrounds. Our board will include up to two parents, who will be nominated by school parents. EMSA believes that parents play a crucial role in their children's education and in the success of a school. We also would welcome a U-46 Board Member to participate on our board as a nonvoting member. This will support EMSA's value of transparency and cooperation with U-46.

Upon authorization, the board's most important task will be hiring an exceptional school leader. We will conduct the school leader search with the support of additional community volunteers with expertise in educational leadership, and plan to hire the founding school leader by August 2017.

EMSA's administration initially will include: a Principal, a dean of culture, and a business manager. The job descriptions for these positions are attached as Attachment 4. EMSA's school leadership team will include all administrators, the Bilingual Coordinator, the Special Education Case Manager, the school social worker, Instructional Coaches, and lead teachers. When we are at capacity, our administration will increase by adding another dean.

The following current EMSA design team members have shared their expertise and contributed countless hours towards making EMSA a reality:

Kerry Kelly, ECSI Board President. A local attorney, she has served as Board chairperson for two nonprofits: The Larkin Center, which had a multi-million dollar annual budget with government and private funding, and the NorthEast Neighborhood Association; as a lawyer, she is able to provide contract analysis and legal advice to the design team. In addition, Kerry has a personal passion for education and science education in particular. An original member of the EMSA design team, she has volunteered substantial amounts of time since 2012 to plan EMSA, including key roles in research and selection of the school model, community outreach, board development and charter proposal development. Because ECSI, the 501(c)(3) nonprofit responsible for planning and governing EMSA is currently a 100% volunteer organization, Kerry

has assumed leadership for the full organization, driving the initiative forward and galvanizing a diverse and dynamic team of volunteers toward a shared vision for EMSA as a truly transformative math and science focused school. Kerry earned her B.S. Genetics & Development at University of Illinois, Urbana, and her law degree from the John Marshall Law School in Chicago.

Adam Gray, ECSI Treasurer, currently manages two H & R Block sites in Illinois. He brings to the team extensive budgeting, investment and financial management experience. He has been responsible for production of Scottish Brewers accounting figures (yearly turnover of \$200m with Operating profit of \$23m), annual budget, period reporting and variance analysis. He managed Scottish Brewers Loan portfolio (\$130m) with a leading role in the creation of a lending plan with major Scottish Clearing Banks. He has led major investment decisions through customer negotiation, internal appraisal and approval, legal agreement and practical implementation for companies such as Castle Leisure (\$15m loan). He helped accelerate growth through prudent investment management of Scotland's largest independent operators including Saltire Taverns.

Doree Haight, ECSI Secretary, Owner, The Haight. Doree started The Haight in 2013 with her two siblings and they have quickly become known throughout the area for hosting events filled with emotion and a timeless sense of wonder. To date, Doree and her team have hosted more than 200 events that reflect their client's personalities and visions. Before assuming her current role as owner of The Haight, Doree was Senior Account Executive at various advertising agencies and companies in the Chicago. She was responsible for defining and driving strategic marketing and branding initiatives. With her extensive marketing experience and entrepreneurial drive she will play an integral role in the development of EMSA's growth strategy and overall brand positioning. She will help lead, develop and oversee the execution of a fully integrated marketing plan that will drive and sustain long-term growth for EMSA, while expanding and strengthening partnerships externally and internally. Doree holds a BS in Marketing and Communications from Carthage College. She is a 16 year advertising veteran by training, and a venue owner by nature.

Kevin Echevarria, ECSI Member, is a nationally recognized entrepreneur. He is the owner and CEO of PKE Enterprises, Inc. where he oversees and manages shared workspace entities such as Dream Kitchen, LocalVore, and Envisage Coworking. He also supplies and coordinates business resources such as marketing and branding, operational needs and customer service. His expertise in the food industry has evolved from owning a restaurant and running his company, RRIA Foods, Inc. He was one of the Top Ten Verizon Business Entrepreneurs in 2013, and was part of Latinos Living the American Dream documentary produced by Eva Longoria and sponsored by Pepsi in 2010. Kevin is a board member of the Elgin Community College Foundation and a mentor with Making the Promise Foundation. He lives in Elgin with his wife and two young daughters.

Dr. Risé Jones, ECSI Member, is the co-founder and Executive Director of Hamilton Wings, a

non-profit organization that uses the arts as a vehicle for promoting leadership, self-development, and achievement, which is designed to specially address the needs of socially and/or academically challenged youth and their families. Since 1994, Risé has designed curriculum for schools, including those in U-46, and community partnerships that integrate best principles and practices from arts education, positive youth development, and experiential learning. Her background and experience has been a vital part of our curriculum planning, and she will continue to serve in a volunteer capacity as an arts advisor after our school has opened. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Psychology from the University of Illinois, a Master of Science in Public Management and Policy from Carnegie Mellon University, and a Doctorate in Public Policy Analysis. Her work has focused in areas of public health and underserved communities as well as youth development and enrichment programs.

Dennis Verges, ECSI Member, brings over fifteen years of experience in financial planning. He is the Director of Finance at SCREEN North America Holdings, which is a \$70 million manufacturer of high-speed commercial inkjet printers in the US, Canada, and Latin America, and is a subsidiary of \$2.4 billion Dainippon Screen Japan. As DoF, Dennis manages all of the financial, non-accounting functions, including accounts receivable, accounts payable, financial planning & analysis, sales & use tax planning, vendor finance/leasing programs, and customer financial services. Dennis has extensive ties in the community: Commissioner, Elgin Strategic Plan Advisory Commission; Commissioner, Elgin Human Services Advisory Commission; Chairperson, Advisory Council NHS Fox Valley; and, Board Member, Open Door Community Health Clinic.

Petrecia Shales, EMSA Lead Teacher, is both a U-46 graduate and a U-46 teacher, with thirteen years of experience. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Human Institutions from Judson University, a Master's in Education from Aurora University, and an ESL Endorsement from National Louis University. She teaches 5th and 6th grade ESL students at Liberty Elementary, where she is an active participant on the PBIS and Building Committees. Petrecia is passionate about social justice, and service learning, and leads Liberty's "Step-Up and Make-a-Difference" club. As a parent of six, a former C.A.S.A., foster parent, and homeschool parent, Petrecia is a strong believer in school choice as means to provide the best learning opportunities for all children. She has been an integral member of the EMSA Design Team and is excited to continue as a staff member for the Elgin Math and Science Academy.

Adriana Barriga, EMSA Lead Teacher, has taught several grades at U-46 and is currently teaching dual language full-day kindergarten at Hough Elementary School. Adriana is bilingual endorsed; she is fluent in both English and Spanish. Adriana lives for the spark in her students eyes when they grasp a concept, ask great questions or master a skill.

Gary Swick is currently is a full time Instructor in the College of Education at Northern Illinois University. There, he works with pre-service Elementary Education students in preparation of using their community as a resource. He is president of the board of directors of the nonprofit Friends of the Fox River. Under his programming, over 30,000 students have participated in collecting data from their local streams. He has conducted camps and experiences for all ages of students. Gary is a retired High School Environmental Science teacher. At District 300 he

developed unique curriculums, student-centered projects, and collaborative initiatives that earned national recognitions. He authored over \$150,000 in grants to conduct many of those projects. Based upon his performance, he has earned many state and national level awards, including a Milken Family Foundation Fellowship (\$25,000), National Environmental Education Foundation's Bartlett Award, and the President's (first ever) Environmental Science Teacher Award. Gary holds a B.S. in Natural Resource Management with minors in Environmental Studies and Outdoor Education from the University of Wisconsin in Stevens Point. He also earned a M.S.ed in Outdoor Teacher Education from Northern Illinois University. He has presented at several national and international conferences on various topics related to successful Environmental Education projects.

Rev. Janie McCutchen Reverend Janie McCutchen is a native of Inverness, MS. She attended and graduated from Mississippi Valley State University in 1975 with a BA Degree in English. After moving to Elgin in 1976, Rev. McCutchen became a member of Second Baptist Church. While teaching new member orientation classes at Second Baptist, Rev. McCutchen developed a desire to gain knowledge to be able to counsel with "hurting people." Therefore, she received a MSW Degree from Aurora University in 1994. Rev. McCutchen is passionate about helping children. She mentors several students since retiring from School District U-46 in June, 2014 as a school social worker. Rev. McCutchen believes about all children what President Barack Obama said, "We are true to our creed when a little girl born into the bleakest poverty knows that she has the same chance to succeed as anybody else." Rev. McCutchen is married to Deacon Mitchell McCutchen, and they have two adult children and four grandchildren.

Melanie Gibb is a graphic design and brand strategist who has helped develop EMSA's current identity mark and print materials. Currently she works from home as a freelance graphic designer for local small businesses, teaches as an Adjunct Professor of Design at Judson University and home schools her two children. Melanie looks forward to collaborating with team members as she continues to help create a visual voice to EMSA's mission. She has a B.A. in Visual Communications and Fine Arts from Judson University, and an M.F.A. in Visual Communications from Northern Illinois University.

Laura Sterba holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Mathematics from the University of Notre Dame. She currently oversees ecommerce and digital marketing for an educational toy manufacturer; and has 20 years experience in various marketing roles, including managing budgets of \$1M+. She has one son, age 6, is an active volunteer with his school, and has coached his youth soccer team. She has also served as President of the Notre Dame Fox Valley Alumni Club and completed the Honolulu Marathon to benefit the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. Laura is assisting EMSA's board with marketing, social media, email and website updates.

Keith Rauschenberger holds a Bachelor degree in Finance from Purdue University and an MBA from the American Graduate School of International Management. He is the president and founder of Rauschenberger Financial Advisors, a planning and investment business. He heads EMSA's finance and site selection committees. Keith has specialized knowledge in school financing and operations as the current board chair of Elgin Academy, a private K-12 college preparatory school of 425 students; he formerly served as treasurer and chairman of Elgin Academy's Finance Committee. Keith has been integral to developing the proposed budget for EMSA. Keith intends to continue to serve on EMSA's Finance Committee.

Sandra Young has been a child care provider for more than twenty-five years, caring for children of all ages. She was born in Jamaica but has lived in Elgin for more than thirty years. Both of her children attended U-46 schools. Sandra has volunteered for many community projects. She cares deeply about children and believes that all children should have an equal opportunity for success in school and beyond.

In addition to our dedicated design team members, EMSA has many community members who have contributed their time and expertise to our events, outreach and/or planning: Caty Hernandez, volunteer, parent of young children; Aloune Khotisene, Multicultural Education Outreach Foundation; Patricia Langestrasse, community organizer; Krissy Palermo, owner Soulful Sparrow, spearheaded charter school in California; Eric Pepa, architect at Allen Pepa; Karen Schock, retired teacher and Elgin Teacher’s Union president, board chair Elgin Symphony Orchestra, among many other volunteer roles; Alan Scimeca, construction development manager

6. Enrollment Summary

	Grades	Class-rooms	Students
Year 1	K-3	8	200
Year 2	K-4	10	250
Year 3	K-5	12	300
Year 4	K-6	14	350
Year 5	K-7	16	400
Year 6	K-8	18	450

EMSA will open with 200 students in grade levels kindergarten through third, two classes per grade, and twenty-five students per class. Each year, the classes will advance a grade as a new kindergarten class enters, thus by 2023 we will have 450 students in grades kindergarten through eighth. Starting with a smaller student body will allow us to develop a strong school culture. This is especially important because of the different style of learning and very high expectations students will face at EMSA. When we start with younger students, the high expectations and expeditionary learning styles become the norm for them.

7. Financial Impact

The affordability and sustainability of EMSA is of foremost concern to our team and to the community. We are requesting 100% of the Per Capita Tuition Charge (PCTC) – the amount

set by ISBE as the cost of educating a general education student in the district – plus categorical funding based on the students who enroll in the school, such as Title I funds for low-income students. As such, district funds will follow the students who enroll at EMSA to the school. This will cost the district *no more on a per pupil basis* than students enrolled at other schools across the district. Plus, EMSA will bring additional resources into the district, including a \$950,000 federal grant for charter startup, additional private funds and the fantastic site of the former Fox River Country Day School facility and grounds, *at no additional cost* to the district.

Overall, the financial impact of EMSA on the district's half-billion dollar budget is miniscule. In its first year, EMSA will cost the district just over \$2 million, which is *less than one-half of one percent* of the district's revenue for the current school year of \$512,126,180. At full enrollment in Year 6, EMSA's impact will still be *under 1%* of the district's current revenue. In comparison, U-46 will spend more on new buses (\$2.3M) this year than our total first year budget. EMSA is an investment the district can afford to make.

III. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM DESIGN & CAPACITY

1. *Program Overview*
2. *Curriculum and Instructional Design*
3. *Pupil Performance Standards*
4. *School Calendar and Schedule*
5. *School Culture*
6. *Supplemental Programming*
7. *Special Populations and At-Risk Students*
8. *Student Recruitment and Enrollment*
9. *Student Discipline*
10. *Parent and Community Involvement*
11. *Educational Program Capacity*

1. *Program Overview*

To fulfill EMSA's mission that all of its students reach their highest potential through hands-on exploratory learning EMSA will partner with the nonprofit EL Education, one of the country's most innovative and successful educational design models. Based on experiential learning and whole-child development, EL Education also provides an excellent platform for EMSA's math and science focus: scientific topics, which often drive the ELA curriculum, are explored actively and deeply; math will be related back to students' expeditions and module work and every other year, an expedition will have a basis in math. The emphasis on math will allow all students to complete algebra in eighth grade using the problem-based approach of Eureka Math. Our curricula has proven success with low-income and minority students, advancing them beyond their peers.

EL Education has proven success in closing the achievement gap and improving ELA and math proficiency for minority and low-income students nationwide: a 12 point increase over district peers in ELA for low-income students, 10 and 12-point increases for Blacks and Hispanics; in math there were 7, 8 and 10 respective point increases. Eureka Math, which will be the foundation of our math program, has been credited for significantly higher math scores for New York City students--who are predominantly minority and low-income--compared to students in other cities in New York.¹³

EMSA will be implementing the maximum available resources from EL Education. We intend to encourage children's natural WOW and WONDER and to make their learning an adventure that will be rigorous and joyful. EMSA embraces the powerful aspirations of EL Education's vision and practices. *EL Education Core Practices, A Vision for Improving Schools* has been and will be EMSA's guiding resource. It is available to view and download online at [EL Education Core Practices](#). This 95-page resource extensively describes the ideology and methodology that will

¹³ [Hechinger Report 1/18/14](#)

guide EMSA's instruction. We highlight only some of these ideologies and practices in this application, but we are committed to all of the Core Practices delineated in the publication. EMSA's will mirror EL Education's approach to education:

Our approach is grounded in respect for teachers and school leaders as creative agents in their classrooms. We build their capacity to ignite each student's motivation, persistence and compassion to propel growth and success in school, college, career and life. Our definition of student success combines academic achievement, character and high quality work. We believe that academic success is built on strong character qualities of collaboration, perseverance, responsibility and compassion, and that character is shaped through engaging and challenging academic work.

--From EL Education's Mission, Vision and [Approach](#)

EMSA shares EL Education's belief that to prepare our students for success in college and life requires a deeper definition of "achievement." Strong test scores are just the beginning; mastery of knowledge, acquisition of skills, strong character traits, and high-quality work are equally important dimensions of student achievement. the dimensions of achievement that our students, teachers and leaders will strive to achieve, and always improve upon (from page 4 of *Core Practices*):

1. Mastery of Knowledge and Skills
 - a. Students will demonstrate proficiency and deeper understanding of their subject; they will apply their learning; they will think critically and they will communicate clearly.
 - b. Teachers and leaders will ensure that the curriculum, instruction and assessments are rigorous, meaningful, and aligned with standards.
2. Character
 - a. Students will work to become effective learners, to become ethical people, and to contribute to a better world.
 - b. Teachers and Leaders will elevate student voice and leadership, make habits of scholarship visible through their instruction, will model a culture of respect and compassion, and will prioritize social and emotional learning.
3. High-Quality Student Work
 - a. Students will create complex work, demonstrate craftsmanship and create authentic work (demonstrating original thinking and voice, connecting real-world issues, and creating work that is meaningful to the community).
 - b. Teachers and Leaders will design tasks that require students to apply, analyze, evaluate and create; they will use models of excellence, critique, and multiple drafts to support all students to produce work of exceptional quality; and they will connect students to the world beyond through meaningful fieldwork, expert collaborators, research, and service learning.

EL Education strategically plans and assesses schools throughout their partnership with the goal of becoming credentialed, which distinguishes schools as having produced remarkable results in each dimension of student achievement through the EL Core Practices. In order to become credentialed, schools are evaluated using two different methods. First, schools need to reach a select benchmarked score on EL’s Implementation Review, which is comprised of 26 rubrics that measure the level of a subset of the Core Practices. Then, schools need to collect and present a Credentialing Portfolio that outlines a multi-year body of quantitative and qualitative evidence confirming continual progress in each dimension of student achievement as follows:

Mastery of Knowledge and Skills:

- Evidence of remarkable academic results aligned to performance benchmarks and EL’s academic standard (see below) as well as deeper learning or critical thinking.

Overall Student Proficiency	Schools may use state test data to show they are outperforming their district* and state in total overall proficiency for at least two of the previous three years for the entire tested population in the school and for low-income students
<i>Or:</i> School or Grade-Level Cohort Growth	Schools may use state test data showing that the student proficiency has grown at a rate at least two times the state average over a three-year period.
<i>Or:</i> Student Growth - NWEA MAP	Schools using the NWEA MAP assessment can meet the academic standard by demonstrating that 60% or more of their students have met their annual growth target for at least two of the previous three years.

** Charter schools will be compared to the district in which the school is physically located.*

Character

- Evidence that students are becoming effective learners and ethical people who contribute to a better world.

High-Quality Work

- Evidence that overall quality of student work has improved over time linked to EL Education’s attributes of quality work (complexity, authenticity, craftsmanship) and that a specific type/category of student work in which this school achieves remarkable results (e.g. mathematical problem-solving, persuasive writing, original student research, etc).

After a school has become credentialed, EL Education provides differentiated support in order to deepen implementation, ensure ongoing professional development, and continue additional data collection. An example of a Credentialing Portfolio can be reviewed [here](#).

In addition to the *Core Practices* guidebook, EL Education will provide us with many other tools, including: 1) EL Education’s K-5 *Comprehensive Literacy Curricula* (newly released); 2) a School Designer who oversees implementation and on-site training for our EL Education program; 3) extensive training for teachers and staff; 4) assistance in hiring a school leader and teachers—including access to EL Education’s network and job posting site; 5) scaffolding for designing and fostering our school’s culture; 6) a mentor EL Education school that will be on-hand to help lead us to a successful opening and first few years; 7) access to EL

Education's extensive online and personnel resources; 8) a nationwide network of schools that have implemented EL Education--we will be interacting with them at National Conferences, Site Seminars, and training opportunities, 9) progress monitoring and school quality review, descriptive feedback and guidance in continuous improvement; and 10) the confidence in knowing that EL Education's active pedagogy practices have been proven effective for all learners.

EMSA's active, EL Education-based pedagogy--where challenges are meaningful and projects are authentic--instills the love of learning in the entire learning community. Our students will learn that it is the content of their character and the quality of their work that will lead to success in life. Our curricula will be integrated around Learning Expeditions, although for the first few years these may be mini-Learning Expeditions based upon the EL Education Comprehensive Literacy Modules which we plan to implement at the start of our school.

Learning Expeditions are a powerful pedagogical tool for delivering and reinforcing specific skills and content while engaging students in meaningful work that integrates literacy with science, social studies, and the arts, providing a coherent framework through which Common Core standards will be taught. (National Clearinghouse for Comprehensive School Reform, 2004; Udall, Mednick, 2000; Ulichy, 2000; Academy for Education Development, 1995). Each grade will take part in up to four Learning Expeditions a year. Expeditions will conclude with a summative project, presentation or other culminating event that synthesizes student's learning and demands the application of content skills. Expeditions utilize:

- Project-based learning, organized around guiding questions that address a problem or explore an issue that is relevant to the local community
- Immersion activities to build student interest and engagement, including multiple pedagogical strategies to scaffold student understanding and development such as a small, flexible grouping, direct instruction, modeling, independent work, student self-reflection, and high quality work products developed over time
- Significant projects, activities, and fieldwork that incorporate learning goals and are developed over time
- Community resources highlighting the expertise of local authors, experts, and community leaders who bring to life the history and culture of Elgin and Illinois
- Meaningful community service through service learning
- Showcases, portfolios, and/or exhibitions through which students present their work and what they have learned to an audience of parents, peers, teachers, community members, and professionals

All Learning Expeditions include a final project that contributes to the students' community and addresses a recognized need. The presentation of the final project is shared with the public. By drawing on students' natural inclination to contribute to society, EMSA's students will be motivated to work thoughtfully and achieve at higher levels. Research supports this outcome, indicating that student achievement is more closely tied to intrinsic, rather than extrinsic,

motivation (Lepper, Corpus & Iyengar, 2005). This is especially true for English language learners (Griffiths, 2008); low-income and learning disabled students also benefit from approaches that make learning personally meaningful (Eisenman, 2007). To review a video documented example of a Learning Expedition, [follow this link](#).

Overlaying EMSA's EL Education curricula, will be the purposeful implementation of "growth mindset" instruction. The growth mindset indicates a belief that characteristics and qualities, such as intelligence, can be cultivated and augmented. (Dweck 2006) In contrast, the "fixed mindset" propounds that such characteristics and qualities are innate: one's intelligence, e.g., is predetermined at birth. Carol Dweck discovered and documented the growth mindset and demonstrated that just knowing that intelligence was improvable vastly increased students' efforts to become more intelligent and consequently increased their measurable intelligence (Dweck 2006). EMSA's curricula will build on the proven theory that intelligence can be augmented; brains have the capacity to grow and change in short time periods (Abiola & Dhindsa, 2011, among others). The more a subject is learned deeply, the more lasting connections and structural, neurological pathways are created. If an idea is only visited once or superficially, the neural connections generated will fade away.

The first step in implementing the EL Education model will be EMSA's use of EL Education's **Comprehensive Literacy Curricula**, which formally addresses CCSS and are the equivalent of mini Learning Expeditions. EL Education's ELA Curriculum has been independently reviewed by *Ed Reports* where it has been found to exceed expectations overwhelmingly, scoring at the very top of the ratings. See [EdReports Grade 6 Analysis](#), and Attachment 5 (EL Education Summary of Ed Reports). EMSA is confident that with the help of the extraordinary skills of the national and regional EL Education teams, we will meet the diverse needs of all our students and make measurable progress in closing the achievement gap.

Establishing a positive vibrant school culture will support EMSA's priority to create a literate student body. Many studies conclude that the importance of reading at grade level by the end of third grade is critically important and a pivotal predictor to the student's future success as a student and in life (also known as the "Matthew Effect in Reading" where proficient readers start at a higher point and then move at a faster rate each year relative to non-proficient readers) (Stanovich 1986, 1992, 1993). At EMSA, we will strive for all students to read at grade level after three years at our school. EMSA will dedicate three hours per day in grades kindergarten through second to foundational skills, comprehensive literature, reading, and writing, using the EL Education's **Comprehensive Literacy** Curriculum which has been designed to ensure reading at or above grade level. In grades third through fifth, two hours will be dedicated to EL Education's **Comprehensive Literacy** Curriculum with an additional one hour per day tied-in with literacy through a companion life science module and expedition-related inquiry. Likewise, EL Education has designed comprehensive, common-core aligned ELA modules for grades 6-8. They can be viewed at http://commoncoresuccess.EL_Education.org/. These modules include all components for classroom implementation (e.g., assessments, discussion points, focused areas of study, etc); they are designed to spike students' curiosity and challenge them

to think deeper.

With a strong foundation in reading and writing, EMSA's students will have the base required for meaningful exploration and advancement in math and science. At EMSA we will dedicate significantly more time to math than the U-46 District elementary schools: 1.75 hours grades K-2; 2 hours grades 3-5; 1.5 hours grades 6-8. This will allow all of our students to complete algebra in the 8th grade. Starting in grade four, EMSA will have one teacher who is endorsed in, or has exceptional experience in, math. Depending upon our bilingual education and other needs, the math specialist will either teach math and science or will be responsible for the curriculum development and alignment with our Learning Expeditions. EMSA will utilize Eureka Math (aka Engage NY math), which is endorsed by EL Education and has been adopted by U-46. Common Core aligned Eureka Math was written and developed by teachers for the nonprofit GreatMinds. Eureka Math provides training for teachers as well as the entire curriculum for grades K-12, including assessments, background, and teacher preparation advice. The curriculum is available in Spanish for grades K-8, including family "homework helpers" in Spanish. We believe that the problem-based approach offered by Eureka, which encourages group and partner-work, facilitates active, hands-on and exploratory learning consistent with our mission.

It's not enough for students to know the process for solving a problem; they need to understand why that process works. Teaching mathematics as a "story," *Eureka Math* builds students' knowledge logically and thoroughly to help them achieve deep understanding. While this approach is unfamiliar to those of us who grew up memorizing mathematical facts and formulas, it has been tested and proven to be the most successful method in the world.

--GreatMinds (12/26/16) <https://greatminds.org/math/about-eureka>

While Eureka Math will serve as the foundation for our math program, it will be supplemented by growth mindset concepts, specifically those propounded in Jo Boaler's book, *Mathematical Mindsets, Unleashing Students' Potential Through Creative Math, Inspiring messages and Innovative Teaching* (2016). Boaler is a Professor of Mathematics Education at the Stanford Graduate School of Education. She advocates deep learning through challenging problem-solving in heterogeneous work groups. Boaler builds on Carol Dweck's growth mindset and illustrates how to bring students from "self-doubt" to "self-confidence" which is fundamental in learning math. She also emphasizes the importance of conveying relevance and joy in mathematics, e.g., in the sense of achievement when solving a truly difficult problem. Boaler outlines the steps for teachers to take to achieve a positive math mindset, including: explain how the brain processes mathematics learning; reveal how to turn mistakes and struggles into valuable learning experiences; and provide examples of rich mathematical activities to replace rote learning. At EMSA, we will assign up two hours per day in all grades for mathematics study for Eureka math and mathematics-focused Learning Expeditions.

Scientific topics are naturally engaging for students and motivate them to become better

learners and push their reading boundaries. The EL Education curriculum supports our mission of exploratory, hands-on learning. On inquiry:

Young children explore the world with wonder...Younger learners are always asking questions. They hunger to make discoveries, to find answers that will help them make meaning of the world around them. They ask questions not to annoy or interrupt, but to pursue their inherent drive to learn. Much like scientists, they develop hypotheses and test them, incorporating their findings and often retesting and modifying their theories over time –the foundations of logical reasoning. Children love to develop deep expertise - naming obscure dinosaurs, explaining the workings of a toy, or playing “teacher” with precision of gesture and speech. Guiding this relentless curiosity in the direction of students’ academic growth without squelching it is a primary teacher’s greatest challenge. By joining students in the inquiry process and creating rich opportunities for discovery, for building deep expertise, and for sharing that new knowledge, teachers are able to harness the “engine” of children’s natural learning predispositions to power their success in the classroom.

“Characteristics of Primary Learners” (Attachment 6)

Our science curricula will be aligned with the Next Generation of Scientific Standards (NGSS). It will, in part, be provided by the EL Education Comprehensive Literacy Curriculum, specifically, in grades 3-5 for eight weeks of life science per year. In the remaining time (grades k-2, the other 24 weeks of 3-5, and grades 6-8) teachers will be designing mini or full Learning Expeditions that will coincide and extend their ELA topics. Teachers will have scheduled support, training and planning time in the summers and throughout the school year to create their Learning Expeditions. An example of a Learning Expedition mirroring the underlying ELA curriculum is discussed below (first graders studying tools). The natural environment will play an important and focusing role in EMSA’s science expeditions. Both of our proposed facilities sites are located within or near extensive natural habitat.

At least one Learning Expedition (eight weeks) per year will be based on social studies and history. We will make an effort to align with U-46’s social studies scope and sequence, to further our purpose as a best practices lab and to facilitate student transfers. We also will include, in a meaningful way, the history and culture of the countries of our English learner students. These Learning Expeditions will be aligned to state standards and targets for the grade levels. Every Learning Expedition incorporates a significant art form, thus students will be engaged in art that will be relevant to what they are studying and learning at the time. High expectations for high quality final products are the norm, pushing students to exceed their own expectations. EMSA teachers will have access to the EL Education Models of Excellence platform, which provides the basis for the curriculum of highly regarded expeditions: <http://modelsofexcellence.EL Educationucation.org/>.

Physical education will also be purposeful. Based upon various brain studies¹⁴, students will engage in activities that will raise their heart rate to a threshold level for a predetermined time; this will increase the students' attention and ability to learn for the next thirty or so minutes.

Almost immediately after engaging in physical activity, children are better able to concentrate on classroom tasks, which can enhance learning. Over time, as children engage in developmentally appropriate physical activity, their improved physical fitness can have additional positive effects on academic performance in mathematics, reading, and writing. PE classes will be structured in the day so that the class immediately following PE will be either math or reading so that students can benefit from the increased learning capacity as a result of their work-out. Students will monitor and diary their health challenges and successes and set goals for individual achievement.

--Active Living Research, January 2015 [Research Brief](#)

We have built-in daily exercise in our week, in addition to thirty minutes of recess time for all K-8 students. Our students will spend up to thirty minutes every afternoon engaged in physical exercise. In the first years of our school, the teachers and school nurse, with assistance from the Dean, will be tasked with developing this program. By year five EMSA's gym teacher will be tasked with updating this program. One program that we are considering is the "Walking Classroom," where students listen to podcasts while they walk.

In addition to one hour of dedicated art per week, the arts will be integrated into many aspects of our school. Arts processes and skills will be explicitly taught and will cultivate a culture of artistic expression and appreciation. We will celebrate the arts in all forms. EMSA students will be motivated by the arts as a window into their academic subjects (e.g., Ancient Greek architecture leads to Ancient Greek civilization) and our diverse cultures and regions of the world. Our approach will mirror EL Education's recommended best practices:

The visual and performing arts are taught using the same effective instructional practices that are used in other disciplines, and all students have access to professional artists and professional exhibitions and performances. Ideally, specialists in visual and performance arts are on the school staff. If they are not, classroom teachers use professional art educators and artists whenever possible to support high-caliber artistic learning. The arts build school culture and student character by emphasizing authentic performance, craftsmanship, risk-taking, creativity, and a quest for beauty and meaning. The

¹⁴Dozens of studies reviewed in Active Living Research (January 2015) [Research Brief](#); Research at the University of Illinois shows that after a 30-minutes on a treadmill, students improve up to 10 percent at problem solving. Dr. Charles Hillman: "It's good for attention, it's good for how fast individuals process information, and how they perform on cognitive tasks." In Naperville, which maximizes this approach, reading scores increased by nearly double, math scores by a factor of twenty.

heritage of critique in the arts forms the basis for a whole-school culture of critique in all disciplines. --[EL Education Teaching the Arts](#)

Community will play a key role in EMSA's instructional model. Every Learning Expedition will end with a contribution to the students' community. The community then becomes the judge of the students' work, inspiring higher expectations in their own work and higher exemplary results. For example, students have compiled interviews and research to create published books such as Polaris' *Peacekeepers*; other students have secured protections for natural areas and created school-wide composting systems. After each Learning Expedition, the community is invited to a Celebration of Learning where all students attend and share the results of their Expeditions. Community will become an even more direct contributor to EMSA's curriculum through our students' Portfolio Passages. These occur at grades five and eight and require the student to present their learning in a style not dissimilar to a doctoral dissertation defense to invited community members, and parents.

EMSA will provide students access to professionals in many fields, including the arts and sciences. EMSA will rely on community resources such as the Elgin Area History Museum and Elgin Public Museum to provide meaning and relevancy to our students' studies. Community partnerships will also provide out-of-school experiences.

At EL Education we use the term fieldwork, rather than field trips. This is not just a semantic difference. Fieldwork is not sitting on a miniature train looking at sites, and it's not just taking a tour of an historic home or walking through an aquarium. Fieldwork is what adult professionals do: research in the world. It may happen to take place in an historic home or an aquarium, but the students are not there as passive listeners. They are there to conduct research for their studies: taking notes, taking photos, interviewing experts.

--Ron Berger, EL Education Chief Academic Officer [EL Education news 12/13/16](#)

Our field work will contribute to the academic program (through local expertise and community role models), and serve as a local catalyst for learning about national and global issues.

EMSA will host weekly Community Meetings, where the whole school assembles to celebrate accomplishments in the Habits of Scholarship traits and recognize "stars," or students who have been nominated by their teachers and peers as an example of superior expression of a specific habit.

2. Curriculum and Instructional Design

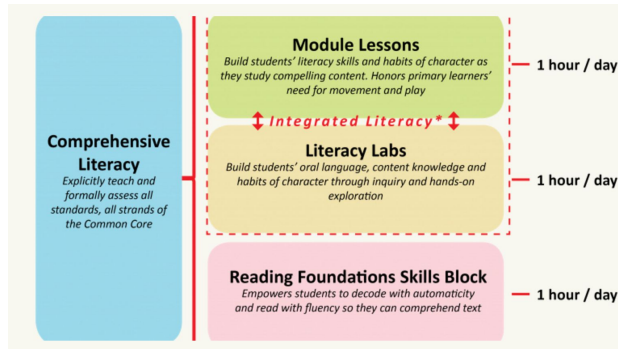
EMSA will be an EL Education, math and science-focused hands-on, exploratory learning environment. It will be classroom-based with emphasis on group and partner work. Each classroom will have twenty-five students and there will be two classes per grade level. We will serve children in grades K- 8. When we open in 2018 with grades K-3, we will fully implement

the EL Education Comprehensive Literacy Curriculum, which we will continue to implement through grade 5. This curriculum is fully developed and aligned to CCSS for English Language Arts (ELA). This curriculum also provides the NGSS-aligned science curriculum for one-quarter of each year in grades 3-5. The curriculum includes supports for English as a Second Language (ESL) students as well as for remedial and advanced learners. Our ELA for grades 6-8 will be based upon EL Education's common-core aligned modules available at http://commoncoresuccess.EL_Education.org/. For all of its math classes, EMSA will implement the Eureka Math curriculum which is aligned with CCSS and available in Spanish. EMSA's social studies will be embedded in its ELA curriculum as will significant parts of its science and art program. These curricula are appropriate for and have been proven effective for the students we expect to serve. As we progress and our teachers gain familiarity and experience with the EL Education curriculum and alignment, teachers will begin to design their own Learning Expeditions. Each summer (two weeks prior to school opening), teachers will work with each other and various members of the EMSA's leadership team to develop these. Teachers and the leadership team will be responsible for curricula not covered by the EL Education and Eureka Math programs, specifically: growth and math mindset overlays and implementation; physical education; and Learning Expeditions. For samples of our scope and sequences for one subject for our elementary and one for our middle school, see Attachments 7 and 8.

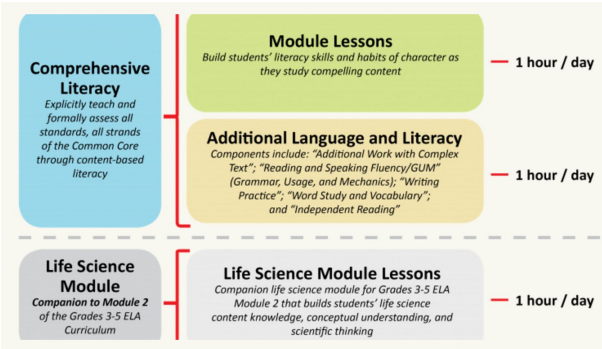
A. English Language Arts (ELA)

EMSA's ELA curriculum for grades kindergarten through second will include three hours daily of EL Education's Comprehensive Literacy Curriculum, divided into four Modules per year ("EL Education Modules"). Each EL Education Module is divided into three Units, which complement and build upon each other. While formative assessments by the teacher are ongoing through the Units, there is a cumulative assessment at the end of each Unit. The Modules are the equivalent of mini Learning Expeditions with each one culminating in a Final Performance Task. Each of the three hours of ELA instruction is purposeful and guided by EL Education: 1) **Module Lessons** build students' literacy skills and habits of character as they study compelling content while supporting movement and play in the classroom; 2) **Literacy Labs** "build students' oral language, content knowledge and habits of character through inquiry and hands-on exploration"; 3) **Reading Foundations Skills Block** "empowers students to decode with automaticity and read with fluency so they can comprehend text." The Reading Foundations Skills Block provides the opportunity for targeted intervention through differentiation and explicit teaching with English Learners in small groups, in accordance with students' WIDA levels and language needs per formative data. These Comprehensive Literacy structures will be based on an engaging science or social studies topic, for example "Toys and Play" and "Plants and Pollinators."

Grades K-2:



Grades 3-5



EMSA's Modules will be 6-8 week mini Learning Expeditions focused on a topic. For example, first graders will study "Tools and Work," which is provided in EL Education's Comprehensive Literacy Curriculum. Eventually, a teacher will develop his or her own Learning Expedition that aligns with CCSS, NGSS and other Illinois standards. The Modules and Learning Expeditions narrow the subject, allowing the students to dive deeply into an exploration of that subject. Students are provided the time and are compelled by interesting discoveries to build vocabulary and understanding at ever-more challenging levels. Students will complete four modules per year, the majority of these modules will be based upon a motivating scientific concept, while at least one will be social studies or history based, and another will be biannually on a mathematics topic.

The Comprehensive Literacy Module Curricula provide the maximum resources to teachers, including:

1. Overviews of the Module which is composed of Units which are composed of Lessons (three hours of Comprehensive Literacy--Module Lessons, Literacy Labs and Reading Foundations Skills);
2. Alignment with CCSS;
3. "Week at a glance" planning;
4. Detailed performance task guidance, performance assessment checklists and overviews;
5. Formative assessments, e.g., an explanatory writing checklist and rubric;
6. Resource requirements, including suggested electronic media;
7. Extensively detailed classroom Lessons which set daily learning targets, describe the CCSS of focus, describe ongoing assessments, set an agenda, provide "teaching notes," and advise of advance preparation for the teacher;
8. Each lesson incorporates a section to support ELLs and ways to integrate Multiple Means of Representation/Action/Engagement (MTSS discussed below); and
9. Opening, Work Time and Closing sections of each lesson (which incorporate all three Learning Labs) described extensively.

As teachers grow confident with the materials, learning standards, expedition planning, and the EL Education approach, they will become less reliant on the published materials and begin

creating their own mini or full Learning Expeditions.

There will be ample school team, individual, administrative and EL Education training time to support the teachers in this endeavor. Teachers will have the opportunity to explore and learn about the EL Education Modules and develop their expeditions during the year prior to the school's initial opening, during summers preceding each school year, and during dedicated professional development days (averaging one full day and one half day every month). By providing fifteen days per year (in addition to summer PD time) and ten hours per week, planning and PD time, EMSA teachers will have the time and energy to focus on curriculum development and best practices. EMSA would expect that for the first two to three years, teachers will utilize the EL Education Modules to inform their instruction. Because of the extensive infrastructure provided by the EL Education Modules, teachers can put their brainpower and enthusiasm to work in developing mini Learning Expeditions that tie-in with the modules and eventually create their own Learning Expeditions (which are very similar to Modules but include additional components). This enables teachers to have significant buy-in and excitement in their teaching.

EMSA will begin EL Education training as we begin hiring. Training will include site visits to credentialed EL Education schools to see EL Education modules and expeditions in progress. Polaris Charter School in Chicago is currently piloting the EL Education Comprehensive Literacy Curriculum Modules and will provide an excellent resource for our teachers and staff. In addition to site visits, EL Education will provide on-site training for curricula development, including aligning with standards across the grade levels, and expedition planning.

How the EL Education Comprehensive Literacy Program & Modules Work

The **Module Lessons** build literacy skills; they are divided into three consecutive units per EL Education Module. Grades K-2 will receive three hours of literacy instruction per day. (Grades 3-5 will receive two hours of literacy instruction per day.) Each Module is composed of three Units. **Unit 1** will establish a foundation of strong content knowledge through reading, discussing, writing, singing, dramatizing, and drawing about the focus subject. For example, first graders in unit 1 of EL Education's Tools Module will learn about many different tools and the jobs each tool does. Students will learn to ask and answer questions about the various related texts and they will learn to collaborate and converse with each other. In **Unit 2**, they will start "close readings" of complex texts. In the Tools Module, the students will analyze the book *The Most Magnificent Thing*, a book that few first-graders can read independently. The teacher will read-aloud the book in a series of sessions in which students analyze and discuss the engaging text. "Students become deeply familiar with what a 'magnificent thing' might be and what sorts of habits of character (such as perseverance) the girl in the story needed to make such a thing." Music and poetry incorporated in the unit bring joy and positivity to the classroom; they help build fluency and a sense of schema for rhythm and syntax (i.e., prosody). In **Unit 3**, the teacher introduces the performance task, which is equivalent to a mini Learning Expedition. In the Tools Module, students will prepare to create their own "magnificent things" and to synthesize their understanding through supported, standards-based writing.

Throughout the EL Education Module Units, the **Literacy Labs** will be ongoing. The labs ensure that all students engage in play and explore time. They have the opportunity to practice skills and habits of character with their interactions and immerse themselves in oral language and content knowledge. There are five Literacy Labs as part of the EL Education Comprehensive Literacy program.

Literacy Lab	Description
Explore	Students build background knowledge and immerse themselves in a hands-on exploration of the content they are studying in the module.
Engineer	Students represent their learning and/or attempt to solve a design dilemma by building various types of models related to the content of the module.
Create	Students use a variety of media; they artistically expand and represent their content learning through visual arts.
Imagine	Students use their imagination to engage in play through role-playing and make-believe. Students take on, interpret, and become immersed in the content they are studying as they play and perform.
Research	Students read a variety of texts on the module topic more independently to build content knowledge and write to build fluency and stamina.

The third hour of the EMSA’s implementation of EL Education Comprehensive Literacy will revolve around the **Reading Foundation Skills Block**, which is designed to build “internalized, automatic knowledge of the building blocks of spoken and written languages--letter names, sounds, and formations; the ability to break words apart and blend them back together; common spelling patterns; and decoding of words.” The Skills Block is also designed to help students develop automaticity around reading, i.e., the ability to “internalize predictably patterned words in context (so that the words become sight words) and smoothly and accurately read basic sentence patterns” and texts. During the Skills Block, students will spend approximately 20 minutes in a whole-group work session and approximately 40 minutes in differentiated small groups, based on their strengths and needs.

EMSA’s literacy program will allow students to develop reading and comprehension skills in phases. These phases are measured and based upon the work of Dr. Linnea Ehri who researched how students “crack the alphabetic code.” The Skills Block is differentiated based on students' needs dictated through a micro-phase assessment grounded in Ehri’s work. The following chart describes the graduated phases described by Dr. Ehri and implemented by EL Education’s Comprehensive Literacy program.

Pre-Alphabetic	Partial Alphabetic	Full Alphabetic	Consolidated Alphabetic
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<p>Able to identify very few if any letters</p> <p>Not yet able to identify letter sounds</p> <p>Able to identify some environmental print</p> <p>If spelling attempts are made, may include a random string of letters or shapes</p>	<p>Able to identify many upper and lower case letters</p> <p>Able to identify some letter sounds</p> <p>Limited phonemic awareness</p> <p>Limited decoding ability</p> <p>Predicts unknown words by identifying beginning sound</p> <p>Able to produce some invented spelling; weak memory for correct spelling</p>	<p>Able to identify all upper and lower case letters and sounds</p> <p>Able to blend and segment sounds in a word</p> <p>A growing number of sight words committed to memory (mostly shorter words)</p> <p>Growing ability to decode words and non-words</p> <p>Able to use context to confirm reading of a word in a text</p> <p>Growing memory for correct spelling; some invented spelling</p>	<p>Able to identify all upper and lower case letters and sounds</p> <p>Large bank of sight words, including multisyllabic words; learns words more quickly</p> <p>Able to use context to confirm reading of a word in a text</p> <p>Proficient memory for correct spelling; able to draw from alphabetic principles to spell new words</p>
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In the 3d module, students embark on a mini-Learning Expedition, which the teacher could adapt to reflect the students' community. The following is a sample Learning Expedition that a teacher developed around the unit of Tools and Work.

Sample Expedition of “Tools and Work” (K-1)

Name of Expedition: “Our Book of Tools,” Alice B. Beal Elementary, Springfield, Massachusetts.

Format: Children’s book.

Subjects: ELA, Science and Technology, Visual Arts

Noteworthy: In 2010, this expedition was featured at the Harvard Graduate School of Education exemplary student work in *Books for Kids, by Kids*.

Kindergartners or first graders will create a children’s book as a part of their Tool Expedition. Students learn to identify tools and their uses and the importance of tools to the various professionals in their community. Students will learn about people’s jobs through the tools they use. They will interview professionals at their school and in their broader community to learn about the tools professionals depend upon.

This expedition has a great interplay with the concept of getting to know our community. Through a study of the tools used in different professions, students gain “concrete, consistent, interesting” insights into the lives of professionals in the community, such as: custodian,

construction worker, secretary, electrician, police officer, teacher, plumber, cook, etc.

Students will utilize and experiment with tools throughout this expedition (as a part of the EL Education Module Literacy Labs described above, as well as in preparation for interviews with experts and during seminars with experts--the experts being the community person of focus). In the sample expedition, the students will conduct a **case study** of carpentry tools; their classroom (or a part of) can be revamped into a wood-working station. Students will categorize carpentry and construction tools into groups based on the main function of the tool (e.g., tools that join things; tools that measure; tools that grip).

As the expedition progresses, each student chooses a tool with which to become an expert. Students look at real tools, photos of tools, visit local hardware stores, interview and/or observe experts to help them become experts. These experiences are underscored by the continued work in the EL Education Module Literacy Labs and the Reading Foundations Skills Block, with focus on: nonfiction read-alouds; independent research and reading; and small group readings.

Students will use EL Education's "writer's workshop" sessions to help them to notice and describe--in writing--their tools' details. Students will revise their writing multiple times. They will work with a technology specialist to word process their sentences themselves on the computer. Students will be exposed to expert quality tool illustrations and meet professional illustrators. The students will draw their tool, illustrating it as accurately as possible. The writing and the illustrating will go through multiple drafts, each draft followed by protocol-driven peer review, teacher and self-evaluation. In addition to the writings and illustrations for the class Tool Book, each student will design, create, paint and display a wooden sculpture using the tools from the wood-working station in the classroom.

This expedition, while promoting literacy skills, also:

- Demonstrates the idea of using tools as lens to understand professions is a powerful one that can be used with young students in a number of ways.
- Delivers an elegant visual layout, that combines student illustrations and writing.
- Shows a high level of precision and detail in kindergarten student's illustration.
- Exemplifies the power of revision and critique for young students.
- Retains the qualities of a young student's work in his/her writing and drawings while also being of high quality.

Standard	Long-Term Learning Target
RI.K.7	With support, I can make connections between the pictures and words in an informational text.
W.K.2	I can teach my reader about a topic using pictures and words.

W.K.7	I can participate in shared writing projects.
SL.K.5	I can use pictures to send a clear message to my listener.
K.G.4	I can compare 2D and 3D shapes using a variety of features.

B. Mathematics

We believe that the problem-based approach offered by Common Core aligned Eureka Math, which encourages group and partner-work, facilitates active, hands-on and exploratory learning consistent with our mission. Our Habits of Scholarship will continue to play a role in our math program, e.g., perseverance and courage are relevant. Math will also provide a time when students can be leaders in their own learning, which is part of EMSA's Vision, by taking initiative or leadership in group work and/or accelerating and taking their learning deeper as befits them.

At EMSA we will dedicate significantly more daily time to math than the District elementary and middle schools: 1.75 hours grades K-2; 2 hours grades 3-5; 1.5 hours grades 6-8. This will allow all of our students to complete algebra in the 8th grade. Part of each day (15 minutes) will be dedicated to a math problem of the day: this will either relate to the Module or Learning Expedition or be a challenging problem with which to struggle until math class, where further work on the problem will take place. Starting in grade four, EMSA will have one teacher who is endorsed in, or has exceptional experience in, math. Depending upon our bilingual education and other needs, the math specialist will either teach math and science or will be responsible for the curriculum development and alignment with our Learning Expeditions.

Throughout EMSA's mathematics curriculum growth mindset will be supported. Math has become a field of study especially susceptible to a fixed mindset approach. Contrary evidence has shown that most students are capable of enjoying and excelling in math, especially when they've adopted a growth mindset and are exposed to stimulating instruction. EMSA's math program will be based on the Eureka Math program (aka Engage NY math) curriculum which is endorsed by EL Education and has been adopted by U-46. While Eureka Math will serve as the foundation for our math program, it will be supplemented by growth mindset concepts, specifically those propounded in Jo Boaler's book, *Mathematical Mindsets, Unleashing Students' Potential Through Creative Math, Inspiring messages and Innovative Teaching* (2016). Additionally, EMSA students will experience at least one mathematics-focused Learning Expedition every two years.

Regarding our goal that every student successfully complete Algebra 1 by the end of 8th grade, this will help ensure that more options are available to EMSA students in their choice of high schools. For example, two of U-46's high school academies require completion of Algebra 1 for admittance to their programs. Having completed Algebra 1 by 8th grade also allows our students to complete a calculus or other high level math class by senior year in high school. EMSA is researching ways to best implement Eureka Math on an accelerated basis. Our plan is

to create a school-wide scope and sequence using Eureka and modified scheduling (e.g., intensive weeks), if necessary, to meet this goal.

3. Pupil Performance Standards and Assessment

EMSA will follow the Illinois Learning Standards, which incorporate the Common Core State Standards in ELA and math, Next Generation Science Standards, and WIDA English Language Development Standards, as well as Illinois-specific standards in areas including social studies, PE/health, and fine arts. EMSA will use multiple measures to assess student learning, as indicated in the following chart.

Assessment Battery – Elgin Math and Science Academy			
Assessment	Type	Frequency	Purpose
PARCC	Outcome	Spring (grades 3-8)	Overall program evaluation (literacy and mathematics)
Illinois State Science Assessment	Outcome	Spring (Grades 5 and 8)	Overall program evaluation (science)
PSAT	Outcome	Spring (Grade 8)	Overall program evaluation and High School placement
NWEA MAP	Screener ¹⁵ Interim/Formative	Fall, Winter, Spring	Measure growth in literacy and math over time, inform Tier I instruction, and identify students needing diagnostic assessments
WIDA MODEL (K-1st grade, 1st sem) WIDA-APT (1st-8th)	Screener	Summer or Fall	Assess English language proficiency
ACCESS (grade K-8)	Outcome	Winter	Measure English language proficiency of ELLs to inform program placement and as a growth measure for English language proficiency
WRMT-III	Diagnostic	Fall, Winter (for identified students only)	Determine specific literacy skills for Tier 2 & 3 interventions

¹⁵ "When teachers administer MAP as part of the RTI model, students receive the benefit of a universal screener that enables teachers to confidently measure their students' performance with the use of accurate and efficient assessment tool." - See more at: <https://www.nwea.org/blog/2014/identifying-problems-solving-map-rti/#sthash.TVSwfyrk.dpuf>

AMU (Diagnostic Items)	Diagnostic	Fall and Winter (for identified students only)	Determine specific math skills for Tier 2 & 3 interventions
Selections of assessments based on identified intervention foci (e.g., Words Their Way spelling inventory)	Progress Monitoring	Ongoing	Determine effectiveness of Tier II interventions and flexible re-groupings of students
Kindergarten Individual Development Survey (KIDS) assessment	Observational	Ongoing (review at days 40, 105 and 170)	Determine children's competencies across developmental domains
Classroom-Based Assessments	Formative	Ongoing	Analyze and track areas of growth/need within curricular contexts
Assessments Linked to Curricular Materials	Formative	Ongoing	Analyze and track areas of growth/need within curricular contexts
Assessments Linked to Expeditions	Formative	Ongoing	Analyze and track areas of growth/need within curricular contexts
Portfolios	Formative	Ongoing	Evidence growth in Mastery of Knowledge/Skills, Character, and High-Quality Work

Below we elaborate on the purpose and use of some of the key assessments listed above.

PARCC and Illinois State Science Assessment. EMSA will adhere to all assessment requirements mandated by the Illinois State Board of Education within the requisite testing window. These assessments will be used to monitor the progress of students in meeting the state standards.

NWEA MAP. EMSA will administer MAP three times per year (fall, winter, spring). Data from these assessments will be used as growth measures to document students' reading and math achievement as well as inform our Tier 1 instruction. The data for reading and math will be used by grade-level teams in the fall, winter, and spring as a screening tool for Response to Intervention (RTI) within our Multi-Tiered System of Supports, Interventions and Acceleration (MTSSIA). Teachers will also use the MAP data to form flexible groupings in the classroom for leveled readers. The Principal and Leadership Team will analyze MAP scores shortly after receipt of the results to identify areas of concern that will need additional attention.

WIDA MODEL and ACCESS. EMSA anticipates that it will have students that qualify for Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) and/or a Transitional Program of Instruction (TPI).

EMSA's Bilingual Coordinator or other WIDA-certificated personnel will administer the WIDA MODEL (K-first semester first graders) or W-APT (second semester first graders and older) as part of the screening process to identify English learners. WIDA ACCESS will be administered to all English learners on an annual basis to monitor student progress, establish when ELL students have attained English language proficiency, according to state criteria, to inform classroom instruction and assessment and to aid in programmatic decision-making.

Classroom-Based Assessments. EMSA faculty will develop assessments as needed to support the learning in each classroom. These assessments will be aligned to the standards and the learning targets defined for each expedition or unit of instruction. These assessments may be in the form of quizzes or tests, but will also include performance tasks, writing projects, and other assessments that are integrated into students' active learning. Teachers will be trained in how to effectively use information gathered from these assessments to inform their teaching and assess where additional supports or interventions may be needed. These assessments will also include non-standardized diagnostic assessments to measure reading skills such as concepts of print, phonemic and phonological awareness, decoding inventory, spelling stage, and sight words.

Students at EMSA will be evaluated in all subject areas using a common set of performance standards. The standards will form the basis for both graded classroom assignments and standards-based report cards. Standards-based report cards will detail student performance related to the Common Core State Standards, Next Generation Science Standards and other State of Illinois essential standards being addressed at that time. EMSA will implement the following performance standards:

- Mastery (4): Student demonstrates complete understanding of the knowledge and skills outlined within a content standard without additional support, and is able to perform content-related skills without significant errors. Student can apply the knowledge and skills outlined in multiple contexts.
- Proficient (3): Student demonstrates a complete understanding of the skills and knowledge outlined within a content standard with minimal assistance, and perform tasks and skills with few errors.
- Developing (2): Student demonstrate a basic understanding of the skills and knowledge outlined within a a content standard, and requires some support to complete content-related skills.
- Below Basic (1): Student demonstrates little or no understanding of the skills and knowledge outlined within a content standard. Student is unable to complete work toward this content standard without significant instructional support or without significant errors.

Assessments Linked to Curricular Materials. EMSA will implement Eureka Math; this program includes mid-module and end-of-module assessments, as well as daily "exit tickets." EMSA's EL Education Comprehensive Literacy Curriculum (K-5) as well as ELA Modules (grades 6-8)

contain multiple opportunities for assessment, including relevant grading rubrics. Teachers will be trained in how to effectively use information gathered from these assessments to inform instruction.

Assessments Linked to Expeditions. After the first few years, teachers will create their own Learning Expeditions; each grade will complete three to four Learning Expeditions each year. Teachers will use multiple pedagogical strategies to support student understanding and development, including facilitation of small group instruction, direct instruction, modeling, independent or group work, student self-reflection, and individual pacing. Expeditions will conclude with a summative project, presentation or other culminating event that synthesizes student's learning and demands the application of content skills.

To assess student work within a Learning Expedition, teachers will use standards-based grading rubrics, collecting student work samples that demonstrate the student's progress toward meeting the specific standards. This type of assessment helps to measure how effectively teachers are building students' domain-specific content knowledge. Because at-risk students often start school with less of this type of knowledge, it is critical that it be taught intentionally and students' mastery of skill be measured routinely. Assessment tools within expeditions may include:

- Teacher observation, including, but not limited to: student contributions to group discussions, work habits, engagement, mastery of skills and knowledge appropriate to the expedition, use of vocabulary and new ideas.
- Expedition-based projects such as writing projects, work displays and performance tasks. These projects will be assessed using a standards-based rubric. Each expedition will include multiple opportunities for assessment, including a classroom-wide culminating project that will allow each student to be part of a presentation of some sort that will summarize the learning that was undertaken by the class.

Portfolios. Students at EMSA will create summative and reflective portfolios that will accompany them through their time at the school and will be used to measure and report their academic progress over time. Portfolios will include student work and assessment data along with other requirements defined by each grade level team, such as student, teacher, and parent reflections on particular pieces of work, projects, photographs, digital representations of work, or write-ups of performances or tasks. With teacher support, students will create and add to portfolios throughout their enrollment at EMSA, selecting work samples that highlight their progress toward meeting standards and goals defined by EMSA. A sample portfolio for a fourth-grade student might include summative math assessments, standardized test scores, a chart showing progress in reading fluency, work samples selected by both the student and teacher that demonstrate mastery of Common Core State Standards, NGSS and other relevant standards, and student reflections that note progress toward self-selected goals.

Students will play a key role in the management of their portfolios, not only by selecting the work to be included, but also by using the portfolios to identify academic and nonacademic goals for

themselves and reflecting on their progress towards meeting those goals. Students will prepare and conduct parent-teacher conferences twice each year, where they will share products they are proud of, discuss projects that interested them, and identify individual goals for the upcoming year. In grades five and eight, members of the community will be invited to the student-led conferences for “Portfolio Passages.” Portfolios give students, teachers, and parents rich data on students’ progress in acquiring the content mastery, ownership of learning, and problem-solving ability that will put them on the path to college. In addition to these presentations, elements from different classes’ portfolios will be displayed on occasion to give the school community a sense of the breadth of work completed within an expedition or classroom.

Student Character and Engagement. Key components of an EL Education school are the Habits of Scholarship which pervade into every activity of the school. Habits of Scholarship help students reflect and grow their non-cognitive skills that affect their academic performance (e.g., perseverance) and social-emotional awareness (e.g., empathy). Because our mission at EMSA is for students and teachers to become explorers, stewards, and embrace the growth mindset, we have selected Habits that will foster such learning: craftsmanship, perseverance, responsibility, compassion, courage and curiosity. These include the habits of performance (i.e., the academic mindsets and habits that students bring to learning) and habits of relationship (i.e., the way students treat and work with others). Our mission is that EMSA’s students and teachers will reach their highest potential through hands-on exploratory learning.

EMSA will implement a system to actively teach, assess and report on students’ habits of scholarship for both performance and relationships. The habits of relationships will be topics for both crew and community meetings, as well as professional development sessions. EMSA’s assessment will be based upon EL Education’s “Essential Qualities of Character” listed below. Current research shows that these assessable qualities of character positively impact students’ academic achievement (Farrington, *et al*, 2012; US DOE, 2013).

Essential Qualities of Character	Common Words or Phrases
Perseverance	Persistence, Tenacity, Grit
Collaboration(Compassion)	Teamwork; We are crew, not passengers
Effort (Craftsmanship)	Growth Mindset, Determination, Willpower, Zest
Responsibility	Initiative, Focus, Self-Discipline

Other essential qualities of character, like curiosity, passion, or compassion, are more difficult to directly measure. The omission of qualities such as these from the list above is not meant to underplay their importance, but rather to clarify that EL Education does not recommend assessing them.

EMSA will begin collecting data regarding student progress with the habits of scholarship upon entry. Each year data from the school's internal system is analyzed by the school, shared with EL Education staff and used to determine priorities and goals for the coming year.

The students' review of their own and others work, their decisions about their portfolio, the presentation of their final products, and the value of continual improvement will result in higher learning.

Promotion to the Next Grade Level. The various assessments which are used to gauge student growth will serve to identify areas in which students need more support as well as areas in which students have achieved proficiency or higher. The interventions provided in response to assessment results ensure that students will be prepared at key grade transitions.

On rare occasions, it may be evident to the student, parents, and teachers that a student has not made adequate progress during the year and that more time is needed to meet certain academic goals as measured by assessments including MAP, portfolios assessments, and teacher or program based assessments. When this occurs, a student will be invited to remain at a grade level and join a new crew. EMSA recognizes that retention can be difficult for students and parents and will work aggressively and proactively to support struggling students at risk for retentions. RTI interventions, including small group and one on one remediation, peer review and feedback, differentiated instruction, and supports for English language learners and special needs students are some of the ways in which EMSA will meet the needs of challenged students.

4. School Calendar and Schedule

EMSA's school calendar and schedule are attached as Attachments 9 and 10. EMSA will be a U-46 school, and as such we have developed our calendar to align with U-46's calendar as much as possible. Our teachers will spend two weeks of intensive staff development in early August; they will also have fifteen additional days throughout the school year for professional development (when the students will not be in attendance), as well as ten hours per week of planning time. The students will start on the same day as U-46 students, although the school year will extend into June. In addition to the U-46 teacher attendance days that are non-student attendance days, EMSA will adjust the schedule to include the equivalent of one full day and one-half day of professional development alternating each month, starting in September.

Students will attend EMSA from 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. for 167 days per year (6 hours per day student contact time) and 8:30 - 12:00 for ten days per year (3.5 hours per day student contact time) (1,037 hours total). This schedule results in far more than the state minimum requirements of 185 days/5 hours a day (925 hours total). We have planned for three hours per day of ELA in grades K-2, two hours per day grades 3-8; in math students will have 1.75 hours per day in grades K-3, 2 hours in grades 3-5, and 1.5 hours in grades 6-8. Science and social studies will be included in the ELA curriculum in grades K-2 and will be an additional hour in grades 3-8, with significant integration in the ELA continuing. Students will attend art class one hour per week.

The extra time in school allows us to extend both math and literacy time. Our additional time will

also be used to build character, intellectual achievement, and social responsibility. It will provide a “time cushion” for delivering core subject content in English and Spanish when needed. It will allow time for morning “crew,” where students check in with each other and their crew leader and character traits are taught and practiced each day as a part of students’ social and emotional learning. There is also additional time within the school day to address remediation, acceleration and enrichment depending on the needs of the students. Learning Expeditions are exciting activities where more time is needed during the day to adequately read, discuss, research, write, draw, build, hear experts, and take notes to answer the guiding questions and complete the case studies and culminating products which will be presented to the public. It is essential to have more time that is flexible to address all of these activities.

EMSA recognizes that the work requirements for staff are very high, and will strive to have salaries reflect comparable salaries in U-46 and surrounding districts. EMSA also has budgeted for teaching assistants for each grade level to provide extra support for students and teachers.

5. School Culture and Social and Emotional Learning

At EMSA, everyday starts with a Crew meeting. To be a member of the "Crew" means to pitch in to help each other, to step up and take responsibility for everyone's well-being around you. As Crew members, students and teachers are active participants in their learning, not passive “passengers.” As an EL Education school, EMSA’s school culture is planned for, developed, and sustained through practices that bring the community together, promote shared understandings, and encourage all community members to become crew. The structure of crew allows for relationship building, academic progress monitoring, and character development. Each classroom is a crew and a crew meeting is held each morning where students lead activities for greeting, sharing, and appreciating each other before the academic activities start. Crew allows students to build positive connections with their peers and with their crew leader (teacher).

Students are introduced to the Habits of Scholarship from the first day of school; the Habits will serve as the foundation for academic work as well as behavior. At our daily Crew meetings, and weekly school wide community meetings our Habits of Scholarship will be discussed, studied, and celebrated. The Habits are: **Courage** and **Curiosity**, which go towards being an explorer; **Respect** and **Responsibility** which are traits of a good steward; and **Craftsmanship** and **Perseverance** which reflect the growth mindset. These form the foundation of our culture and will establish a climate where students and adults are committed to quality work and citizenship. EMSA will implement structures and traditions of an EL Education school, including crew, community meetings, exhibitions of student work, student-led conferences, and service learning.

EMSA will encourage and welcome students of every background to our school. English language learners will see their language and culture studied and celebrated. Special education students will be participating members of Crew and every other aspect of EMSA possible. At-risk students will thrive with our active learning approach and many layers of support to ensure they do not fall behind their peers. EMSA’s rituals and routines will ensure that every

student is known and cared for, that student leadership is nurtured, and that contributions to the school and world are celebrated.

The foundation of a successful EL Education school is a community that brings out the best in students, families, and staff. This is reflected in our mission statement: At EMSA, students and teachers will reach their highest potential through active exploratory learning and social responsibility. Our Habits of Scholarship underscore our mission. EMSA will celebrate both student academic growth and character development. Our teachers and school leaders will communicate clear expectations for student character and model those values in their own practice. Our policies and practices will encourage students to take responsibility for learning, to demonstrate empathy and caring, and to be stewards of their school and community.

EMSA's Habits of Scholarship will be celebrated throughout the day, and are the guidelines for addressing exemplary behavior and academic work. For example, at EMSA's weekly community meetings, we will celebrate our habits of scholarship and recognize "star" students and staff who exemplify--or demonstrate a superior expression of--a specific habit. These "stars" will have been nominated by their teachers and peers.

EMSA's Habits of Scholarship will be expressed into statements of how these habits will be exemplified in the classrooms ("I statements"). The leadership, staff, and students reflect on successes as well as challenges by referring to the behaviors associated with each habit. Students will choose one habit on which to focus, and reflect on their own progress. A student or staff member can be nominated for special recognition of having exemplified a certain habit, and that recognition is celebrated in crew and community meetings.

When challenges occur, discussions will also be held in terms of how the Habits of Scholarship can help improve academic achievement and social progress. The habits are taught and discussed in age appropriate ways starting in kindergarten. For example:

Courage¹⁶

- I accept my fears yet keep trying.
- I stand up for others even if it is unpopular.
- I take risks in my work in order to learn.

Perseverance

- I keep going even when I'm tired or something is hard.
- I have patience and do what I can to help my crew move forward.
- I strive to do good work.

Responsibility

- I do what I am supposed to do and accept consequences for my actions.
- I make choices with others in mind.
- I always try and do my best work.

¹⁶ Examples of K-1 statements: I can try new things. I can recognize when someone is being treated unfairly in our classroom. I can share my work with others.

Curiosity

- I can ask questions and find answers for myself.
- I can ask questions and find collaborative solutions.
- I can ask questions that help me grow as a learner.

Craftsmanship

- I create products that show attention to detail and that are aesthetically pleasing.
- I revise my work multiple times to create high quality work products.
- I can assess how well my best efforts meet expectations.

Respect

- I work cooperatively with others.
- I take care of resources and materials and act as a steward of our community.

EMSA is committed to maintaining a learning environment where everyone can reach his and her full potential. Our school is based upon mutual respect and a shared set of values about the importance of education. Therefore, everyone is expected to fulfill the following responsibilities, and to respect the rights of others.

<i>Crew Members' have the RIGHT...</i>	<i>Crew Members' have the RESPONSIBILITY...</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● To be shown respect	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● To show respect to others in word and deed
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● To be heard	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● To speak at appropriate times, in an appropriate manner, and to listen patiently to others
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● To be taught by a caring and competent teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● To be prompt and prepared each day
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● To disagree with others	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● To resolve all conflicts peacefully and quickly
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● To experience the joy of learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● To strive for excellence, and to persevere in the face of challenges

Community Meetings: One of the community-building structures at EMSA will be a weekly community meeting, which will be a time when all students and faculty members come together. Parents will be invited. It is an important opportunity for communication and celebration. At EMSA, the weekly community meetings will contain some or all of the following:

- **Acknowledgments:** Each community meeting will have an opportunity for staff and students to acknowledge examples of greatness that have occurred.
- **Announcements:** This section of the community meeting will provide an opportunity to announce upcoming events, fieldwork, service projects, assessments and deadlines. We will also announce birthdays, special accomplishments and recognize student successes.
- **Letter from the Community:** There may be a letter from the community that is read aloud. The letter may be from a past student, a visitor, a staff member, a student, or another member of the community.
- **Character Recognition:** Students and staff who demonstrate extraordinary character traits for their service to others will be recognized during this time.
- **Celebration of Learning:** A crew may give a brief overview of the learning that is taking place in a

- particular field of study.
- **Fun!:** The whole school community may participate in a game or contest as participants or supporters.

A great deal of thought, research, and practice has gone into designing the EL Education model which will be adapted to EMSA's learning environment. While some of the practices described below may look different from a traditional elementary school classroom, they have proven effective in EL Education schools across the country, including those in urban areas. Professional development for teachers includes a significant focus on school culture, and teachers will be trained and supported in the successful implementation of its founding practices.

Other Aspects that will Inform our Culture:

Our classroom spaces will be flexible: EMSA classrooms and work areas will be arranged to help students collaborate in small groups. This will require group tables or clusters of desks as opposed to rows of individual desks. A section in each classroom will be set aside for whole group meetings, which is essential to building a supportive community of learners or crew within the EL Education model.

Our classrooms will have ongoing conversations and be full of movement: Student conversation will be the center of much of the learning at EMSA. We believe that deep learning takes place when children challenge one another, ask questions, share ideas, and build on one another's knowledge through verbal interactions – not just teacher instruction. At certain times during the day, children will be getting out of their seats to gather materials, consult with one another, and look at information on the walls.

We will use primary sources as much as possible: We believe children can learn by using authentic resources and materials. Although all students have access to textbooks, students more often gather information from non-fiction and fiction trade books, publications, and the Internet. By reading literature and exploring primary sources, children gain information-gathering skills that they use to independently problem-solve and conduct research in the real world. Classrooms will be stocked with books in English and Spanish. Conducting interviews and having conversations with experts will be a frequent practice of our students.

Revising work will become a habit: Students at EMSA will not be finished with a piece of work until they complete multiple drafts. This expectation reaches across grades and disciplines. Improving on work again and again is common practice in an EL Education school. Teachers guide students from draft to draft. Students collaborate to assess the work of their peers. Rubrics set high standards for finished pieces and guide students as they strive to get their work to meet these high standards.

We will encourage internal rather than external rewards: We will not typically reward our students with prizes when they succeed. We will offer specific praise, encouragement, and a culture that fosters and celebrates student achievement. We believe that if children only

experience extrinsic rewards, they learn to work only for those rewards, and do not connect their learning to the outside world. We strive to help children make those connections, believing that the purpose of learning is to interact thoughtfully and powerfully in the world.

Learning will be public and collaborative: Student work at EMSA will often be assessed by their peers. Students will read their writing out aloud, solicit comments, and present project drafts for formal peer critiques. We will do public work just like in the real world. Having an authentic audience will keep us on our toes, supporting quality work with high standards.

Service and character development will be a part of our curriculum: We will focus on character and service as well as academics. Quality academic work will be mirrored by the quality of the ways in which we treat one another, our community, and our environment. Students will be encouraged to be honest, respectful, determined, creative, and responsible. Every morning, each crew will hold a morning meeting. Crew members will check-in with each other in terms of character and academic progress. If there are problems with courtesy, behavior, tolerance, or responsibility in the group, those problems are often addressed in this setting.

Typical Day for 1st Grade Teacher.

A first grade teacher at EMSA would begin the work day at 8:00 am, an hour before students arrive. This first hour is devoted to planning. At least two mornings per week are designated as classroom planning time, with the other mornings determined by EMSA for grade-level planning, data-sharing, vertical articulation, etc.

At 9:00, teachers take attendance and students begin “Pre-Crew” activities. This includes collaborative conversations about the day’s big idea related to the module of study, which the teacher has displayed via doc cam. By 9:15, the teacher facilitates the daily Crew Meeting, giving students opportunities to share both personal successes and concerns, as well as discussion stemming from the day’s big idea. The teacher uses the big idea as a transition into the goals for the day’s EL module work.

From 9:45 to 10 am the teacher introduces the math problem of the day. This teacher-created math problem embeds content vocabulary from the module into a practical application using grade-level math skills. Students work on the problem-of-the-day collaboratively or individually. The problem is then discussed and shared during the math block in the afternoon. Students will have their snack at this time.

From 10:00 until 12:00 noon, students work on the Literacy aspects of their continuing module of study with the Module Lessons (one hour) and Literacy Labs (one hour) from the EL Education Literacy Curriculum. During the Learning Lab time, which is the hands-on, exploratory portion of the Literacy Curriculum, students engage in up to five types of labs (progressive): Explore, Engineer, Create, Imagine, Research. Push-in can be provided for ELL students, as well as IEP students requiring reading support minutes during the Learning Labs.

Early in each module, the teacher builds background knowledge necessary for success and understanding. This includes read-alouds, shared reading, guided reading, podcasts and videos. As the module progresses, close reading, writing, and researching become more primary focuses, with differentiation for language and learning level provided by the classroom teaching assistant and Special Education teacher. Since each module is thematic, encompassing literacy, social studies, and science, the 2-hour block before lunch is highly cross-curricular, involving literacy skills relating to both fiction and non-fiction reading and writing across content areas.

Lunch and recess are held between 12:00 and 1:00 pm. The teacher has this time to herself/himself. The teaching assistant supervises lunch in the classroom and rotates supervision at recess with other teaching assistants.

At 1:00, the 90-minute math block begins as the teacher and students finish and discuss the math problem of the day. Teachers use the Eureka Math curriculum to teach both the whole class and small groups. The Eureka math curriculum will be accessed in both English and Spanish, and language support will be provided by the classroom teacher and aide. Students requiring math support through an IEP/504 will receive minutes delivered by the Special Education teacher.

From 2:30-3:00 teachers will lead students in purposeful exercise, e.g., the Walking Classroom, nature walk, or a cardio work-out.

At 3:00, for first graders, the third hour of the EL Education Literacy curriculum continues with the Reading Foundations Skills Block (RFS) which focuses on the letter-sound patterns of the English language, automaticity, etc. In this block, the teacher spends 15-20 minutes with the whole group. The students then spend the next 40-45 mins in differentiated small groups based on strengths and needs. The RFS block is another good time for ELL and Special Ed push in. Towards the end of the module, this block will be devoted to more hands-on activities encompassed in the mini-expedition, and may include science experiments, service learning, art, projects, outdoor education, and presentations. At the end of the day, students and teachers ready classrooms for the next day, students are dismissed at 4:00 and the teachers' day is complete.

Typical Day for a First Grade Student

At 9:00, a typical EMSA first grade student, Juan, is seated in his classroom ready for the day to begin. His teacher Mrs. Castro greets students in English and Spanish. Mrs. Castro is bilingual endorsed in Spanish and has several English learner students in her Transitional Bilingual Education classroom. Mrs. Castro takes attendance while students begin "Pre-Crew" activities. On the screen at the front of the classroom are photos of different tools and separate photos of people who might use the tools. Mrs. Castro prompts the students, "Do they know the names of the tools and who uses them?" repeating the question in Spanish. Juan and his tablemates

“collaboratively converse” about what they think the tools are and what they do and who uses them--both the English and Spanish words for the tools are exchanged and discussed.

By 9:15, Juan is seated on the carpet in a community circle as Mrs. Castro facilitates the daily Crew meeting, giving Juan and his classmates opportunities to share both personal successes and concerns especially as they relate to the Habits of Scholarship, as well as discussion stemming from the day’s big idea.

From 9:45 - 10 am Juan works with a partner or a small group on the math problem of the day. This teacher-created math problem embeds content vocabulary from the module into a practical application using grade-level math skills. The teacher provides a brief summary of the problem in English and Spanish. Juan moves to a table with the teacher assistant and other students who are discussing the problem in Spanish.

At 10:00, Juan, as a student leader, helps distribute the snack for the morning as students gather in a circle again. The class then listens intently as Mrs. Castro picks up where she left off yesterday in the story of *The Most Magnificent Thing*. Mrs. Castro translates *La Cosa Más Magnífica* into Spanish at the end of each page as she deems necessary. Mrs. Castro uses a close read-aloud guide to conduct a session in English and Spanish that invites students to analyze and discuss the rich literary text. What might be a magnificent thing? What sorts of Habits of Character (such as perseverance) does the girl in the story need to make such a thing? The students stand to sing a song about wheels (tying the story and the labs together).

Juan and his group-mates move to the literacy labs where they work together to do a series of design challenges that give them hands-on experience with collaborative problem solving (e.g., how does a vice work). During the literacy lab time, which is the hands-on, exploratory portion of the Literacy Curriculum, students engage in up to five types of labs (progressive): Explore, Engineer, Create, Imagine, Research. The time passes quickly for Juan as he engages with his peers, talking with both native English and Spanish speakers, on the problem of the day. He asks a few questions of the teacher in Spanish and later shares his thinking with the teaching assistant when she stops by to check on his group's project. Lunch and recess are held between 12:00 and 1:00 pm. The teaching assistant supervises lunch in the classroom and rotates supervision at recess with other teaching assistants.

At 1:00, the 90-minute math block begins as the teacher and students finish and discuss the math problem of the day. Teachers use the Eureka Math curriculum to teach to both the whole class and small groups. The Eureka math curriculum will be delivered in both English and Spanish, additional language support will be provided by the classroom teacher and aide. Some students use Eureka’s Spanish language workbooks. Students requiring math support through an IEP/504 will receive minutes delivered by the Special Education teacher.

From 2:30-3:00 Mrs. Castro leads her class on a Walking Classroom hike around campus--the students listen to a podcast in English or Spanish while they walk.

At 3:00, Juan and his classmates' third hour of the EL Education Literacy curriculum continues with the Reading Foundations Skills Block (students work on the letter-sound patterns of language, automaticity, etc.) In this block, the teacher spends 15-20 minutes with the whole group. The students then spend the next 40-45 minutes in differentiated small groups based on strengths and needs. Various Spanish language books on the topics being studied (tools, in this case) are available. Juan is choosing between *Handy Manny: Herramientas para Juguetes* and *Ve, perro. Ve!* Juan's group for this block includes native Spanish speakers and Mrs. Castro works with them in Spanish to help them build fluency and automaticity to strengthen their reading comprehension and skills. The RFS block is another good time for ELL and Special Ed push in. At the end of the day, Juan and his classmates ready the classroom for the next day; they are dismissed at 4:00.

6. Supplemental Programing

To further its mission of hands-on exploratory learning, and develop teamwork and environmental stewardship, EMSA students will go on camping and backpacking adventures, such as

- K: Overnight at the school;
- 1-2: Overnight camping on the school grounds;
- 3-4: Overnight camping at developed site;
- 5-6: Multi-night backpacking with light loads, some equipment trucked in;
- 7-8: Multi-night backpacking with full loads.

After our first year, EMSA will have a good idea of what its students, teachers and families would like for supplemental programing. We are considering after-school offerings of orchestra, Spanish and robotics. For the upper grades (6-8), sports and clubs will be offered.

7. Special Populations and At-Risk Students

At EMSA, we are committed to the education of all children, providing an exciting and exemplary continuum of educational opportunities to every child within our classrooms. Four populations will get added attention and resources from us: students with disabilities; English Language Learners; students requiring Tier 2 and 3 supports as identified by our Multi-tiered System of Support; and students at risk of falling behind their grade level expectations due to circumstances beyond their control, such as poverty or social emotional difficulties.

A. Students with Disabilities

All students, regardless of disability, are entitled to a free appropriate public education (FAPE), which is guaranteed by Federal Law through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and supported by Illinois Law. EMSA will welcome all children, regardless of ability or

disability, and will work with the District to make all necessary accommodations to allow its students to spend as much of his or her day in the classroom with his or her non-disabled peers in the general education setting to the maximum extent appropriate as defined within the child's individualized educational program. If a child is determined to be an eligible special education student, an Individual Education Program (IEP) will be created for that student to define the specific academic, physical or social emotional needs within the realm of special education and related services. The child would receive programs and services within the least restrictive environment as determined through the multidisciplinary team process. EMSA will partner with the District to ensure delivery of special education and related services to eligible children in accordance with their IEPs. In addition, for those students who have health, physical or mental disabilities not addressed by IDEA, EMSA will work with the district to ensure the requirements of Section 504 are being met, including the creation and implementation of 504 plans for those students.

EMSA anticipates a 15% special education population (based upon 13.3% District-wide statistic). In our opening year of 200 students, we would expect approximately thirty students with special needs will matriculate into our school setting. We plan to hire 1.5 FTE certified special education teachers (one will be the Special Education Case Manager), a 1.0 FTE school nurse, and a 1.0 FTE school social worker, preferably bilingual, in our first year of operation. We anticipate that this obligation would increase to 2.0 FTE certified special education teachers by year four. Additional services required by students' IEPs, such as related service providers, additional special education teachers or equipment such as assistive technology will either be provided by the District or provided by EMSA with the cost reimbursed by the District. Our Special Education Case Manager and additional teacher will provide integrated push-in and pull-out services as appropriate and as needed per students' IEPs. Our Special Education Case Manager will work with the District and school staff to coordinate all special education services in the school.

We request that EMSA be treated similarly to other elementary and middle schools in the District for special education services. For example, our school would be assigned to a District case manager and services such as occupational therapy and speech therapy would be built into District therapists' schedules on a rotating (and as-needed) basis. In addition, the district would provide transportation and extended year services (ESY) to EMSA special education students requiring services to maintain academic, social/behavioral, communication, or other skills learned as part of their individualized education program or Section 504 accommodation plan. In order for a child to receive ESY services, the child must have evidenced substantial regression and recoupment issues during the previous IEP year or show there is evidence of emerging 'break-through' skills. Because EMSA's schedule extends into summer, we will have to coordinate transitioning EMSA students into a District ESY program if applicable.

EMSA will conduct universal screenings of all entering students every year. We anticipate using the NWEA MAP as a universal screener. We plan to administer the MAP tests three times per

year. Using a fully developed MTSS model, the screenings will provide initial data regarding student's strengths and weaknesses within the academic program and may be part of the data used to determine if a further evaluation of a student is indicated. An evaluation is an individual assessment of a student to determine possible eligibility for special education and related services. Regular education interventions and supports will be attempted, as feasible, before labeling and serving of a student as disabled (see MTSS below).

A request for an evaluation for special education can be made by a parent of a child, an employee of a State educational agency, another State agency, a school district, or a community service agency. EMSA will work with the the District to provide notice of "Parent Rights" to concerned persons regarding the necessary steps to request an evaluation. Within fourteen school days of receipt of a request for evaluation, the District must determine whether an evaluation is warranted. In making this determination, the District may utilize screening data and conduct preliminary procedures such as observation of the child, assessment for instructional purposes, consultation with the teacher or other individual making the request, and a conference with the child. If an evaluation is deemed warranted, the evaluation will be conducted within forty-five school days (based on District standards) and must be completed within sixty school days (state law) of receiving parental consent to evaluate (but not sooner than ten days after consent unless the parent waives the ten-day waiting period).

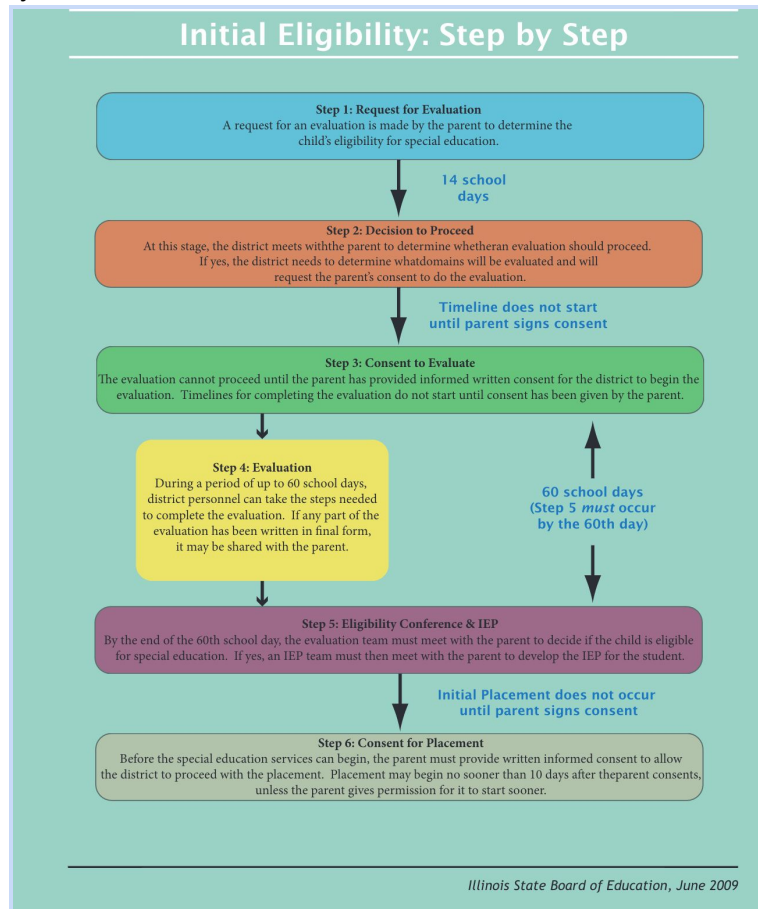
If a child is referred for evaluation for special education then the District shall convene a team of individuals--including the parent, EMSA team members, such as the general education teacher and other EMSA staff--having the knowledge and skills necessary to administer and interpret evaluation data. This may be called a domain review or evaluation planning meeting. At this meeting, the team shall identify the assessments necessary to complete the evaluation and review existing evaluation data. To determine whether additional evaluation data is needed in any relevant domain, team members will consider information from a variety of formal and informal sources, including information provided by the child's parents/guardians; current classroom-based assessments and observations; observations by teachers and providers of related services; information, if any, provided by the child; and information from specialized evaluations such as those performed by independent evaluators, medical evaluators, behavioral intervention specialists, bilingual specialists, etc. The team will seek the input of the parent in making its determination of needed assessments. Within fourteen school days of this determination, the team shall provide written notification to the parents which includes, among other legal requirements, a description of the action/evaluation proposed by the District. This notice shall include the request for the parent's consent to conduct the evaluation.

The evaluations will be administered by the District, which may delegate some of the testing to EMSA personnel, as appropriate. The evaluations will include assessment in the domain areas related to the student's suspected disability. The domains defined by ISBE include: academic achievement, functional performance, cognitive functioning, communication status, health, hearing/vision, motor abilities and social emotional status. Not later than sixty school days (45 is preferred by the District) after the date of written consent from the parent, an Individual

Education Plan (IEP) meeting will be held to consider the results of the evaluation and determine

- Whether the child has, or continues to have, one or more disabling conditions;
- The present levels of performance and educational needs of the child;
- Whether the disability is adversely affecting the child’s educational performance;
- Whether the child needs or continues to need, special education and related services; and
- Whether any additions or modifications to the child’s special education and related services are needed to enable the child to meet the goals and objectives of his/her IEP and to participate appropriately in the general curriculum.

If the child is determined to be eligible for special education and related services the IEP team will develop an IEP. The child receiving special education and related services must have an IEP developed in compliance with these procedures and in effect at the beginning of each subsequent school year.



The required members of the IEP team include: 1) parent/guardian; 2) at least one regular education teacher of the child; 3) at least one special education teacher of the child (if the student only receives speech/language, the speech and language pathologist shall fulfill the role

of the special education teacher); 4) a representative of the district who is qualified to provide, or supervise special education, is knowledgeable about the regular education curriculum and district resources for disabled students, and has authority to make commitments for the provision of resources and is able to ensure that the services set out in the IEP will be implemented; and 5) a person able to interpret the educational implications of evaluation results (can be one of same person(s) named above). Other participants may include: 6) persons invited at the discretion of district or parent (these invitees are to have knowledge or expertise regarding the student); 7) if the case involves a student whose behavior impedes their learning or the learning of others, the team shall include a person knowledgeable about positive behavior strategies; 8) there must be a qualified bilingual specialist or bilingual teacher, if the presence of such a person is needed to assist the other participants in understanding the child's language or cultural factors as they relate to the child's instructional needs.

EMSA will work with the District to ensure annual reviews of the IEP of each child with a disability to determine whether the annual goals are being achieved. The IEP will be revised as appropriate to address any lack of expected progress toward the annual goals; the results of a reevaluation; information about the child provided to, or by, the parent; the child's anticipated needs; or other matters. Reevaluations (at least one every three years per disabled child) will be conducted in a similar manner to initial evaluations.

A child's teacher or parent may request a review of the child's IEP at any time. Within ten days after receipt of such request, the District will either agree and notify the parent of the meeting, or notify the parent in writing of its refusal to meet. Notice of a refusal will include an explanation of the reason no meeting is necessary to ensure a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) to the child.

EMSA will ensure that parents understand that all children, including children with disabilities, are eligible to participate in EMSA's lottery and that EMSA will provide a continuum of services to address the student's special education needs. EMSA's outreach will include language that mirrors that promise. EMSA's intended outreach includes informational meetings presented to groups/clubs/gatherings, public meetings, fliers, website, Facebook, Twitter, email, radio, newspaper ads, and cable. All of these would include a statement of EMSA's commitment to serving children with disabilities. At the times of application and enrollment, EMSA's Principal and special ed case manager will communicate with families what services will be available through its continuum of services. EMSA intends to work with the District to develop its continuum of services and to share District resources where financially and locationally feasible. EMSA's Principal and case manager will be tasked with ensuring effective communication and outreach.

EMSA will partner with the District (EMSA's LEA) to facilitate Child Find activities. The District conducts activities to create public awareness of special education and related services and advises the public of the rights of children with disabilities, in all major languages in the District. The District currently has the ongoing duty to locate, identify, and evaluate all children from

birth, using various public awareness and Child Find activities. EMSA will support these activities as the District recommends, for example, myriad required screenings could be coordinated with the District, including: hearing and vision screening at regular intervals during the child's career and annually for all children who receive special education and related services; on-going review of each child's performance in order to refer those children who exhibit problems with their educational progress, interaction with others, and/or functioning or adjustment in the school environment and may be eligible for special education and related services.

EMSA will support parents' rights, including their mandated inclusion on the IEP team, regarding their child's special education process. EMSA will provide an educational liaison in the role of parent educator, who may be the school counselor, case manager, or social worker. He or she will provide support for parents and parent education through trainings and meetings with parents individually as needed to support their involvement and understanding of the IEP process. EMSA will assist in facilitating additional parent training with service providers when needed.

EMSA and the District will take steps to ensure that children with disabilities have equal access to the variety of educational programs and services available to nondisabled children. These steps could include: modification of instructional methodologies, staffing, materials and equipment to permit effective participation as appropriate; and individualization of the instructional program including staffing, curriculum modifications, classroom accommodations, modified grading, assistive technology and instructional materials to permit the effective participation of children with disabilities. EMSA will support the District's obligation to ensure that a continuum of alternative placement options is available to meet the needs of children with disabilities. The continuum will also make provision for supplementary services (such as resource room or itinerant instruction) to be provided in conjunction with regular class placement.

EMSA will endeavor to use push-in services whenever feasible and in the best interests of the student. These can be delivered in small group settings during the daily, three-hour EL Education Comprehensive Literacy Curriculum. The literacy labs (a one hour portion of the curriculum) would be conducive to push-in services because the students will already be breaking into small groups to perform hands-on tasks. The terms of the interventions will be dictated by the IEP and the IEP team's recommendations. EMSA will ensure that there is meeting space for recommended pull-out services, e.g., in the first three years at any of its potential locations there will be extra classroom space. All of the sites considered have spaces that can be set aside for one-on-one and/or small group meeting space.

EMSA is committed to meeting the requirements of Federal and State law in serving its special education students. EMSA will not modify its general ed curriculum in a way that will restrict a disabled child's access to an age-appropriate regular classroom. EMSA will work with the District in selecting the least restrictive environment (LRE) for a disabled student, starting from

the assumption that EMSA can and desires to provide the LRE for all of its students. If circumstances arise where the setting must be reconsidered, EMSA will work with the District and IEP team to assess and implement an interim alternative educational setting (IAES).

EMSA will remain in compliance with state and federal law and not discriminate based upon a child's need for special education services. Any decision made that a child will not be educated at EMSA because of their need for special education and related services will only be made after the IEP team's consideration of the educational environment options. This includes considering all available resources, accommodations, and related services. The consideration of the child's education at EMSA also depends upon the IEP team's determination that EMSA's educational program and services meet or do not meet the child's individual needs.

B. English Language Learners

An English Learner (“ELL”) is any student “whose home language background is a language other than English and whose proficiency in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding English is not yet sufficient to provide the student with the ability to meet the State's proficiency level of achievement on State assessments; the ability to successfully achieve in classrooms where the language of instruction is English; or the opportunity to participate fully in the school setting.” (ISBE *Equitable Access to Educational Excellence, Framing Services for English Learners in Illinois*, Terminology, 8/23/2016). The State assessment is the ACCESS test.

EMSA's goal for all students is to keep them with their classmates and participating in classroom activities for as much of the day as possible. This will be true for our students who are not proficient in English when they enter school. EMSA values language minority students and the diverse assets they bring to the classroom. Diversity in the classroom develops all students' ability to think critically, empathize and collaborate (Richards, Brown, & Forde 2006; Ajayi 2006, *cited in* ISBE 8/23/2016). In heterogenous group settings (which EMSA favors), students from different cultural backgrounds can offer multiple perspectives and approaches to analization, which groups often outperform homogenous groups in similar settings (Nora, 2013; Finney, 2011; Phillips, Kim-Jun & Shim 2010; Boaler 2008; *cited in* ISBE 8/23/2016). These are valued contributions to our EL Education curriculum and will be welcomed and encouraged.

EMSA is committed to meeting all Illinois and Federal requirements for educating our English Learners. We will identify our potential ELL's through home language surveys, which we will administer in the summer of each year. For our students who indicate that another language is spoken at home, EMSA will follow the below ISBE screening tools, except that EMSA will conduct kindergarten screening during the summer to allow for appropriate staffing for the fall term. For its opening year, and as soon after the lottery as possible, EMSA will receive and review students' second semester screenings provided by the District (where applicable) to help inform our scheduling, assess hiring outcomes (FTEs), and evaluate curricular material needs and planning goals. EMSA's goal will be to have all of its teachers either bilingual or ESL endorsed.

CHART FOR DETERMINING ELL ENGLISH PROFICIENCY FOR KINDERGARTEN STUDENTS

SCREENER		DOMAINS ASSESSED				Cut-score for English Language Proficiency
		Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing	
MODEL	Kindergarten (1st Semester)	X	X			Oral language proficiency level is 5.0
MODEL	Kindergarten (2nd Semester)	X	X	X	X	Overall composite proficiency level is 5.0 and the composite literacy (reading/ writing) level is 4.2
MODEL	First Grade (1st Semester)	X	X	X	X	Overall composite proficiency level is 5.0 and the composite literacy (reading/ writing) level is 4.2

Screening Children Grades 1-12

▶ Prescribed Screening Instrument

▶ WIDA ACCESS™ Placement Test (W-APT) or WIDA Measure of Developing English Language (MODEL)

Districts must use either the WIDA W-APT or MODEL as a screener for students entering the second semester of 1st grade through 12th grade to determine students' English language proficiency and to identify students eligible to receive EL services.

▶ Using Scores to Determine Placement

As of January 1, 2014, any student who is administered the W-APT or the MODEL and scores below an overall composite proficiency level of 5.0 or less than a composite literacy (reading/writing) proficiency level of 4.2 is considered to be an EL and is eligible for EL services. A student who achieves a 5.0 composite proficiency level **as well as** a 4.2 composite literacy (reading/writing) proficiency level is considered English proficient.

▶ Training for W-APT or the MODEL Test Administration

The W-APT or the MODEL is to be administered by certificated instructional personnel (teachers including bilingual teachers and ESL teachers) and certificated non-instructional personnel (coordinators, program directors, school psychologists, speech and language therapists, assistant principals, principals, assistant superintendents and superintendents) who have completed the ACCESS for ELLs training, passed the on-line quizzes and meet certification requirements to administer ACCESS for ELLs.

Source: <http://www.isbe.net/bilingual> (11/28/2016)

EMSA anticipates having more than 20 ELL students whose native language is Spanish and whose MODEL and ACCESS scores will indicate a need for bilingual education services. EMSA intends to implement a Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) program. If EMSA has fewer than 20 such students, then we will implement a Transitional Program of Instruction (TPI) with Spanish supports, as well as a TPI for other languages that may occur. EMSA plans to hire a full-time Bilingual Coordinator (who will be a bilingual endorsed teacher) to oversee implementation of its TBE and/or TPI programs. Among other duties, the Bilingual Coordinator will be responsible for tracking and ensuring that EMSA meets the requirements of Illinois and Federal law, including establishing and supporting a bilingual advisory committee (BAC) which will consist primarily of parents of ELL's.

The goals of both the TBE program and TPI are the same: to transition ELL's to general education upon meeting exit criteria established by ISBE (e.g., currently 5.0 composite, 4.2 reading, 4.2 writing on ACCESS). The ELL student is entitled to services until he or she can exit to the general education program. This typically takes several years.

EMSA's TBE program will provide Spanish language instruction in the core content areas: ELA, social studies, science and math. EMSA will design effective Spanish language delivery in each of these domains as well as for social and instructional language. ELLs who are placed in mainstream classes with a bilingual endorsed teacher will receive differentiated instruction in Spanish as well as some small group instruction in Spanish. If the mainstream classroom is not led by a bilingual endorsed teacher, then ELLs will receive co-teaching or pull-out instruction in Spanish. "Initial language allocation" will vary with a gradual shift to instruction mainly in English as a student's English proficiency increases (ISBE *Equitable Access* 11/23/2016 p. 3). EMSA may provide "a separate instruction period (resource) offering home language instruction" for those content areas where delivery in Spanish is not possible in the above settings (*Id.*). Instruction delivery will be coordinated between the classroom teachers and the Bilingual Coordinator, who will also be providing an instructional component or scheduling it with another EMSA bilingual endorsed teacher. All instruction will be based upon EMSA's EL Education curricula which is aligned to Illinois standards and will include topics on the history and culture of the ELL's native lands.

The requirements for a TPI are similar except that a BAC is not required and the instruction of a core subject may be in English, provided that the ELL students will receive daily scaffolding and native language supports. These will increase the ELL students' access to challenging content while simultaneously learning English.

Daily ESL instruction is a required component of both the TBE and TPI programs. EMSA's ESL program will incorporate targeted English language development instruction in the structures of the English language and how it works especially compared to the student's native language. "Targeted English language development may be provided as a stand-alone course or block or may be a designated time within the school day for a self-contained ESL or bilingual education teacher" (ISBE *Equitable Access* 8/23/2016 p. 6). The ESL program will also include abundant "content-based English language development" which will be provided with hands-on experiences and multiple exposures to topics and content. (*Ibid.*)

To meet our TBE and TPI requirements, our initial staffing goal will be to hire at least one bilingual endorsed teacher for each grade level. For teachers who are not bilingual certified, EMSA will make every effort to hire teachers who hold an ESL endorsement or plans by the teacher to attain endorsement. Additionally, EMSA has budgeted for a teacher aide in every

classroom. If a teacher is not fluent in Spanish, then his or her aide will be. This will guarantee at least one fluent, Spanish-speaking adult per classroom. EMSA will need to be ready to adapt our staffing and Spanish-language delivery at all times depending upon the number of ELLs, their proficiency, and their grade levels.

At EMSA, our ELL's will be presumed to be fully participating students in every class; however, our ELL students will need significant additional targeted language instruction within each lesson and additional supports. For math, EMSA intends to use Eureka Math. EMSA will provide its Spanish ELLs with Eureka Math workbooks in Spanish, if needed. Eureka Math teacher materials in Spanish will also be available for each grade. An optimum time for push-in services during the ELA instruction would be during the one-hour daily Reading Foundations Block (k-2) and the Additional Language and Literacy (ALL) block (grades 3-5) of our EL Education Comprehensive Literacy Curriculum. In these blocks, students are provided explicit and targeted instruction in differentiated small groups for literacy and language skill development. For ELA (which may include, by way of integration, history, social studies and/or science), TBE and TPI students' instruction will include Spanish-language books and materials related to each eight-week module topic (e.g., "Tools" for grade 1). The materials will be appropriate to the student's reading level based on ACCESS scores and formative assessments.

EMSA plans to utilize supplementary digital ELA and math programs such as Lexia (k-5) for reading, RAZ KIDS which offers Spanish language leveled books. For math, ZEARN (k-5) is aligned with Eureka Math. These programs will reinforce learning in a stimulating and motivating manner for our ELL students.

Additionally, EMSA's ELA curriculum has specific ELL scaffolds integrated into each lesson. In the "Language Dive" scaffold, students learn to pull out the structure and meaning of complex sentences. In the "Conversation Cues" scaffold, collaborative conversations--which are focused, exploratory, and frequent--enables deep learning. Clear protocols are implemented to ensure richness and purposefulness of conversation. Conversation cues (e.g., "Can you say more about that?") encourage meaningful and value-added conversations. Such scaffolding will be purposefully constructed to provide ESL supports. Content-driven ESL programs yield better academic results than traditional ESL pull-out from mainstream classrooms with no native language use (Thomas & Collier, 2009).

The following are several examples taken from EL Education's Tool's Module (grade 1). For a mini-Language Dive, six questions are listed that the teacher may ask the EL to elicit responses and to assess the child's understanding. For example: "What does it mean to create an object? What do you like to create?" Further along in the lesson, many suggestions are made for the teacher to help the EL's understanding of the material. For example, "There is challenging language in *The Magic Bow* and no visual support. Display a picture of a bow before reading the story. Model pretending to shoot an arrow. After reading the story, check for comprehension. Ask students to describe what happened first, next, and last in the story." See Attachment 11 for EL Education's "Supporting English Language Learners Guidance Document."

C. Response to Intervention and Multi-Tiered System of Support

EMSA will work with EL Education to identify data-driven identification tools and resources for its implementation of a Response to Intervention (RTI) model within a Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS). MTSS allows educators to intervene early to prevent student failure and to maximize effective grade-level curriculum and instruction. A successful MTSS program will improve the quality of instruction for all students, contribute to more meaningful identification of learning and behavioral challenges, and assist with appropriate identification of learning and other disabilities.

LEARN Charter School Network, a successful Illinois charter network with ten campuses, has given EMSA permission to adapt its recently developed MTSS Manual to our program. Using LEARN's robust and thorough Manual as the basis for our MTSS, EMSA will work with EL Education and the District (which is developing its own MTSS program) to augment our program. For example, EMSA would follow EL Education's lead and add the component of acceleration for a Multi-tiered System of Supports Interventions and Acceleration (MSSIA), which requires that we choose intervention and acceleration activities thoughtfully and strategically to support students according to their challenges, capacities and aptitudes.

EMSA's EL Education ideology and EL Education curriculum incorporate many of the the goals and reasoning behind MSSIA. In its ELA EL Education curriculum, each lesson has built-in MSSIA supports such as questions and suggestions for the teacher to use as necessary. These tools also support EMSA's goal that every child spend the most time in the classroom with their classmates. EMSA espouses the use heterogeneous work groups which also complement MSSIA.

EMSA's RTI and MSSIA will closely resemble the approach adopted by LEARN:

Response to intervention (Rti) integrates assessment and intervention within a multi-level prevention system to maximize student achievement and to reduce behavioral problems. With RTI, schools use data to identify students at risk for poor learning outcomes, monitor student progress, provide evidence-based interventions and adjust the intensity and nature of those interventions depending on a student's responsiveness, and identify students with learning or other disabilities.

There are four essential components of RTI:

- *A school-wide, multi-level instructional and behavioral prevention system.*
- *Screening.*
- *Progress Monitoring.*
- *Data-based decision making for instruction, movement within the multi-level system, and disability identification.*

Tier I: The Core Universal Instruction and Supports. Tier I is the first layer of prevention

and is the focus of instruction, providing a strong foundation, with the goal of meeting of all students' [educational needs]. Tier I involves general academic and behavior instruction and support designed and differentiated for all students in all settings. In general, 80-85% of the school's student population will be successful with only Tier I instruction.

Tier II: In addition to, and aligned with the core academic and behavior curriculum and instruction at Tier I, students who fall below the 25th percentile in basic math and reading skills but above the 10th percentile will receive Tier II, targeted supplemental interventions and supports. Tier II interventions are provided to small groups of students both in and out of the general education classroom. Interventions may be provided by classroom teachers, instructional assistants, instructional coaches, interventionists and related service personnel. About 10-15% of students at the school will receive Tier II interventions in addition to core instruction at Tier I.

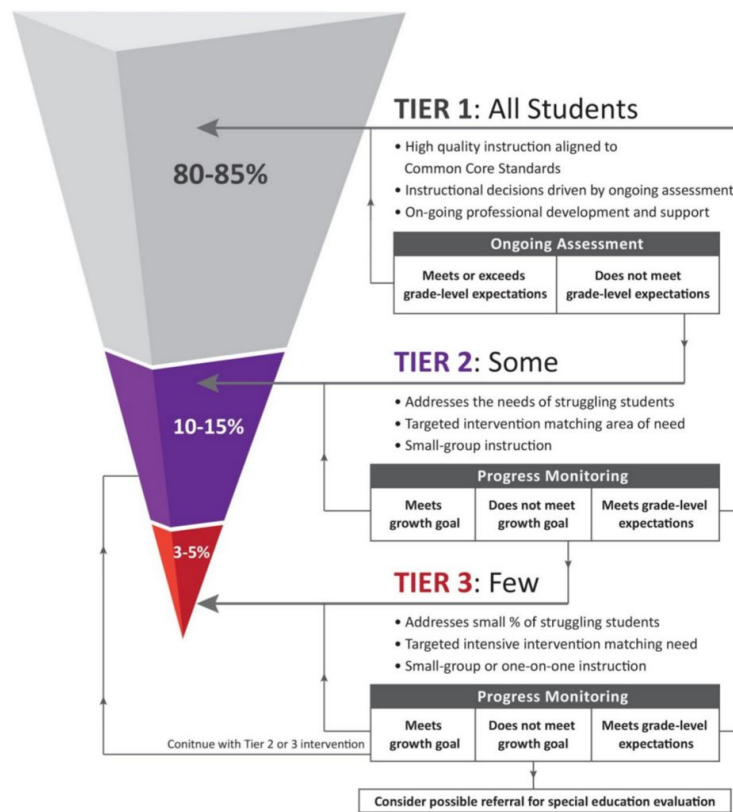
Tier III: In addition to, and aligned with the core academic and behavior curriculum and instruction at Tier I, intensive individualized interventions and supports are provided to students who have not made significant progress in Tier II, are 1 ½ - 2 grade levels behind, or are below the 10th percentile in basic math and reading skills. Tier III interventions are more explicit, and more intensive than Tier II interventions. Students who need this level of support, receive targeted interventions in small groups or individually. Only 3-5 percent of students at the school will need Tier III interventions to make adequate progress.

It should be noted that as required by Illinois Regulations, Special Education eligibility decisions in reading, math and writing must reflect a fully enacted process where students are provided quality interventions within the regular education environment, followed by educational decision making based on data demonstrating struggling students' response to high-quality, research based interventions (RtI).

Ultimately, we believe an MTSS model fully implemented with fidelity will support all learners by building the infrastructure necessary to close instructional gaps and provide appropriately intensive interventions to all students. In addition, we believe early and comprehensive intervention prevents unwarranted misidentification of students as having disabilities.

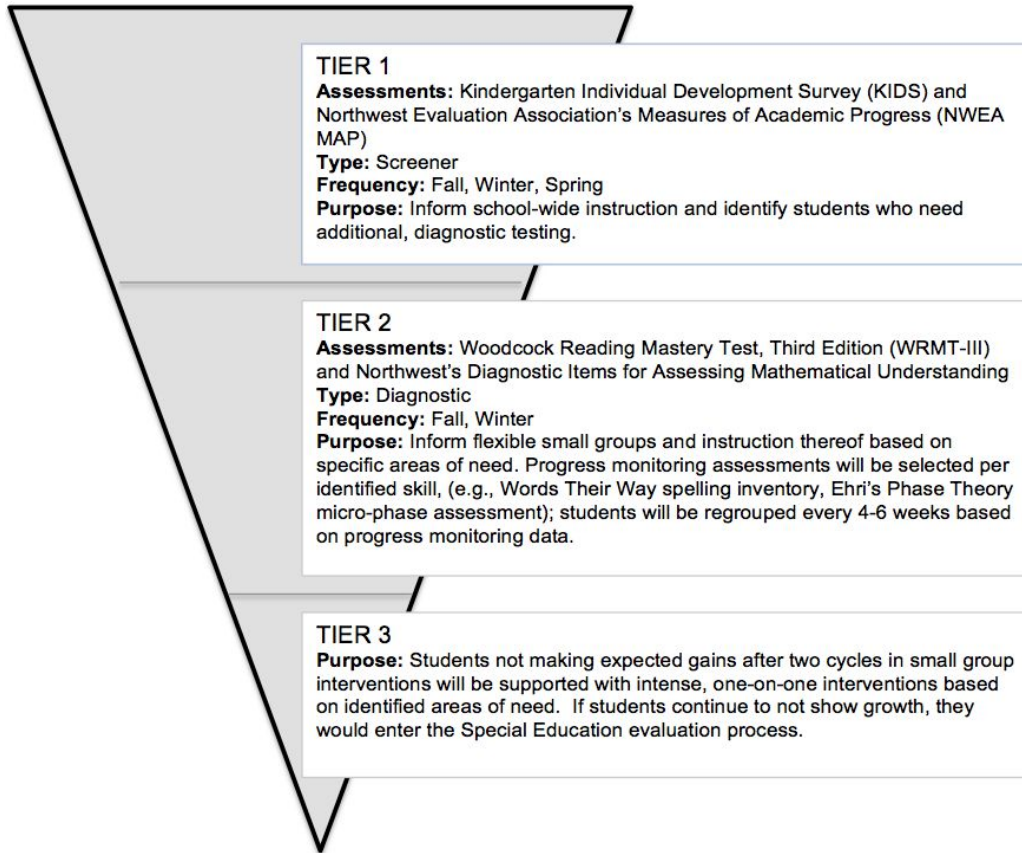
LEARN MTSS Manual, pp. 7-8.

RtI Decision-Making Process within a Multi-Tiered System of Support



Source: LEARN MTSS Manual p. 9

Like LEARN, EMSA will administer a universal screening to all students, followed by diagnostic tests as indicated. EMSA plans to administer the NWEA MAP tests three times per year as a universal screening. Students who are below grade-level standards would take a diagnostic test such as the Woodcock Reading Mastery Test (3d ed) which will provide data to identify students and their needs for Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions. Parents will be notified when a student is identified for RTI support. If inadequate progress has been made after Tier 3 supports and interventions, then additional tests and/or diagnostics may be recommended to aid in a decision for possible special education referral. EMSA will work with the District to align its screening and testing tools with the District's. The RTI team will consider the data to determine whether a student is responding to the intervention and develop a plan according to its MTSS protocols.



C. At-Risk Students

Some children enter the public school system having heard 30 million less words than other children of their age. This “30 million word gap” occurs by the age of three in children whose mother has less than a high school degree compared to children whose mother has a college education (Hart and Risley 195, 2003). Children from less affluent backgrounds have far fewer vocal interactions with their parents which leads to knowing fewer words, having less knowledge, not learning complex syntax, and asking fewer questions. It is a cycle that grows denser each year and, if not addressed dramatically in the first years of school, will contribute to ever-widening achievement gaps compared to the more affluent children (Stanovich 1986, 1992, 1993). EMSA’s choice of EL Education’s Integrated Literacy Curricula will powerfully address these deficiencies through vocabulary, knowledge, fluency, decoding and syntax.

In K-2, children need to learn one to two thousands words, especially academic vocabulary, per year to stay on track (Biemiller 2010, Nagy and Anderson 1992). We know that word knowledge is critical for reading comprehension success (Whipple 1925, NAEP 2012) and that reading or listening to multiple texts on the same subject can quadruple vocabulary growth (Landauer and Dumai 1997; Adams 2009; Cervetti 2015). At EMSA, our EL Education Comprehensive Literacy Curriculum will address these needs with its three hours of dedicated literacy per day. Through the Module Lessons, Literacy Labs and Reading Foundations Skills

Bocks, students will be read aloud to the equivalent of an hour each day; they will be reading multiple texts on a single topic; and they will be learning vocabulary indirectly (through root words, prefixes, suffixes, etc) and directly with hands-on labs. The exposure to multiple texts on the same subject also helps build word knowledge, which lays the foundation for additional word knowledge and builds to “world” knowledge, where readers develop insights and facts about important topics in science, social studies, technology and art.

EMSA’s program will promote fluency--reading grade level complex texts accurately--and increase comprehension with decoding support, e.g. using structured phonics (letter recognition and phonological awareness), building knowledge and vocabulary, having students follow along silently to a text being read by a fluent reader, and developing automaticity (when words become sight words and can be smoothly read in texts). Structured phonics programs, like EMSA’s planned Reading Foundations Skills portions of the Comprehensive Literacy Curriculum, have been shown to be definitively beneficial.¹⁷ Proficient readers are better able to interpret syntax--the grammatical structure of a sentence. EMSA’s students will be exposed to complex texts through read-alouds. Students will be taught how to take apart complex sentences to find meaning.

With its three hours of dedicated ELA¹⁸, EMSA will be highly invested in closing the achievement gap. EMSA will also encourage literacy throughout the school with celebrations of achievement. Community and home resources will be augmented for the students’ benefit as well: visits to the public library, forming partnerships with local museums, adopting at-home and volunteer-based reading programs. These enrichment-type opportunities can help to close the achievement gap as well.

8. Student Recruitment and Enrollment

EMSA plans to open its doors in August of 2018; our initial enrollment will include four grade levels (K - 3), two classes at each grade level, and 25 students per class, for a total of 200 students. The only enrollment requirement will be residency in U-46 boundaries. We anticipate having more applicants than seats; this would require that a lottery be held to determine which students fill the seats. A draft of our application is attached as Attachment 12.

EMSA will actively recruit and strive to attract a socio-economically, racially and ethnically diverse student population, similar to that in U-46. EMSA will recruit students through a well-defined marketing campaign which will include marketing materials in Spanish. EMSA’s strategies for student recruitment will include many various techniques to ensure a diverse

¹⁷ See, e.g., “Why a Structured Phonics Program is Effective,” David Liben, Student Achievement Partners, pp 10-11, [Standards Institute](#).

¹⁸ Three hours ELA in grades K-2 (includes scientific topics but ELA is focus); two hours ELA in grades 3-5 with an additional hour of science (social studies for one-fourth of the year) that supports the ELA; one hour ELA in grades 6-8 with the Learning Expedition based in science or social studies driving the ELA subject matter.

student population, including but not limited to:

- Utilizing our Design Team and Founding Board's ties in the community to reach a diverse group of potential students.
- Presenting information about our school at preschools, Head Start, religious institutions, and other community organizations.
- Posting information at community businesses that service parents and children such as beauty shops, day care centers, candy stores, health clinics, laundromats, and restaurants.
- Attending and/or renting space at community fairs and events to market our school.
- Maintaining a user friendly website with information in both English and Spanish.
- Working with groups such as the YWCA, YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, EPEL, Salvation Army, Elgin Recreation Center, and the Greater Elgin Family Center to inform potential parents and students about our school and the enrollment process and deadlines.

Another plan to attract and keep at-risk and low-income students includes busing. As stated throughout this application, serving low-income students is an EMSA priority. We recognize that transportation may be a significant obstacle for access to our school for low-income families who may not have time and/or access to reliable transportation to and from the school. At the same time, it is cost-prohibitive to provide transportation across a school district the size of U-46. We have therefore decided to focus on providing bus transportation from neighborhoods with the highest percentage of low-income students to our school. Beyond this, we will work with families to facilitate carpooling arrangements, when possible, as schools such as Prairie Crossing Charter School in Grayslake have done. We will submit a transportation plan to the district in fall of 2017 for approval, including our planned bus routes, prioritizing neighborhoods with the highest concentration of poverty in the District. We will adjust these plans as needed in Summer 2018, with modifications to bus routes based on actual students enrolled.

The goal of EMSA is to be open all U-46 students. All students will have equal access to the school's admission process. If the number of applications exceeds the number of vacancies at EMSA, a fair and impartial lottery will be conducted and will comply with all the requirements of the Illinois Charter Schools Law.

EMSA will respect and not interfere with District goals to serve neighborhood students who attend neighborhood schools. EMSA's goal is to provide an additional school opportunity for families. This will complement the District's offering of school choice at the elementary level in the form of two-way dual language and the School Within a School gifted program available in grades 4 to 6 at five elementary schools. At the middle school level, EMSA will provide another educational opportunity for families in addition to the current SWAS program at four schools and the dual language programs.

9. Student Discipline

EMSA's mission includes helping students reach their highest potential through social responsibility. EMSA's student discipline processes are rooted in prevention through teaching. Integral to our mission is our vision to teach students the skills to be responsible individuals; this will be achieved through our school's participation in EL Education's focus on Habits of Scholarship. Our six Habits of Scholarship are: Courage, Curiosity, Respect, Responsibility, Craftsmanship, and Perseverance. As students actively participate as crew members in their classrooms, they will learn how their actions, or lack of actions, impact other crew members and the school as a whole. By proactively teaching social skills to EMSA students, the need for disciplinary response will diminish. Students will learn and integrate the Habits of Scholarship each day, and positive, prosocial behaviors will continually build.

EMSA will be incorporating a number of preventative measures to foster prosocial behavior, including the school's integration of daily morning crew meetings in each classroom, weekly school-wide community meetings, and EL Education's focus on enhanced student-teacher communication. At the beginning of the school year, all teachers lead their student crews in establishing a set of Crew Courtesies or Operating Agreements for the year. Students are involved in determining what is appropriate behavior in the classroom as well as what is appropriate throughout the school day in all classes, on field work, outings, at lunch and recess, and in the school's common areas (e.g., Crews create "Looks like/Sounds like/Feels like" charts to define Habits). When the Crew reaches a consensus, the teacher and students together establish their contract for the year, which everyone signs, along with the Principal, as an indication of their support of their Crew Courtesies or Operating Agreements. These Crew agreements are provided to the school office as well as other members of the school staff who work with students on a regular basis, and may be referred to as necessary if students act in a manner that is contrary to what they have agreed to do.

EMSA's Habits of Scholarship will be celebrated throughout the day, and are the guidelines for addressing exemplary behavior and academic work. Students learn how rule violations are managed and are continually provided positive feedback for prosocial behavior--especially positive affirmation when students demonstrate the target behavior. The feedback will relate to EMSA's Habits of Scholarship and the Growth Mindset, e.g., "You're showing perseverance right now when faced with a challenge" and "What would be the responsible way to respond to that?" At the classroom level, when challenges occur, Crew discussions will be held in terms of how the habits of scholarship can help improve academic achievement and social progress. The habits are taught and discussed in age appropriate ways starting in kindergarten (see chart below for an example). At the school level, students are acknowledged for their exercise of positive behavior choices. At EMSA's weekly community meetings, we will celebrate our habits of scholarship and recognize "star" students and staff who exemplify--or demonstrate a superior expression of--a specific habit. These "stars" will have been nominated by their teachers and peers. They will receive a t-shirt for that specific trait that they can wear on all Community Meeting days.

PERSEVERANCE: I can keep trying.

Perseverance means...

Myself - I can keep going even when I'm tired or something is hard.

Others - I can have patience and do what I can to help my crew to move forward.

Learning - I can strive to do good work.

PERSEVERANCE	Pre-K-First Grades	Second-Third Grades	Fourth-Fifth Grades
Myself	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When something is hard, I can ask for help after I have tried my best. I can try new strategies until one works for me. I can try something new when I get stuck. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can use a variety of strategies when things are hard. I can try new strategies until one works for me. I can try something new when I get stuck. I can improve my work after getting feedback. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can take on challenges. I can accept the struggle of challenges. I can use a variety of strategies to keep myself going to overcome challenges.
Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can keep trying to work with others even when it is hard. I can move on when I don't get my way. I can focus on a task even when my crew is off task. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can maintain respectful relationships even when it is difficult. I can be flexible when things don't do the way I planned. I can focus on a task even when my crew is off task. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can offer solutions or encouragement when my crew gets stuck. I can collaborate with my group even when it's challenging. I can be resilient even in the face of adversity.
Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can revise my work to make it better. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can put in the effort necessary to achieve high quality work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can put in the effort necessary to achieve high quality outcomes.

An additional element of our culture and discipline approach will be EMSA's school uniform requirement. EMSA values each child's individuality, but also recognizes the importance of having uniforms to develop a sense of unity and school identity. We anticipate a school logo t-shirt and polo shirt choices for the uniform with khaki or navy pants. EMSA plans to adopt the practice of awarding a student or staff person a special t-shirt when he or she has been recognized for his or her stellar behavior. EMSA's eighth grade students will wear a different color shirt, designating them as leaders of the school. Uniforms decrease the concern of inappropriate clothing while they increase the sense of community and crew.

EL Education's emphasis on and approach to the development of positive school culture and character parallels the widely adopted approach known as Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). PBIS has been implemented by many school districts, including U-46. EMSA's EL Education approach to behavior will share the same goal as PBIS programs: to maximize instructional time in the classroom by minimizing behavioral disruptions. However, our EL Education approach is fully integrated with the curriculum, which leads to deep implementation and high levels of success in preventing negative behaviors. Like the goal of PBIS, our goal is to make data¹⁹ based decisions to support interventions that will prevent failure.

EMSA's EL Education culture structures, which are similar to that of PBIS, will have a tiered approach. From the beginning of the school year, classrooms are intentionally setup around norms that connect to the Habits of Scholarship, which are the foundation for the tiers. Students create anchor charts of what these co-constructed norms look like, sound like, and feel like in the classroom (in addition to other, common areas of the school, e.g. hallways), and hold each other accountable to them. In addition to being the central focus in Crew, Vertical Crew, and Community Meetings, EMSA's norms and Habits of Scholarship live in every classroom through routines and structures. For instance, every classroom will have a designated sensory area with

¹⁹ E.g., a student's MTSS tier level (and the testing results that informed that); other academic markers; progress on character development as measured through the application of the habits of scholarship; attendance; growth mindset markers; and the behavior or pattern of behavior the student is demonstrating.

a written Habits of Scholarship reflection process, allowing students who need to refocus behaviorally a routinized process within the instructional space. All students will engage in goal setting and tracking, analyzing the connections between their academic performance and the Habits of Scholarship. These examples connect to the first tier of EMSA's system whereby all students have the opportunity to reflect and lead their own academic and social behaviors.

Students who need additional behavioral support would participate in a small group intervention. An example of a Tier 2 intervention at EMSA connects back to Crew; students' Crew Leaders, who are the primary connection between the school and families, will create a check-in/check-out system for their Crew students where behavioral goals are set. Students in this intervention check-in with their Crew teacher at the beginning and end of each day to ensure their goals have been met. Both progress and challenges during the check-in/check-out system are shared with parents via the Crew Leader. When students consecutively make progress and achieve their goals, they are given the choice of ending the intervention.

EMSA will create individual interventions for select students who continue to not make progress in small group interventions. These individual interventions will be tailored to each student's needs based on the data collected and guidance of the Dean of Culture, Social Worker, and Crew teacher. An example of an individual intervention might look like a student meeting with the social worker on a weekly basis to work on a social-emotional learning curriculum, (e.g., Second Step). EL Education has created a guide for classroom management which can be accessed [here](#).

Regarding high-level interventions such as out-of-school suspensions or expulsions, EMSA, like U-46 will not have any automatic, or zero-tolerance, suspension policies. EMSA's goal is to have no out-of-school suspensions and no expulsions. EMSA will adopt a policy similar to U-46's out-of-school suspension policy:

Out-of-School suspensions may be used if other appropriate and available behavioral and disciplinary interventions have been exhausted and the student's continued presence in school would either: 1. Pose a threat to the safety of other students, staff, or members of the school community, 2. Substantially disrupt, impede or interfere with the operation of the school. a. Whether a student's continuing presence in school would pose a threat to school safety or a significant disruption to other students' learning opportunities shall be determined on a case-by-case basis by the school board or its designee. The school board or its designee shall determine what constitutes a threat to school safety or a disruption to other students' learning opportunities on a case-by-case basis. 105 ILCS 5/10-22.6 (b-15). ** Any student who receives an out-of-school suspension must be afforded due process before being excluded from the school. The student must also participate in a reinstatement conference prior to returning to school. The student and a school staff member must be in attendance. A Parent/Guardian is also expected to attend either in person or via telephone conference. A Parent/Guardian's inability to attend or participate shall not prevent the student from returning to school.

Source: U-46 Code of Conduct 2016-17 (p. 7)

Pursuant the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), procedural safeguards will be in place for those students who have violated EMSA's Code of Conduct or Discipline Policy and are on an Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

EMSA, with guidance from our lead partner, EL Education, will combine the compatible components of its program with EL's Management in the Active Classroom (Attachment 13) and Culture Core Practices to make a clear and coherent approach for classroom teachers. EMSA's Principal and existing leadership team will work with the EL Education School Designer to develop a coherent approach to culture, positive behavior, and prevention practices, as well as an approach for conflict resolution and remediation. One conflict resolution program that EL Education schools implement with a high degree of success is called VOMP: Vent, Ownership, Moccasins, Plan. To resolve a conflict, students will first vent (an uninterrupted telling of their side of the story with focus on "I" statements), then students take ownership for the parts they each played in the conflict, then the students view the situation from the "moccasins" or shoes of the other person, finally, the students create a plan of action in case a future conflict arises. The VOMP approach is described in more detail in Attachment 14.

With the extent of research-based, preventative components being implemented in the EMSA classroom, the EMSA team is confident that students will feel secure in their behavior expectations, and they will receive pertinent behavior training at each grade level throughout their time at EMSA. In addition, EMSA will be working collaboratively with a mentor school, which will be a credentialed EL Education school, to help implement best practices within the EL Education framework. EMSA's Dean of Culture will have the primary responsibility for overseeing the school's implementation of the culture and behavior intervention programs.

10. *Parent and Community Involvement*

EMSA has been a collaboration of community members, including potential parents. Most of the team has strong Elgin ties but all share the philosophy that public schools are a vital part of our community. We support U-46 and its successes at many levels. Our school will be very unique and distinguishable from any of U-46's current offerings, allowing U-46 to provide a public education opportunity to families that seek a different style of learning from its current offerings. Letters of Support are attached as Attachment 15.

One of EL Education's Core Practices is "engaging families and the community in the life of the school" (Core Practice #28). EMSA's school leaders and teachers will build and sustain relationships with community organizations and cultural institutions. EMSA will be a responsible member and contributor to the U-46 and Elgin communities, which will in turn advocate for EMSA. Many of EMSA's design team members have a strong ties to the U-46 and Elgin communities. EMSA's racially diverse team consists of teachers, university professors, community leaders, professionals, nonprofit leaders and volunteers. This is a new design team from the one that applied for a charter school in 2014, although the mission and focus have remained largely the same. This design team started meeting as a team in February 2016. Our prior efforts at opening this charter school demonstrated strong community and parent interest, as was evidenced by more than 300 families wanting to send their children to EMSA, more than

500 signatures to show support, and dozens of letters of support from the community. In the last few months we have added more than 150 interested students and supporters.

In August, EMSA hosted a visioning session for community members and leaders at the former Fox River Country Day School property. The session was moderated by Green Schools Network and EL Education School Designer Dr. Jennifer Seidel. Attendees toured the campus and then strategized how EMSA could create a community learning space at the property or at any facility that EMSA would occupy. The main ideas that emerged related to the property's rare ecosystem, historic architecture, and history as a farm. EMSA could coordinate a community garden, could promote environmental stewardship, or focus on historic and green architecture. All would be excellent fits with EMSA's math and science focus and could provide learning opportunities for students and individuals who do not attend the school, e.g., field trips, business partnerships, camps. Attendees indicated their willingness to reconvene to start the process of building a community learning space with EMSA. For other sites, EMSA could pursue a community garden or a focused-science based theme. The importance of building community, as a place where students become invested and want to return to with their own families, was discussed and it was generally concluded that Elgin and U-46 could benefit from EMSA creating a special learning environment with a strong community component.

In the fall, EMSA invited the community to two information sessions, both held at The Haight in downtown Elgin. More than 100 attendees shared their hopes and concerns with their children's education, debated the importance of the location of the school, and strategized what should be included at EMSA. Attendees highly favored the Fox River Country Day School site because of its natural setting and location in Elgin. Some indicated their willingness to attend EMSA regardless of its location. Many voiced their concern that a distant location would be hard on the students (too much time commuting) and the parents; some indicated they would be unwilling send their children the distance to Wayne or Bartlett. Parents shared their hopes to see EMSA build critical thinkers, supply more technology resources, value transparency, let children play outside, demonstrate that every child matters, collaborate with businesses and social agencies, incorporate hands-on active learning, assign less homework, nurture curiosity and willingness to take risks, make science and math relevant, and more.

EMSA has verbally committed to partnering with several local agencies to enrich opportunities for our students and the community: Boys and Girls Club of Elgin, Elgin Public Museum, Friends of the Fox, and Multicultural Education Outreach Foundation. When we are approved, EMSA will continue to pursue meaningful partnerships with businesses, colleges, and social agencies.

EMSA will continue to cultivate its relationship with U-46 and envisions sharing with U-46 teachers and/or administrators EMSA's curricula, teaching and intervention techniques, CCSS and NGSS curricula alignment, EL Education training, and any other aspects of its educational programs. One of the foundational practices of EL Education is to share resources, materials and approaches with partner districts, and EMSA looks forward to a close collaboration with

U-46 in furtherance of this aim.

EMSA's Board of Directors will be composed of a broad representation of backgrounds. Our board will include up to two parents, who will be nominated by school parents. EMSA believes that parents play a crucial role in their children's education and the success of a school. Board membership will increase parents' ownership and investment in the school. We also would welcome a U-46 Board Member to participate on our board as a nonvoting member. This will support EMSA's value of transparency and cooperation with U-46.

Another EL Education core practice is *engaging families in the life of the school* (Core Practice No. 28). We believe that families are key partners in the education of their children. Students and staff at EMSA will make families welcome, know them well, and engage them actively in the life of the school. We recognize that families care about their children's education, bring strengths, and add value to the community. Regular communication and multiple opportunities for participation that encourage families to be strong partners in their children's learning will be provided by:

- Holding student-led conferences 2-3 times a year, at which parent-attendance is mandatory;
- Scheduling events outside of the school day, assisting with transportation, providing translators as needed;
- Providing parents volunteer opportunities both within the school day and outside of school hours;
- Guaranteeing up to two EMSA Board of Directors positions for parents;
- Learning about and embracing the cultures, backgrounds, and values of students and their families; and
- Inviting parents to become tutors and experts in classroom activities.

EMSA faculty will begin each school year by establishing a pattern of positive, regular communication with families through newsletters, phone calls and emails. We will establish an annual calendar of events which involves families that include student-led conferences, celebrations of learning (where students show their families and the community their final products from the Learning Expeditions), family fun nights, and family science and math events. The Principal will communicate with families via newsletters and scheduled meetings to celebrate successes, review school's policies and curriculum, and address areas of concern to the school community.

Up to two Directors on EMSA's Board will be filled by parents, elected by the school's parents. These Board members will offer vital perspectives as the Board makes financial and educational decisions. In addition, EMSA will support a Bilingual Advisory Committee (BAC), which will be comprised of parents of bilingual students and EMSA support staff, as well as a parent group. Both will be important partners in the EMSA community. These groups will help support school activities, identify concerns, contribute input into EMSA's policies and practices, and help meet the challenges as we move forward. The groups will meet regularly with the Principal and staff

representatives to ensure clear and continuing two-way communication.

EMSA will ensure that parents are well informed about their children's progress and are equal partners when finding a new approach may be necessary. As described earlier, parents will also participate in student-led conferences, in which students present portfolios of their work and discuss their progress toward meeting academic and non-academic goals. Parents can also review returned students' work and request additional information about the curriculum and their student's progress. An annual climate survey will be used to solicit parents' perceptions about their children and their experiences at EMSA.

11. Educational Program Capacity

The EMSA Board and Design Team is composed of a dynamic and diverse group of volunteers, committed to the vision of igniting the *wow* and *wonder* of learning for students and families in U-46 through the creation of EMSA. Our Board of Directors and design team members have been working tirelessly and carefully planning, in collaboration with nonprofit partners, in order to make this vision a reality.

Below, we describe educational and operational experience and expertise of our Board of Directors, design team members and partners, as well as our plans to recruit and hire an exceptional school leader following authorization.

Partnership with EL Education

As described throughout this application, EL Education has been a formal, core partner in the design of our school's educational program, based upon their successful school model and related curricula. EL Education's School Designers have supported the creation of our educational plan and school design by providing us many hours of consultation, ELA and science curriculum, national/regional conferences, site observations, and access to their online resources. During the design phase, EMSA has worked closely with the following EL Education staff members:

- **Jenny Seydel, Ph.D., School Designer**, provided extensive support to help us with initial school design in 2014. Jenny specific expertise in science and environmental education. She has her M.Ed. in Environmental Education from Lesley College and the Audubon Expedition Institute, and a Ph.D. in Environmental Studies from Antioch University of New England. At the time, she was a leader at the nonprofit Green Schools National Network; she is now their board chair. Jenny partnered with us again in 2016 to lead a visioning session about the role of EMSA and FRCDS in the U-46 community.
- **John Lydon, a School Designer** with EL Education since 2015, has assumed the role of lead School Designer for EMSA in 2016. John brings to EMSA a deep expertise in EL Education practices, working with schools in Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, and West Virginia, and has been recognized nationally for his innovative curricula and instruction by organizations that include the Golden Apple Foundation, The New Teacher Project (TNTP), Fund for Teachers, and the Oppenheimer Family Foundation. Additionally, John

holds a Master of Language and Literacy from the Harvard Graduate School of Education, and has extensive knowledge of elementary literacy interventions and assessment as well as instructional and leadership coaching at the K-12 and university level. John has provided guidance to EMSA during the application phase with an emphasis on curriculum, assessment, culture, and leadership structures. After authorization, John will support the hiring and foundational training of school administrators and teachers at EMSA. In successive years, John will oversee EMSA on their path toward becoming a credentialed EL Education school.

- **Nikki Lacewell, Regional Director, Chicago/Milwaukee**, has been with EL Education since 2015. Nikki brings to EMSA a deep background in educational leadership. She was an Assistant Principal and Teacher Development Coordinator in turnaround settings within the Chicagoland area where she worked to improve school culture, instruction, and teacher practice in chronically low-performing public school districts, leading professional development and fostering collaborative learning environments for dramatic school improvement. Prior to joining EL Education, Nikki was an English department chair, a national trainer, and dean in public and independent schools within the Dallas/Fort Worth area, building instructional leadership capacity for teachers and enhancing equity for all students through providing access to rigorous instruction for college and career readiness. She provided additional expertise during EMSA's school design process in areas including support to English learners, Special Education and assessment, drawing not only on her own experience but also tapping into the expertise of staff across the EL Education organization, a network of over 150 schools in 30 states serving more than 4,000 teachers. Access to this network of expertise will be available to EMSA, as needed, throughout their partnership with EL Education.

Going forward, not only will EL Education play an integral role in recruiting and hiring our school leader, they will also be involved in all of EMSA's major decisions and will provide extensive training to our school leader, staff and teachers, including curriculum development and alignment. EMSA plans to continue a formal partnership with EL Education for the duration of its existence and has budgeted funds to continue this partnership, which will provide us with ongoing professional development of our school leader and staff to ensure high fidelity with the EL Education model.

Support from the Illinois Network of Charter Schools

The Illinois Network of Charter Schools (INCS), a nonprofit organization that provides advocacy and support to charter schools across the state, has provided ongoing support to our design efforts. **Anne Levy Brown, Senior Manager of Charter Growth**, a former teacher and education researcher with ten years of experience supporting the startup of charters in Illinois, has guided the Design Team through the requirements of Illinois and federal law for education and charter schools. She has extensive ties in the charter school world and arranged school visits and consultations with many experts in the field, as well as providing resources and information in areas including educational program design, special education, English learners, board

governance and community outreach. INCS has also provided guidance on charter finance through support from Matt Shaw, an expert in the field who has worked with numerous charter schools and for charter school authorizers.

In addition to many charter visits in 2012-2014, we have recently visited LEARN Charter School in Waukegan, Polaris Charter Academy, Rowe Elementary School, UCSN Esmeralda Santiago Charter School and Instituto Health Careers Academy in Chicago.

INCS will continue to partner with us to ensure we are meeting the legal requirements of opening and operating a charter school in Illinois, as well as provide resources for outreach, hiring, finances, grants and fundraising, and governance. EMSA also plans to access the resources and expertise of the INCS Special Education cooperative and membership in the statewide charter network to continue drawing on the expertise and experience of high-performing charter schools in a host of areas.

Additionally, our Founding Board and Design Team members will contribute to EMSA's capacity to implement our education program. **Dr. Risé Jones** (Design Team, Academic Excellence committee) will share her expertise in designing curriculum, building partnerships and serving academically challenged youth and their families. **Gary Swick** (Founding Board) is an instructor at the school of education at NIU. He's a retired D300 high school science teacher and is president of the nonprofit Friends of the Fox River. He will continue to advise the team on matters of curriculum, instruction and assessment. **Trecia Shales** (Design Team) has taught the elementary grades for more than thirteen years, she is ESL endorsed and currently teaches an ESL classroom in U-46. **Adriana Barriga** (Design Team) has taught several grade levels in U-46; bilingual endorsed, she is currently teaching dual language kindergarten. **Kerry Kelly** (Founding Board) has a B.S. in Genetics and has taught problem-based learning science camps locally as well as FOSS science classes as a volunteer at U-46. **Dr. Margaret Longo**, Director of Special Education at LEARN Charter Network, which has 10 charter schools in Chicago, North Chicago and Waukegan and **Velia Soto**, former Principal of Erie Elementary Charter School in Chicago, have provided invaluable advice and guidance in the areas of special education and bilingual education and they will continue to be available as resources to EMSA. **EL Education's** Nikki Lacewell and John Lydon will continue to provide their expertise in all three areas.

EMSA's Founding Board members will increase its outreach and engagement activities with the help of current Design Team members who will remain active as the Outreach Committee.

Dennis Verges, serves on other community Boards and Commissions, including: City of Elgin Strategic Plan Advisory Commission, City of Elgin Human Services Advisory Council, OpenDoor Community Health Center, and NHS of the Fox Valley as Advisory Council Chairman. He is the father of a preschool student and is active in the Latino community. **Reverend Janie McCutchen** is a retired U-46 school counselor who works closely with at-risk children. **Kerry Kelly** has diverse community ties. **Adriana Barriga** is a bilingual kindergarten teacher who works with young Latino families. **Dr. Risé Jones** directs and coordinates after-school and year-long programs for at-risk youth.

IV. OPERATIONS PLAN AND CAPACITY

- 1. Legal Status and Governing Documents**
- 2. Organization Charts**
- 3. Governing Board**
- 4. Staff Structure**
- 5. Staffing Plans, Hiring, Management, and Evaluation**
- 6. Professional Development**
- 7. Performance Management**
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- 9. Start-up and Ongoing Operations**
- 10. Operations Capacity**

1. Legal Status and Governing Documents

The Elgin Charter School Initiative (ECSI) is a tax-exempt, nonprofit educational entity, which has received Federal IRS 501(c)(3) status, formed expressly for the purpose of establishing a charter school: the Elgin Math and Science Academy (EMSA). ECSI Board of Directors will govern the operations of EMSA. The following supporting documents are attached: IRS Letter Approving 501(c)(3) Status (Attachment 16); Illinois Attorney General Registration (Attachment 17) and Bylaws (Attachment 18).

2. Organization Chart

EMSA's organizational chart for its first year through its sixth year, when it will be at capacity, is attached (Attachment 19).

3. Governing Board

EMSA will be governed by the ECSI Board of Directors (Board) pursuant to Illinois charter and applicable laws. Within the governance framework, the Board will exercise its authority and meet its responsibilities utilizing nonprofit board best practices. The EMSA Board of Directors will ensure that the school operates in a manner faithful to the terms of its charter and in compliance with all applicable laws, and that the school is financially sound and fiscally responsible.

In particular, the Board is responsible for:

- Determining and maintaining focus on the organization's mission;
- Legal and fiscal well-being of the organization and the school;
- Hiring and evaluating the EMSA Principal (and dismissing the Principal, if needed);
- Approving and monitoring major contracts, including with core partner, EL Education;
- Approving and monitoring the implementation of EMSA's goals and policies for finances and operations and academic excellence;

- Regularly monitoring student achievement data in relation to academic goals;
- Approving and monitoring EMSA's annual budget and fiscal policies;
- Overseeing financial stability and integrity of use of all funds at the school;
- Contracting with an external auditor to produce an independent annual financial audit according to generally accepted accounting practices;
- Ensuring that all aspects of the contract entered into with District U-46 (or other authorizer) are met;
- Leading some and assisting with all fundraising efforts, especially in the planning year 2017-2018;
- Providing vision, leadership and technical assistance to develop/implement strategic plans;
- Participating in the active recruitment, selection and orientation of new board members with special skills and expertise to further the work of the board and the school;
- Actively participating in the school community in support of students, parents/guardians, and the community;
- Ensuring that all necessary accountability measures are in place, including performance evaluations, and that all necessary records and reports are transmitted to the proper charter school oversight entities; and
- Adopting by-laws to govern the Board of Directors.

The Principal of EMSA will report to the Board and be responsible for the day-to-day operation and management of EMSA, as well as being the educational leader of EMSA. The Board does not manage the school, but rather oversees the Principal, who handles the operations of the school. Ultimately, the Board will hold the school, and specifically the Principal, accountable for academic, organizational, and financial performance.

The Board of Directors will consist of up to fifteen voting members, serving two-year terms, which will be staggered. Currently the ECSI Board has six Founding Board members: Kerin Kelly, attorney at Steffen and Kelly; Adam Gray, Office Manager at H & R Block; Dennis Verges, Director of Finance at SCREEN North America Holdings; Doree Haight, Senior Manager at Sears Holdings and owner of The Haight private events space; Gary Swick, Instructor at Northern Illinois University and retired high school science teacher; and Kevin Echevarria, CEO PKE Enterprises, Inc. The resumes of the Founding Board members are attached as Attachment 3. They bring expertise in education, financial management, marketing, property management, entrepreneurial business, legal and work with at-risk populations, as well as EL Education training, extensive nonprofit board experience, second languages, and STEM background. The Design Team will continue to support EMSA's mission and supply support during the planning year as members of Board committees.

When at capacity, the founding Board of Directors will consist of members of the community who have experience in the STEM fields, law, finance, management, marketing and public relations, education and/or personnel as well as representatives from partnering programs or institutions. Within six months of opening, two parents of enrolled students will be added to the

Board based upon their election by other school parents. The parent members will serve renewable one-year terms; all others board members will serve staggered terms of one or two years at the outset, and will go to staggered two-year terms thereafter. We also would welcome a U-46 Board Member to participate on our board as a nonvoting member. This will support EMSA's value of transparency and cooperation with U-46.

The EMSA Board of Directors will constantly encourage a "culture of candor." This will be reflected in its Conflict of Interest policy, which has been adopted as a part of our bylaws and will be reviewed at least annually. Board discussions on the topic will raise awareness, encourage disclosure and discussion of anything that may be a conflict. Our board minutes of will reflect when a board member discloses that he or she has a conflict of interest and how the conflict was managed. Our policy requires that a discussion on the matter will ensue without the board member in the room, and that a vote will be taken and that the "interested" board member abstained. Board members will annually sign a statement disclosing any conflict of interests he or she may have with the operation of the school. Attachment 20 (Conflict of Interest Policy).

It is important for the Board to establish and maintain ongoing two-way communication with the parent community. The Board will develop on-going procedures to maintain this vital communication link, which will inform future decisions for the school. All Board meetings will comply with the Open Meeting Law and will be open to the public. Parents' and community members' attendance will be encouraged and welcomed. Detailed minutes will be kept, which will be published to the community and be accessible upon request. A schedule of monthly meetings will be developed prior to the beginning of each school year. The schedule will be published in the family handbook and posted on a public bulletin board in the school office and available on the school website.

The following process will be followed in filling the remaining Board of Directors seats. Profiles of each candidate will be presented to the Founding Board. In addition to the qualifications stated above, there are other attributes that are important for Board members to possess. These include: a) a strong understanding of and personal commitment to the accomplishment of the school's mission; b) commitment to using professional skills and experience and/or other resources to support the school; c) prior board experience or other experience that would contribute to having an understanding of the proper and appropriate role of a Board member; d) possession of professional skills, professional/personal and/or community-based experience that would contribute to the success of the Board and the school--e.g. skills and/or experience related to education, STEM, law, finance, fundraising, personnel and marketing; and 3) willingness to serve actively on at least one of the committees of the board and to seriously consider the leadership of a committee. Each candidate will be interviewed by at least two existing Board members. A nomination from a Board member who interviewed the candidate may be made and seconded at a Board meeting. The candidate may then be approved upon a majority vote of the Board.

EMSA has identified the following Board committees to guide the start-up phase of the school:

- **Academic Excellence:** will regularly review EMSA's academic performance and progress towards academic excellence. Will establish and review with the Principal academic goals and timelines and will report on EMSA's academic progress at Board meetings. Will meet with EMSA Leadership Team(s) to gather input and gain insight and understanding into the academic programs. Will arrange for Board trainings on key components of the charter agreement and on issues related to academic achievement, EL Education, and oversight. Will work to build academic partnerships.
- **Finance:** led by the Board Treasurer. Will regularly monitor the financial health and performance of the organization. Will assist in the development of financial and accounting processes in accordance with GAAP during the startup period. Will meet with the Principal and the business manager on a regular basis (to be determined). Will design and review, with the Principal and business manager, the financial goals and timelines, as well as the annual budgets and cash-flow statements, and will provide input and perspective on the annual budget to the Board. Will arrange for Board training to ensure that all members are able to be effective stewards of EMSA's financial resources. Will form an audit subcommittee that includes two independent members of the community to meet annually to review and maintain the integrity of the annual financial audit and make recommendations to the administration.
- **Development and Outreach:** will develop annual, long term and special campaign fundraising goals and supporting plans. EMSA has set significant fundraising and grant award goals for the planning and first years of operation, towards which this committee will contribute significantly. EMSA anticipates a significant capital campaign to prepare its facilities for middle school classrooms; this effort will be supported by the development committee. Will meet with the Principal on a regular basis (to be determined) and will assist in the development of related goals and timelines. Will provide guidance on any annual events and work to build awareness of and partnerships with EMSA.
- **Governance:** will have primary responsibility for Board member recruitment, nominations, orientation, and training. Will develop the Board handbook, including board training and education schedule. Will develop a succession plan for Board members and especially officers. Will develop, with the full Board, board-level goals for the year as part of the annual planning process. Will evaluate the effectiveness of board meetings, makes recommendations for improvements, and will coordinate an annual evaluation of the full Board.
- **Facilities:** will serve as an ad hoc committee and will be concerned with the maintenance of all land, buildings, facilities and equipment leased or owned by EMSA. The committee reviews all physical plant needs and advises the Board on building related issues, ongoing maintenance and planning for long-term improvements. Specific responsibilities may include: developing and recommending a maintenance and replacement schedule for buildings and grounds; conducting or overseeing inspections of school facilities when needed; planning for new construction, major renovations, or major improvements of school and grounds; recommending additions, deletions or changes to facilities to support school programs; acting as Board liaison to

administration on matters pertaining to security, space and community use of facilities; implementing and overseeing long-term capital improvement projects; overseeing technology infrastructure; reviewing and recommending the hiring of an architect to the Principal.

- **Principal Selection, Evaluation and Support:** This committee, to be led by Board Chair Kerry Kelly, is charged with selecting EMSA’s Principal and then with fostering a supportive partnership between the board and Principal which includes development of clear annual goals for the Principal, a structured process for feedback during the year, and an annual evaluation of the Principal’s performance.

These Committees may need to be adjusted or subdivided over time as EMSA grows, or additional committees may be necessary to support the growth and success of EMSA. During the startup period, Board members and candidates may provide more significant support as needed by the school leaders, such as in vendor selection and negotiations, than they will once the school is in operation. In addition to business meetings, the Board will hold a full-day retreat at least annually (to take place, at least partially, on a school day). During the retreat, Board members will have the opportunity to experience the workings of the school, including observing classrooms, touring the facility, and speaking with students, faculty and families. Additionally, the retreat will serve as an opportunity for EL Education and other board training, as well as reflection on the school’s progress, the Board’s functioning as a group and the school’s growth towards its mission and vision.

The use of data by the Board will improve the quality of decision-making by the school and mirror the school’s commitment to data-driven instruction in its classrooms. EMSA will utilize resources developed by BoardOnTrack, a national expert in charter school board governance, along with resources and expertise from Illinois charter schools, through connections facilitated by INCS, to guide and strengthen our board performance. Data regarding EMSA’s defined goals for finances, governance, human resources, EL Education, engagement and student enrollment, as well as Board performance matrices, will be gathered and analyzed by the Board. The Board will use data to establish priorities, make fiscal decisions, measure progress toward the achievement academic goals, evaluate the effectiveness of its partnerships, determine its impact on the community, identify issues and challenges, and address problems.

4. Staff Structure

EMSA Staffing Chart:

	Year 1 2018-19	Year 2 2019-20	Year 3 2020-21	Year 5 2021-22	Year 5 2022-23	Year 6 2023-24
Grades	K-3	K-4	K-5	K-6	K-7	K-8
# Students (max)	200	250	300	350	400	450

Principal	1	1	1	1	1	1
Business manager	1	1	1	1	1	1
Dean	1	1	2	2	2	2
Special Ed Case Manager	1	1	1	2	2	2
Bilingual Coordinator	1	1	1.5	1.5	2	2
Administrative Assistant	1	1.5	1.5	2	2	2
Teachers	8	10	12	14	16	18
Teacher Assistants	8	10	12	14	16	18
Special Education Teachers	.5	.75	1.25	.5	1	1.25
Instructional Coaches	1	1	1.5	1.5	2	2
Art, Music, PE Teachers	.5	.5	1.0	1.0	1.5	2
School Nurse	1	1	1	1	1	1
School Social Worker	1	1	1	2	2	2
Custodian	2	2	2	3	3	4
Total Staff	27.25	32	37.75	45.75	51.75	57.25

The Special Education Case Manager and Bilingual Coordinator will each serve as teachers in their respective areas in addition to fulfilling administrative responsibilities related to coordination of Special Education services and Bilingual instructional services, respectively, for the school. The job descriptions for the Principal, Financial Manager, and Dean of Culture are attached (Attachment 4). Teacher criteria is listed below in section 5.

In our first year of operation our teacher to student ratio will be 1:23; our adult to student ration will be 1:9. In year six these will be 1:19 and 1:8.

5. Staffing Plans, Hiring, Management, and Evaluation

EMSA plans to offer teachers and administrators employment contracts, while it is anticipated that the remainder of its staff will be at-will. EMSA will strive to offer teacher salaries that keep pace with District salaries. For our first year, our salaries are based on the U-46 salary ranges. We have budgeted teacher salaries at \$45,000-55,000 for our first year of operation with an annual 2.5% increase. Salaries for our lead teachers, Special Education Case Manager, and Bilingual Coordinator will be upper end of that range. Teacher’s assistants starting hourly wage will be \$15, custodian \$20, and nurse \$25. The average administrative (Principal, Business

Manager, Dean) salary will be approximately \$80,000, with the Principal's salary in the above-\$100,000-range. We also hope to offer competitive benefit packages to new hires. After its first two years of operations, EMSA will consider incentive systems for its teachers and staff depending upon its cash flow. EMSA's strong commitment to supporting its teachers with an Instructional Coach, ample planning and prep time, extensive EL Education professional development, competitive salaries and the engaging teaching style supported by EL Education will help EMSA attract and retain high-performing teachers.

Key selection criteria for our teachers include:

- Valid and current elementary teaching certification
- Bilingual endorsement
- ESL endorsement
- Bachelor's degree in elementary education or a STEM field
- Minimum two years teaching experience preferred
- Experience with EL Education, experiential education or project-based learning
- Proven effectiveness in leading at-risk students to significant academic gains
- Demonstrated commitment to continuously improving teaching through coaching and professional development and a data-focused mindset about their practice
- Demonstrated ability to work effectively with students and families of diverse make-up, cultures and communities
- Experience with writing curriculum, project design and development, and creating community partnerships preferred

For its initial two years, EMSA's leadership team will consist of the Principal, the Business Manager, the Dean of Culture, at least one Lead Teacher, the Bilingual Coordinator, the Special Education Case Manager, the School Social Worker and the Instructional Coach. Our EL Education School Designer will serve as a consultant to this team. The purpose of the leadership team is to increase the achievement and engagement of every student through continuous improvement of curriculum, instruction, assessment, and culture in alignment with EMSA's mission and EL Education Core Practices.

EMSA's Principal will assess the effectiveness of the leadership team and make adjustments as needed by adding additional staff and/or dividing into different teams. The teachers and staff will be hired in accordance with the school's needs and growing population through the build-out years. Initially, all school staff will report to the Principal. The Principal may assign the Dean of Culture or Business Manager to assume management and/or a role in supervision and evaluation of some staff members.

As described earlier, the EMSA Board of Directors will launch recruitment of the Principal immediately following authorization. Once hired, the Principal will work with the Board to recruit and hire the Business Manager or an interim financial consultant, who will begin work as soon as funding is available, followed by the Dean of Culture and Instructional Coach, who will start

their positions in spring or summer of 2018. The Principal, with support from the board, will simultaneously begin recruiting teachers, with the goal of identifying and interviewing strong candidates in January-March 2018 and hiring all teachers by June 2018. The administrative assistant will be hired by the Principal at his/her discretion and when funding allows for it. The EL Education School Designer and INCS advisor will be retained as partners immediately upon authorization.

All new hires will attend a five-day summer immersion professional development in EL Education in addition to the required ten-day on-site professional development provided by EL Education immediately before the commencement of classes. EMSA will hire its teacher assistants and the balance of its staff in time for them to fully participate in the ten-day on-site professional development.

EMSA's school Principal will be ultimately responsible for the hiring (which will include mandatory criminal background checks) and dismissal of school personnel. The expectations for staff evaluation--including the frequency, content and consequences of evaluations--will be clearly described in the faculty handbook, which will be finalized by EMSA's Principal, School Designer and Board of Directors. The evaluation guidelines will be based upon the Charlotte Danielson Framework for Teaching, and will be handled collegially and with the goal of continual improvement. The Principal will arrange for specific professional development (PD) topics which may be identified as a result of evaluations, using both large group, small group, and individual opportunities as deemed appropriate. PD expectations will be clearly communicated at the time of interview and all of these expectations will be acknowledged in writing by the staff upon hiring. EMSA's Instructional Coach, in coordination with the leadership team, will assume primary responsibility for coordinating professional development opportunities which support areas of concern and are aligned with EMSA's work plan.

6. Professional Development

EMSA's Instructional Coach, in coordination with the leadership team, will assume primary responsibility for coordinating professional development opportunities. EMSA's goal will be to have all teachers hired by June 2018 for the school year that commences in August of 2018. This will allow new hires the opportunity, paid for by EMSA, to attend a five-day summer immersion professional development in EL Education. In the beginning of August, all teachers and most staff will attend in an annual, ten-day on-site professional development program led by EL Education. In addition to these opportunities, EMSA teachers will have fifteen planning or professional development days during the school year as well as ten hours per week of planning time.

EMSA will build an academic culture that engages learners by expecting rigorous work from all students and celebrating their accomplishments. In addition, administrators and teachers will model a rigorous and pioneering academic culture. Both teachers and administrators will model a passion for teaching and learning and will welcome the opportunity for continuous professional

development in the implementation of innovative teaching practices.

Staff and student culture at our school will be developed and sustained through practices that bring the community together, promote shared understandings, and encourage all community members to become “crew, not passengers.” School leaders, teachers, and staff in our school will be members of a community of learners. Professionals work together to share expertise, improve the school’s program, build background knowledge in their disciplines, and model collaborative learning for students. Staff culture is characterized by respectful collegiality where teachers resist judgment and blame. They support each other to improve practice. Teachers and school leaders model a safe community that fosters high quality work.

Professional development for individual teachers and for the staff as a whole is at the heart of the school. Below is a list of core teacher competencies which will be addressed in the professional development plans for EMSA:

- Knowledge of and competency in utilizing EL Education’s five core practices: Learning Expeditions; Instruction; Assessment; Character and Culture; and Leadership.
- Creating a climate conducive to project-based learning and inquiry.
- Creating rigorous and relevant learning expeditions that promote relationships with peers and community members.
- Managing and assessing project-based learning.
- Proficiency in using technology tools to assist learning and collaboration.
- Proficiency in various STEM fields.
- Incorporating character education practices into morning meetings, community meetings, and crew advisory sessions.
- Teaching reading and writing in the content areas through the use of Common Core State Standards.
- Creating daily lessons that incorporate active pedagogy.
- Using assessment tools and using data to inform instruction and differentiation.
- Aligning curriculum with CCSS and Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS).
- Utilizing electronic portfolios to assess student progress.
- Implementing student-led conferences and features of EL Education practices.
- Implementing PBIS within an EL Education framework.
- Learning best practices for ESL and TBE teaching.
- Implementing an MTSS program.
- Implementing best practices when serving students with special needs.

During the summer and throughout the school year, teachers will participate in professional development institutes offered by EL Education. These opportunities will allow teachers and school leaders to deepen their understanding of EL Education and allow EMSA to develop internal expertise and the capacity to sustain EL over the long term. Teachers, administrators, and board members will also have an opportunity to visit high performing EL Education, STEM and project-based learning schools, as well as participate in state, regional, and national EL

Education conferences.

EMSA's calendar provides for 10 days of professional development **before the school year** begins. The topics for this intensive PD include:

- EL Education History and Overview of Core Practices and Design Principles;
- Student Engaged Assessment (learning targets, portfolios, standard target assessment planners for expeditions);
- Setting the School Culture (character traits, morning meetings, community meetings, crew meetings, integration of culture through daily activities);
- Setting the Staff Culture (staff working norms, structures and processes to support collaborative planning and professional learning);
- Common Core Standards for ELA and math;
- Next Generation Science Standards;
- Expedition and Lesson Planning;
- Integrating Reading and Writing Across the Curriculum; and
- ESL, Tier 2 and 3 Academic and Behavioral Supports.

The above topics will be interactive and will provide time for teachers to ask questions, request help, create lessons and expeditions, brainstorm, share ideas, and develop a high level of trust and comfort among the staff. Newly hired teachers will also be encouraged to attend five-day EL Education institutes during the early summer.

In addition, during the school year there are monthly full and half days of potential professional development or planning time. The EL Education School Designer will work with EMSA staff and will be a vital part of planning for and providing professional development. There will be one hour of common planning time daily each morning (8-9 am); this first hour will be devoted to planning: at least two mornings per week will be designated as classroom planning time, with the other mornings determined by EMSA for grade-level planning, data-sharing, vertical articulation, etc. Teachers also have planning time while students are at daily 30-minute recess and at their weekly one-hour art class.

EL Education provides site seminars throughout the year on topics that are foundational for success that some of our teachers will be able to attend. The EL Education School Designer will also provide on-site coaching to the teachers and leaders. This interactive structure supports continuous growth and development for the individual teacher and the school as a community.

All professional development offerings by EL Education are designed so that participants are able to return to school ready to implement new instructional strategies or expedition topics. This staff development approach is at the heart of creating authentic learning experiences and modeling reflective practices that will be utilized to engage students in the classroom.

7. Performance Management

EMSA seeks to work with the District to determine the final performance standards by which EMSA will be evaluated for performance and renewal. We suggest the following goals for consideration:

Academic Goals

EMSA seeks to provide a rigorous and engaging K-8 education that will result in students gaining proficiency or beyond in literacy, math and science. In particular, through the EL Education model, EMSA believes that we will be able to improve student achievement for students who learn best through hands-on education and extended explorations. We believe that this model appeals to children from across racial, ethnic and socio-economic groups, but we are especially focused on improving student achievement for students from racial minority groups and low-income families to help close the dramatic achievement gaps by race and income that have persisted in our district and that are mirrored in districts across the state and nation.

To support our goal of improving achievement for all students, we include two goals related to performance on the NWEA MAP assessment: (1) student achievement growth based on the percentage of students meeting their individual target growth goals on the NWEA MAP assessment and (2) student achievement attainment based on the national percentile attainment of our full student body.

In order to focus specifically on narrowing racial and income achievement gaps, we have divided our academic achievement goals by prioritized “target” subgroups, as indicated below, for whom we seek to increase student achievement beyond the performance of their peers in the same subgroups, and non-target subgroups, for whom we seek to maintain performance equal to or exceeding that of their peers in the same subgroups.

GOAL	Metric	Reviewed	2019	2021	2023
Student achievement growth	% of students meeting expected growth targets on NWEA MAP in Reading & Math	Annually	40%	50%	60%
Student achievement attainment on NWEA MAP	National Attainment Percentile on NWEA MAP in Reading & Math	Annually	45th	55th	65th

Academic achievement of students in target subgroups	% of students meeting or exceeding expectations in each of the following subgroups on PARCC in ELA & Math: Black Hispanic Am. Indian Two or more races Low income LEP IEP	Annually	At or above district and state average in each subgroup	At least 3 percentage points above district and state average in each subgroup	At least 5 percentage points above district and state average in each subgroup
	% of students meeting or exceeding standards on Illinois State Science Assessment in target subgroups (listed above)	Annually (once school serves grade 5+)		At or above district and state average in each subgroup	At least 3 percentage points above district and state average in each subgroup
Academic achievement of students in non-target subgroups	% of students meeting or exceeding expectations in each of the following subgroups on PARCC in ELA & Math: White Asian Non Low Income	Annually	At or above district and state average in each subgroup	At or above district and state average in each subgroup	At or above district and state average in each subgroup
Student Achievement/Growth	% of students meeting or exceeding standards on Illinois State Science Assessment in non-target subgroups (listed above)	Annually (once school serves grade 5+)		At or above district and state average in each subgroup	At or above district and state average in each subgroup

In addition to student outcome goals, EMSA believes that its long-term success and impact relies on its organizational and financial health, hiring and retention of effective staff and staff sustainability. The following tables focus on school operational and financial goals and metrics designed to measure performance across a spectrum of school operations--operations that ultimately enable us to focus on achieving our mission. EMSA plans to measure financial performance and management, governance, human resources, and engagement of the key stakeholders. The person responsible for reporting this information is listed below the goals in italics. The Board will review all reports and make recommendations as needed. EMSA leadership will monitor daily key factors, such as daily attendance, tardiness, site visitors, field work, etc. We will carefully track teacher retention and will assess staff satisfaction using an annual survey. To facilitate tracking and sharing of information with the District, we would utilize the same program as the District; this will also help us transition students and maintain transparency. For areas of tracking that are not included in the District's system, we will identify alternate tracking systems.

EMSA FINANCIAL GOALS
Responsibility: Business Manager

GOAL	Metric	Reviewed	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Amount in reserves	Financial Statement	End of fiscal year	299K	1.05M	995k	1.02M	871k
Liquidity	Financial Statement	Monthly	300K	300K	400K	400K	500K
Facility cost % (inc funding)	Financial Statement	Annually	4.5	3.6	13.8	10.6	14.8
Fundraising goal	Financial Statement	Annually	50k	50K	50K	50K	50K
Total cost per student	Financial Statement	Annually	11.3K	10.1K	11.6K	11.3K	11.8K
Audit	Audit Report: # of significant findings	Annually	none	none	none	none	none
Meet payroll on time, without mistakes	Staffing Information	Bi-weekly	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

EMSA GOVERNANCE GOALS
Responsibility: Board Chair or Designee

GOAL	Metric	Reviewed	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
# new board/committee members recruited	Board Minutes	Annually	tbd	tbd	tbd	tbd	tbd
% on time committee	Board Minutes	Bi-annually	100	100	100	100	100

reports							
Board attendance	Board Minutes	Bi-annually	85%	85%	85%	85%	85%
No material weakness in controls or compliance	Board Minutes	Annually	meet	meet	meet	meet	meet

EMSA HUMAN RESOURCE GOALS

Responsibility: Principal

GOAL	Metric	Reviewed	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Teacher retention	Retention rate of rehired teachers ²⁰	Annually	80%	85%	90%	90%	90%
Teacher satisfaction	Survey ratings	Annually	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%

EL Education GOALS

Responsibility: Principal

GOAL	Metric	Reviewed	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Budget allocation sufficient to fund EL	Financial Statement	Annually	100K	70K	70K	41K	41K
Satisfactory EL Implementation Review	Implementation Score (points/130)	Annually	47	66	84	98	98+

EMSA'S ENGAGEMENT and ENROLLMENT GOALS

Responsibility: Principal

GOAL	Metric	Reviewed	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Parent Involvement	Attendance at Conference	Bi-annually	85%	88%	90%	92%	95%
Parental satisfaction rating	Survey	Annually	85%	85%	90%	90%	90%
Student re-enrollment	% of re-enrolled students ²¹	Annually	93%	94%	94%	95%	95%
Student satisfaction	Survey	Annually	80%	80%	85%	85%	90%
Attendance	Average daily	Monthly	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%

²⁰ Excludes teachers who are not invited to remain.

²¹ Excluding students who move outside district boundaries.

	attendance						
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EMSA will monitor the actual results against the goals described above to determine progress and will report on progress against goals to the Board. EMSA leadership will develop annual plans to address areas where we underperform or are falling short of our goals, which will be approved and monitored by the Board. EMSA leadership and the Board will pay particular attention to patterns of underperformance and to substantial variance from any goals in a given period. Underperformance trends or significant variances in a single period that call into question EMSA’s ability to meet long-term academic, organizational or financial goals will trigger in-depth investigation by EMSA leadership and Board and may result in Corrective Action plans. Such plans could include changes to school systems, practices, curricula or staffing assignments, for example. In the extreme, a Corrective Action plan could include significant changes to the school program or a school leadership change. Any changes in a Corrective Action plan that would be material to the charter contract with the district would be reviewed in advance with the District for approval.

8. Facilities

There are two primary facilities that EMSA has investigated for its site: the Fox River Country Day School property (FRCDS), an independent facility, and Wayne Elementary School (“Wayne”), a district-owned facility. A third possibility that EMSA investigated in 2014 and which is still available, is the Rakow Building in Elgin. The natural beauty that surrounds the FRCDS, in addition to its proximity to the at-risk families that EMSA expects to serve, makes it our first choice. Local architect, Eric Pepa, is familiar with the property and has guided us in determining feasibility regarding repairs and rehabilitation since 2012 and continues to advise us. In September 2016, Mike Shales of Shales McNutt Construction conducted a facility evaluation for budgeting purposes for us. The report is attached along with a report from Pepper Environmental Technologies and facilities report by architect Eric Pepa (Attachment 21).

Independent Facility.

EMSA has identified the former Fox River Country Day School (FRCDS), at 1600 Dundee Avenue, Elgin, IL 60120, as the preferred site for our STEM-focused charter school. The site is owned by the City of Elgin. EMSA is in discussion with City Council Members and staff to lease this property. Local attorney Peter Bazos has committed to assisting with negotiations and lease finalization.

FRCDS is located adjacent to a county forest preserve and private nature preserve. In the surrounding area there are several endangered and rare plant species. The entire combined property was recognized as an Illinois Natural Heritage Landmark in 1989, and the Kane County Forest Preserve portion has been designated as a Forested Fen Nature Preserve by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. With the Forest Preserve and Max McGraw Wildlife Foundation as neighbors, and the Fox River a short, walkable distance away, this site is

perfectly suited for our math and science academy. In addition, the site has existed and operated as a school for almost 100 years, with the most recent building (the Neil Building) dating to 2005. The Administration building was designed by John S. Van Bergen, a protegee of Frank Lloyd Wright, and has been identified on the 2012 Ten Most Endangered Historic Places by Landmarks Illinois.²² The interior space will provide spacious classrooms for our 6th - 8th grade students.

The site consists of multiple buildings. EMSA would occupy these buildings in a staggered succession to coincide with our increased number of students and available financing to make necessary improvements to the buildings prior to occupancy. EMSA has researched its financing options and has met with two separate lending institutions, both of which provided favorable feedback with regard to our model of staged development. For our planning year, we have planned for loan of up to \$250,000 to cover building repairs and improvements to the Neil Building and pay for furniture, desks, equipment, and computers. In year three, we have scheduled a loan of \$2 million for improvements to the gymnasium, to allow for its use and occupancy. In year five, we would require a loan of \$1.75 million for improvements to the administration building to house grades 7-8. In November 2017, EMSA met with the director of lending for schools at IFF, which offers affordable financing to charter schools, to discuss funding opportunities. IFF “is the largest nonprofit CDFI in the Midwest and one of only a few nationally to earn the CARS AAA+1 rating.” <http://www.iff.org/about-iff>. IFF has made over \$620 million in loans, leveraged \$1.7 billion in community investments; it manages \$498 million in total assets. IFF’s Letter of Proposal is attached at Attachment 91.

Initially, EMSA would occupy the Neil Building, which was built in 2005 as an elementary school. It contains thirteen classrooms (ranging from 780 sq. ft to 850 sq. ft.) two offices (Principal and business manager), a conference room, an assistant’s room, a common space (1540 sq. ft.) with a fireplace, a “hearth room” (590 sq. ft.) with a work area (380 sq. ft.) behind the fireplace, and an upstairs “overlook area” (450 sq. ft.). Our school will open in August of 2018 with eight classrooms (K-3) and will add two classrooms per year, which means the Neil building will be more than adequate until the 2021 school year when we will have to modify an existing space to add one more classroom. At that point, we plan to utilize existing classroom space in the Gymnasium, which will have been updated in July of 2020. The Gymnasium contains a variety of classrooms which have been used for art and music classes, and it is our intention to also utilize them for this purpose. Some of these spaces could also be used for dedicated science labs and computer labs. In August of 2022, to accommodate our middle school students, we will occupy the Administration Building. This timeline will give the EMSA Board of Directors the opportunity to write grants as well as plan and complete a capital improvement drive to make modifications, with the approval of the City of Elgin, to meet the needs of EMSA students. EMSA’s business manager will oversee the improvements to the buildings according to the plans and needs identified by EMSA’s Board of Directors and staff.

²² www.landmarks.org/ten_most_2012_fox_river_country_day_school.htm

Also, EMSA has had preliminary discussions for shared occupancy of the facilities with other nonprofits that serve children. Partnerships and collaboration are an important part of EMSA's mission and goals and will help make the school a community center as well as increase EMSA's ability to raise funds to make improvements. Discussions with energy groups as well as the Illinois Landmarks Commission indicate an interest in partnering with us to improve the energy efficiency and appearance of these buildings.

District-owned Facility.

EMSA has studied and discussed with the District the option of utilizing a district-owned school building for its school. EMSA would share an existing U-46 facility, which is under-capacity, as it phases in its program. Wayne Elementary School is one of the District's schools that is greatly under-capacity and would meet all of our basic needs. The major drawback of this site is that its location is not conducive to attracting at-risk families from the Elgin area. EMSA's basic classroom needs include:

- Eight regular ed classrooms in 2018 increasing by two each year until 2022 (eighteen)
- At least one space for pull-out educational services in 2018 increasing until at least two in 2022
- Common area for entire school to meet
- Gymnasium (with locker rooms by 2022 for middle school)
- At least two science labs and one computer lab
- Library
- Playground area
- Within walking distance to a nature preserve

EMSA's anticipated administrative space needs include:

- Reception desk/office
- Principal office
- business manager office
- Dean office (one upon opening, two by 2020)
- Copy room, storage space
- Teacher work room

9. Start-Up and Ongoing Operations

EMSA's detailed start-up plan is attached (Attachment 23). EMSA's budget and budget narration are attached at Attachment 24.

Transportation

In order to ensure access to the school to low-income and minority students, the greatest concentration of which are currently attending schools in the City of Elgin, we plan to provide bus transportation from pick-up locations in Elgin to our school. Although not required by charter law, transportation is a significant financial investment to which EMSA is committed in furtherance of its mission to be a diverse learning community. EMSA has planned its calendar to coincide with U-46's calendar to facilitate possible shared busing services, which could make busing more widely available district-wide. We have also budgeted for field work trips that are vital to the EL Education approach.

Safety, Security, and Insurance

EMSA will ensure accessibility to the facilities by any and all students with disabilities. At the FRCDS property, the Neil Building complies with ADA regulations. If EMSA leases a district-owned property, it will work with the district to ensure ADA compliance. All students will have appropriate access to the classrooms and facilities in accordance with any physical limitation or disability. EMSA's Principal and business manager will be responsible for ensuring such compliance. EMSA's Principal, in coordination with the Board of Directors Facilities Committee, will continue to work with our architect to ensure that its facilities meet all ADA and life safety issues. The Principal, with the assistance of the facilities committee, will oversee the planning and implementation of the school's security plan. EMSA will secure insurance as detailed below to adequately cover our school, employees and students:

Types of Coverage	Limit
Workers' Compensation and Employer's Liability Insurance	\$500K
Commercial General Liability Insurance - General Aggregate	\$2M
Automobile Liability Insurance	\$1M
School Board Legal/Professional Liability Insurance	\$2M
Umbrella/Excess Liability Insurance	\$2M
Fidelity Bond	\$2K
Property Insurance/Fire Legal Liability	TBD

9. Operations and Facilities Capacity

EMSA has assembled a Founding Board and supporting Committees that will provide expertise in implementing our operations plan. Our collective qualifications and capacity are described below.

- A. Staffing: EMSA's initial hire will be the school Principal. This will be the Founding Board's responsibility, to be guided and advised by the Principal Recruitment Team. The Principal Recruitment Team will consist of founding board members, including the board chair, EMSA leadership team representatives, community stakeholders, a representative from Illinois Network of Charter Schools, and a representative from EL Education. While we plan to add to our Recruitment Team, our current members include: Kerry Kelly (founding board), who as President of the Larkin Center co-chaired the CEO recruitment and hiring; Dr. Risê Jones, who has extensive experience in coaching and assessing educators; Ed Schock (community stakeholder) is a former U-46 Principal and former Elgin Mayor, he has extensive experience in the hiring process; Petrecia Shales (EMSA Leadership Team) has been a teacher for thirteen years in U-46; Anne Levy-Brown of INCS will continue to consult with us and sharing her extensive ties in the charter community; John Lydon of EL Education will co-lead the Principal Recruitment Lead, bringing extensive EL Education insights and leads for this crucial position.
- B. Professional Development (PD): This will be EMSA's Instructional Coach's responsibility to oversee, facilitated by the Principal and EL Education School Designer, with the input and assistance of the Leadership Team. EL Education will be instrumental: in addition to collaborating with our Instructional Coach and Principal, our School Designer will lead many of the PDs and onsite institutes; he or she will help plan off-site PD opportunities. Other important areas of PD include MTSS and behavior interventions, ESL, special education, specialty areas, and safety. EMSA's teachers' PD will far exceed that provided to teachers in most Illinois districts.
- C. Performance Management: EMSA will use Charlotte Danielson Framework for teaching to evaluate teachers; this will be the responsibility of the Principal. The Principal will be evaluated by the Board of Directors, utilizing a comprehensive evaluation that we will develop based on models from BoardOnTrack and several successful Illinois charter schools. Dr. Jones has comprehensive experience in evaluating educational programs as well as educational leaders and she will help lead the board in its evaluation processes.
- D. General Operations: EMSA's business manager will have primary responsibility for overseeing EMSA's financial resources and operations; the business manager will work with the Principal and the Finance Committee; the Board will be responsible for approving and monitoring the implementation of EMSA's goals and policies for finances and operations as well as high expectation goals for academics. Currently, EMSA has three individuals committed to participating on the finance committee: Adam Gray, our treasurer, is currently the office manager at H & R Block, he has managed the multi-million dollar financial operations of several corporations; Dennis Verges is the Director of Finance at SCREEN North America Holdings; and Keith Rauschenberger, MBA, is the president and founder of Rauschenberger Financial Advisors, has specialized knowledge in school financing and operations as the current board chair and past treasurer of Elgin Academy where he also led the Finance Committee. We will continue to receive support

from our consultants at INCS and EL Education during our start-up years.

- E. Facilities acquisition and management: Adam Gray, our treasurer, heads our facilities committee. He has extensive experience in financial management and operations; other Founding Board members on this committee include Dennis Verges, who brings financial management experience, Kevin Echevarria, who manages many properties (including commercial kitchen spaces) as the CEO of PKE Enterprises, and Kerry Kelly, who brings legal experience; also contributing to this committee are Alan Scimeca, a general contractor with extensive experience in acquiring and redeveloping properties, and Eric Pepa, an architect with Allen Pepa, who has been working with the EMSA team for several years and is familiar with the FRCDS property. We have also had the assistance of Shales McNutt Construction (which built the Neil Building on FRCDS property) in assessing the necessary repairs and improvements to the FRCDS property. We will be using attorney Peter Bazos for our property acquisition and/or lease negotiations. Attorney Bazos has expertise in contract and commercial lease law.

V. Financial Plan & Capacity

1. **Financial Plan**
2. **Financial Management Capacity**

EMSA's budget and narrative (Attachment 24) was developed with the goal of aligning our resource allocation with our mission-based priorities. In addition, the assumptions we made in developing the budget are included in the attached budget narrative. In constructing the budget we began by making conservative assumptions of revenue and allocating similarly conservative expenditure amounts to all of the activities outlined in this application. In order to ensure realistic projections, we reviewed the financial data of several similar charter schools and consulted with Matthew Shaw, who specializes in financial planning and organizational capacity and advises Illinois charter schools with business operations, school funding, and strategic planning. We also shared our budget and confirmed our assumptions with District U-46's Director of Financial Operations. We then reviewed the budget to ensure that it effectively aligned our resources with the following priorities:

- Providing high-quality instruction and culture;
- Effectively implementing the EL Education model; and
- Providing enriched and accelerated STEM opportunities.

The Design Team and Founding Board for EMSA are committed to developing and implementing an internal accounting control system that promotes and protects sound management practices, both general and financial. The Board will approve all financial systems and controls prior to accepting state or district funds. We are further committed to ensuring that the information generated as a result of these controls is: reliable and useful for making programmatic and other decisions; effective in the process of asset and records management; instrumental in assuring that the school's policies are followed; and maintained in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) as defined by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA). The business manager will administer EMSA's daily fiscal and accounting functions. The Board of Directors and Principal will provide fiscal oversight. We will contract with an independent certified public accountant (CPA) to provide support in analyzing, reconciling and adjusting account balances, and to ensure the records are maintained in accordance with GAAP. The CPA also may assist in developing the charter school's accounts and implementation of an accounting software system. As indicated in the budget, EMSA will hire an independent consultant to assist in the development and implementation of our internal financial control policies and procedures. The following are examples of internal financial control policies and procedures that may be implemented through this process:

Financial Statements. Financial statements shall be prepared by the business manager and shall be reviewed by the Principal, Board of Directors, and the Board's Finance Committee. The business manager shall prepare monthly balance sheets and statements of activity which will be prepared in accordance with GAAP, and include a detailed reporting of asset, liability, revenue

and expense categories, actual enrollment figures and a comparison between year-to-date actual and year-to-date budget data. Financial statements shall be presented to and reviewed by the Board of Directors monthly.

Audits. Independent audits of the financial statements and EMSA's compliance with state statutes per its charter agreement shall be conducted annually by a Certified Public Accountant selected by the Board of Directors. Auditor may be retained to assist with tax and compliance. Annual financial audits will be conducted in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards. Financial regulatory forms shall be completed as necessary by the charter school or an accounting firm selected by the Board. Appropriate financial forms and reports shall be filed with the charter entity, federal government and appropriate state agencies. Upon completion, audits shall be reviewed by the Principal and submitted to the Board of Directors for review. All audits shall include a management letter.

Books of Account. The books of account shall be maintained in accordance with GAAP, and include Budget Reports, General Ledger, and detailed journals for all cash receipts and cash disbursements (including payroll). The business manager shall maintain all books of account. An accounting software package will be utilized to properly record all assets, liabilities, net assets, revenues, expenses and budgets. A certified public accountant will be available, as needed, to provide monthly accounting support to the business manager.

Payroll. EMSA will outsource its payroll system, to be approved by the Board of Directors. Documentation of authorized pay rates shall be maintained in the employee's personnel file. Personnel files shall be secured with access limited to authorized individuals. EMSA will contract with a payroll service to provide payroll processing, including distribution of payroll checks, direct deposit, and payroll tax reporting, filing and depositing. All payroll changes will be authorized by the Principal and forwarded to the payroll service by the business manager.

Accounts Payable. Accounts payable shall be maintained by the business manager who shall ensure timely payment and the development of payment plans. Purchase orders for expenditures must be approved before incurred and must not exceed budgeted line item in financial projections. After the business manager aligns the purchase orders to actual invoices and other documentation, he/she will generate checks for bill payments. The Principal or Board Treasurer will review the paperwork and sign the checks. Any expenditures of over \$15,000 require dual authorization by the Principal and Board Treasurer. Purchases in excess of \$5,000 require prior approval by the Board of Directors. Any payments (other than salaries or ordinary compensation) made to the Principal or an administrator over \$500 must be signed by Board Treasurer. All contractual relationships will require multiple bids to be reviewed by the administration.

Fiscal Review Process: The Board of Directors will review and approve EMSA's operating budget and review its asset holdings and liabilities at least annually. The Board-approved annual budget will be the guiding document against which to compare actual revenue and

expenses. The Board will review monthly budget-to-actual and cash flow reports. The Board Treasurer will review monthly bank statements and reconciliation reports and indicate his/her approval in writing (e.g., initial documents). The business manager and Principal will provide to the Board monthly financial statements of receipts and expenditures, as compared to the annual budget. The Board will review annually a physical inventory of all property in the school's possession or control comparing it with a detailed spreadsheet from the past year.

The above only represent a few examples to demonstrate financial controls that will be maintained within the school. There will be additional controls required to ensure: proper recording of donated materials, pledges and other revenues; accurate, timely financial reporting and information returns; and compliance with other regulations. EMSA will implement the principle of "segregation of duties" to assure that no financial transaction is handled by only one person from beginning to end. These controls and procedures will be outlined in detail in the Financial Management and Accounting Procedure Manual. The goal of this manual will be to help ensure compliance with all laws and regulations, maintain the security and best use of assets and funding, and provide timely and accurate financial reporting. This manual will be developed with assistance from contracted consultants and will be reviewed annually by the Board, business manager, Principal, and legal counsel to ensure that policies are up-to-date and effective. Any required changes will be submitted to the Finance Committee of EMSA's Board for approval and reported to the full Board.

Fiscal Accountability: All Board of Directors members will receive a minimum of four hours in training for financial oversight. Training will cover basic accounting information such as how to read balance sheets. Training will also cover specific information concerning handling and expenditure of funds. In general, the EMSA Board will look to the Board treasurer to review the financial documents. However, it is important that all members of the Board are able to read and understand documents that relate to the financial soundness of the school. Training regarding financial oversight will enable every Board member to perform their responsibility to ensure that the school is implementing financially sound practices and following policies that have been implemented by the Board. All Board members will have the right to review all financial documents of the school at any time. We will implement measures that will ensure EMSA is financially accountable, deterring the improper use of funds.

Financial Management Capacity: EMSA's business manager will have primary responsibility for overseeing EMSA's financial resources and operations; the business manager will work with the Principal and the Finance Committee; the Board will be responsible for approving and monitoring the implementation of EMSA's goals and policies for finances and operations as well as high expectation goals for academics. Currently, EMSA has three individuals committed to participating on the finance committee:

Adam Gray, EMSA's treasurer, brings to the team extensive budgeting, investment and financial management experience. He has been responsible for production of Scottish Brewers accounting figures (yearly turnover of \$200m with Operating profit of \$23m), annual budget,

period reporting and variance analysis. He managed Scottish Brewers Loan portfolio (\$130m) with a leading role in the creation of a lending plan with major Scottish Clearing Banks. He has led major investment decisions through customer negotiation, internal appraisal and approval, legal agreement and practical implementation for companies such as Castle Leisure (\$15m loan). He helped accelerate growth through prudent investment management of Scotland's largest independent operators including Saltire Taverns. He currently manages two H & R Block sites in Illinois.

Dennis Verges is the Director of Finance at SCREEN North America Holdings, which is a \$70 million manufacturer of high-speed commercial inkjet printers in the US, Canada, and Latin America, and is a subsidiary of \$2.4 billion Dainippon Screen Japan. As DoF, Dennis manages all of the financial, non-accounting functions, including accounts receivable, accounts payable, financial planning & analysis, sales & use tax planning, vendor finance/leasing programs, and customer financial services.

Keith Rauschenberger, MBA, is the president and founder of Rauschenberger Financial Advisors. He has specialized knowledge in school financing and operations as the current board chair and past treasurer of Elgin Academy where he also led the Finance Committee.

Illinois Network of Charter Schools has been integral to our financial and operations planning. INCS provides expertise in charter school law as well as contacts and resources to provide consultation on any area of education. EMSA will maintain its participation in the INCS network and continue to receive consultation in charter school finance concerns.

EL Education provides support and expertise across all dimensions of schools outlined in the EL Education Core Practices. As such, they have been a fundamental resource for EMSA's curricula and instructional design, in addition to providing valuable guidance in structuring operations and finance, drawing on their diverse experience working with over 150 schools across the country. EL Education will continue to be a partner with EMSA on their path to become a Credentialed EL Education school.