The Excel Center

Application

A charter proposal by
Goodwill Education Initiatives, Inc.

Sponsored by:
Goodwill Industries of Central Indiana, Inc.
1635 W. Michigan St.
Indianapolis, IN 46222

Location of the School:
630 Nichol Avenue,
Anderson, IN 46016

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Executive Summary

The mission of The Excel Center is to provide adults the opportunity and support to earn a high school diploma and begin post-secondary education while developing career paths in sectors of the local economy that offer better-than-average employment and growth opportunities. The school will "meet students where they are" in their education by providing a flexible structure and supportive relationships to help them manage work, life and family concerns as they achieve their educational goals.

An individual who drops out of high school faces a number of challenges that affect his or her current well-being and future success. High school dropouts have worse health, lower incomes, and fewer job opportunities than the general population. [i] In addition, high school dropouts are more likely to have lower earnings, be recipients of government welfare, and are eight times more likely to be incarcerated than high school graduates. [ii] The Excel Center will seek to enroll students over 18 who have not completed high school, and have either dropped out or are severely under-credited compared to their cohort. While the Excel Center will accept any student who applies to attend the school, the school will recommend other educational options for students who may benefit from a traditional-age high school.

The Excel Center provides a structured environment that meets the particular needs of adult students as they work towards a high school diploma. Many adult learners face additional non-academic barriers to their educational success, many of which were prominent reasons that many students dropped out of school in the first place. Many of these other reasons remain significant barriers to their educational progress; effective educational opportunities for adults must provide supports and flexibility to promote student achievement while maintaining a supportive learning environment that helps students overcome the various challenges to their continued education. Students will enter the school at a variety of skill levels and degrees of attaining credits, so school will create a flexible environment that gives each student a realistic path for their educational success and a possible career.

Community interest in the Excel Center model in the city of Anderson grew when two community leaders, Reverend Dr. James Streeter and Dr. Earlie Dixon, heard about the Excel Center opening in Indianapolis in 2010. These co-founders of the Anderson Impact Center learned more about the Excel Center model and recognized it has much to offer to individuals and the city of Anderson. The city has a significant number of people who lack the educational options to return to high school and continue their education and find a good career. There are over 8,000 individuals who lack a high school diploma in the city, and over 20% of young people 18-22 have dropped out. The Excel Center serves this population because its educational model fits their unique situation, and it permits people with few options to get back on track in their education.

Goodwill Education Initiatives, Inc. (GEI) has worked with the Impact Center to build a vision for reaching an under-served area of Anderson. Dixon and Streeter have championed efforts to educate the community about the Excel Center, organizing multiple stakeholders to work together to establish a building, and have explained the benefits of the school to the Anderson community. The Excel Center provides an educational opportunity to a segment of the population with few options, and significant interest from prospective students indicates that the Excel Center is striking a nerve. Over 20 Anderson residents have even applied to attend the Indianapolis Excel Center locations, showing that this many

people without a high school diploma are willing to go great lengths to continue their education when they see a viable opportunity to do so.

The Excel Center model has three main pillars: a secondary-level academic platform that fits needs of non-traditional students, a College and Career Readiness focus on viable careers, and a "coaching" program that works with students to identify barriers to their education and proactively plan ways to remain engaged in their education. The Excel Center provides a rigorous, Common Core-aligned curriculum with an accelerated schedule that allows students to work quickly to earn course credit and progress at a faster pace than a traditional high school. The Excel Center's instructional program is aligned to Common Core standards and includes team-taught courses, fixed length teaching, and, in non-essential courses, credit recovery. College and Career Readiness functions are ingrained in the regular functions of the school. Students who demonstrate the skills necessary to work at postsecondary level are encouraged to take postsecondary-level coursework as a way of encouraging students to continue learning at the college level. As a result, dual credit and postsecondary credits are a strong feature of Excel Center schools. In addition, the Excel Center identifies particular industries with above-average growth potential and introduces students to that industry, helping students explore careers in that field and find a career pathway that leads to productive work. Coaching in the Excel model is an attempt to address the life barriers and issues that prevent students from being successful. The Excel Center coaches are responsible for keeping students engaged and motivated in the school. The relationship that coaches create with each student is a critical factor in student success, as that relationship will provide security, confidence and encouragement for students to continue when the work becomes difficult and life barriers become difficult to manage. Coaches will work with students to identify potential barriers to students' continued education, whether through short-term barriers (such as housing and childcare) or long-term challenges (including student self-efficacy and self-confidence).

The Excel Center will open in Anderson and will serve 300 adult students. The school operates year-round and, as students graduate or leave the school, spaces are filled by students on the waiting list throughout the year. As a result, the school does not operate with discrete grade levels and the school will maintain a size of 300 students in future years. Growing a location beyond this size negatively impacts the ability for the school to maintain a small, intimate environment and for staff to establish meaningful relationships with students.

Nonetheless, the overwhelming interest in the Excel Center remains high: in Indianapolis, the Excel Center planned to open with a few hundred students, but overwhelming demand by the community – over 2,200 individuals having applied to the school – GEI recognizes that the school could offer more benefits to more students across the state. Over 700,000 Hoosiers lack a high school diploma, and the initial interest in the school suggests that many people across the state would be eager to take advantage the opportunity the Excel Center provides.   In areas where there is demonstrable need, considerable community support, and a viable financial model, the Excel Center may be able to open additional sites in other communities across Indiana. These additional sites could be added and negotiated with the Charter Board as opportunities are sought and are presented to GEI leadership. A similar arrangement has been made for the Excel Center chartered by the Mayor of Indianapolis, which now operates in three locations under one charter agreement.

The Excel Center will be managed by Goodwill Education Initiatives, Inc. GEI was established in 2004 with the support of Goodwill Industries of Central Indiana, Inc. to operate charter schools. GEI currently operates two schools: the Indianapolis Metropolitan High School, which serves traditional-age high school students in a non-traditional academic environment; and the Excel Center, which currently operates in three locations in Marion County, Indiana. In total, GEI's schools have over 1,200 students, serving primarily disadvantaged and low-income student populations. GEI share support functions between its schools, including leadership, student outreach, data and reporting, and special education. This arrangement allows GEI's schools to deal efficiently with a variety of needs and barriers to student success, and to build upon experience GEI has gained through the maturation of the Indianapolis Met and the development of the first Excel Center sites. Goodwill Industries supports GEI by providing a number of back-office support functions for the school, including facilities management, IT and HR support, and marketing.

GEI leadership has decades of experience operating successful businesses, not-for-profits, and are involved in public policy. Many leaders on GEI's board have also served on the board of Goodwill Industries. There has been strong consistency and longevity among GEI leadership. The current board roster has over 40 years' collective experience governing Goodwill Education Initiatives and the schools it runs. In addition, GEI leadership has well-seasoned staff with skills in academic and curricular design, student outreach and enrollment, special education, adult education, and college and career readiness.

Founding Group and School Leadership

Biographies and resumes of key members of the Founding Group are included as Attachment 1.

Jim McClelland has served as Goodwill Industries' CEO since 1974. During his leadership, Goodwill has strengthened a now-thriving retail business, established innovative workforce development programs, and, in recent years, tackled the central Indiana community's challenges on educating young people. McClelland presides over an organization that now has over 2,500 employees employed in Central Indiana in donated goods retail stores, light manufacturing, janitorial and contracts work, workforce development services, and education initiatives.

Board Leadership The Goodwill Education Initiatives board brings together an array of skill sets: business operations, event planning, education, finance, and other skills. The board includes the following individuals:
- C. Perry Griffith, Chair
- Gina DelSanto, Vice Chair
- Holly Hill-Brooks, Secretary
- Juan Gonzalez
- Jeffrey Harrison
- Bruce Jacobson
- Michael O'Connor
- Fred C. Tucker, III

Collectively, this group has over 40 years experience working as a school board for Goodwill Education Initiatives. This leadership team has governed Goodwill Education Initiatives since the Indianapolis Metropolitan High School was founded in 2004. The school has grown from an opening size of 120 students to over 415 students today, and the school was re-authorized by the Mayor of Indianapolis for a full seven-year term in 2010. The leadership team has extensive organizational leadership experience managing for-profit and not-for-profit businesses, working in public policy, serving on the boards of local community organizations, and managing schools.

Scott Bess has served as Chief Operating Officer for GEI since 2005. During his leadership, he has seen the growth of the Indianapolis Met high school from 120 students to 400, and the establishment of the Excel Center. The school leader for the Excel Center is Scott Bess. Scott is vice president and chief operating officer of Goodwill Education Initiatives, Inc., which operates the Indianapolis Metropolitan High School and the Excel Center. Scott has been a teacher and has worked in the information technology field for a Fortune 500 company and as an independent business owner.

A member of the Danville school board for over 15 years, Scott took over operations of the Indianapolis Metropolitan High School in 2005. The Met is now in its eighth year of operation and has grown from 75 students in the first year to over 400 students today. With more than 120 graduates, the Met has maintained a 95% college acceptance and attendance rate and is noted for one of the largest and most successful internship programs in the state of Indiana.

Although the Indianapolis Met did well with most of the students it has enrolled, Bess observed that many students – typically those older and under-credited – had little success in their school. Seeing this opportunity, Bess designed the Excel Center as an alternative high school for older students who could benefit from a more mature academic environment. Bess currently oversees two schools – the Indianapolis Met and the Excel Center. The Met serves 430 students, and the Excel Center currently is operating in three sites in Marion County, serving 750 students.

Dr. Schauna Findlay, Ph.D, is the Chief Academic Officer for Goodwill Education Initiatives where she supervises the academic programs for Indianapolis Metropolitan High School and The Excel Centers. Prior to joining Goodwill, Dr. Findlay was the Director of Curriculum and Instruction at the Indiana Department of Education. There she supervised all content area specialists, Indiana's Academic Standards, implementation of state code regarding curriculum requirements and recommendations, and served as a team member of all areas impacting the state's academic achievement. Dr. Findlay was responsible for the state's plan for implementing the Common Core State Standards. This included leading teachers, coaches, professors, and content experts in the development of state curriculum maps which serve as a starting point for schools to develop curriculum, resources which support the standards, and formative assessments which align with the curriculum. She also supervised the Division of College and Career Preparation which worked with business, industry, and higher education to develop career pathways which lead to certification or dual credits.

Prior to serving at the IDOE, she served as Director of Curriculum with the state's second largest district, Fort Wayne Community Schools. Dr. Findlay served as an elementary principal increasing ISTEP+ scores from 78% to 94% in one year. She also served as a secondary administrator and English teacher in grades 7-12. She graduated with honors from Purdue University with a Bachelor's degree in English. She earned a Master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction from Indiana Wesleyan University where she was named the Outstanding Educator in her graduating class. Her doctorate in Educational Leadership was earned from Purdue University.

Partner Organizations

Goodwill Industries of Central Indiana, Inc.

Goodwill Education Initiatives' most significant partner is its parent organization, Goodwill Industries of Central Indiana, Inc. Goodwill supports GEI by providing substantial back office support for school operations and long-term planning, allowing GEI staff to focus most of their efforts on providing quality educational opportunities for its students. Goodwill Industries supports Goodwill Education Initiatives in a variety of in-kind and financed support services, including:

- Use and maintenance of GEI facilities, including renovations of new space
- Administrative support through accounting, IT services, recruitment and HR practices
- Development and fundraising support, as well as capital support through the Goodwill Industries Foundation of Central Indiana
- Connecting students and their families to resources in the community. Goodwill maintains solid working relationships with a number of community-based organizations, not-for-profits, and public organizations.

- In small cases, Goodwill can also provide employment in Goodwill stores in the community to students who may need to work part-time while they continue in school. Goodwill operates one store in Anderson.

Goodwill Industries of Central Indiana, Inc. serves 29 counties in central Indiana, including Madison County and the city of Anderson.

Anderson Impact Center

Through the direction of the Anderson Impact Center, Anderson Community Schools has agreed to let the Impact Center gain ownership and operating rights of a school building, the Robinson Elementary School. Under this arrangement, the Impact Center will lease space to the Excel Center to operate a location with 300 students, and, by using additional space within the school building, locate other community groups and services within the building. Previously managed by Anderson Community Schools, ACS voted in favor of this transfer the building to the Impact Center during its October board meeting.

Background

Since its founding in 1930, Goodwill Industries of Central Indiana, Inc. has attempted to address the most pressing social needs in the central Indiana community. For decades, Goodwill has provided employment opportunities to individuals with few options to gain viable employment elsewhere. Goodwill recognized that it can add the greatest value for individuals it works with and communities where it works if it "help young people and adults who have struggled or failed in other educational settings complete high school and attain a post-secondary degree or other recognized credential."

In 2004, Goodwill Industries leadership created Goodwill Education Initiatives, Inc., a not-for-profit entity formed in 2004 to operate charter schools. That year, the Mayor of Indianapolis authorized a charter for the Indianapolis Metropolitan High School. Now in its eighth academic year, Indianapolis Met provides a non-traditional environment that promotes student engagement and success through its 3 R's: relationships, relevance, and rigor. Since its opening, more than 750 students have attended the high school. The Indianapolis Met currently has over 400 students. Although a majority of students enter the school at least two grade levels behind, between 90 and 95 percent of graduating students enroll in post-secondary education. The Met's individualized, flexible model has helped many students who do not perform well in traditional settings meet their educational goals. In 2010, The Indianapolis Met was given a full seven-year renewal by the Mayor of Indianapolis to continue operations.

In 2010, Goodwill Education Initiatives opened the Excel Center, a high school designed to work with young adults who have dropped out of school. Designed to meet the unique needs of older students, the Excel Center includes an array of supports that address life needs outside the classroom, including childcare, transportation assistance, and balancing school with work. Chartered by the Mayor of Indianapolis, the Excel Center serves over 700 students in three sites, all operating within Marion County.

The Excel Center has reached a unique need in an adult education landscape with few alternative options. Since its opening in September 2010, more than 2,800 individuals have applied to the school. The school meets a unique need with a population with few quality alternative options. Across the state of Indiana,

most GED programs have seat-time requirements that require a student to be present in class a specified number of hours before taking the test. In addition, the majority of adult education programs are open limited hours – most often Tuesdays and Thursdays of each week – providing little ongoing support for adults who would like to earn their equivalency. The Excel Center's extended hours, skilled support staff, and the array of educational resources at their disposal has provided significant benefits to a population in an area where many adult education providers are experiencing cutbacks.

In response to this incredible demand, the Excel Center opened two additional sites in Marion County in 2011. The first is located in the Meadows community on the Northeast side of Indianapolis, and it provides a medical-focus track for workforce designs. The second is located in Decatur Township and focuses on logistics and other jobs. Together with the original Michigan Street location (which focuses on IT and technology-related jobs), the Excel Centers in Marion County serve over 750 students at a given time.

Since the opening of the Excel Center in 2010, communities across the state of Indiana have expressed strong interest in opening a site in their area. For a variety of reasons – acute community need, a lack of viable alternatives, or limited resources of existing adult education services – individuals and community organizations have investigated whether the Excel Center model could benefit their local communities. Despite only having locations in Indianapolis, 97 cities and towns in Indiana are represented among its 2,800 applicants.

After learning about the Excel Center's success and growth in Indianapolis, two local community leaders championed efforts to educate the Anderson community about the Excel Center and requested that GEI explore opening a new site for the school in their city. Rev. Earlie Dixon and Rev. Dr. James Streeter co-founded the Anderson Impact Center, an organization focused on providing educational, job training and placement, and business development programs in a targeted section populated by some of Anderson's most disadvantaged residents. Leadership from the Impact Center visited the first Excel Center site in Indianapolis, and following that visit, they were determined to have the benefit reach the Anderson community. The Impact Center's plans have been endorsed by organizations including the City of Anderson, the Economic Development Corporation, the Flagship Enterprise Center, and its Levinson Center, St. John's Hospital, Ivy Tech, the Black Pastors Alliance, NAACP, and strong support from Senator Tim Lanane.

Rev. Dixon and Dr. Streeter presented the plans for the Excel Center at the meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Anderson Community School Corporation on September 13, 2011, and the board agreed to the plans during its October 11, 2011 board meeting.   Selections from the minutes of that meeting are included in Attachment 18.

In the city of Anderson, over 7,500 individuals – nearly 18 percent of the population over 18 – lack a high school diploma. In addition, 22 percent of the young people aged 18-24 lack a high school diploma, limiting their chances to establish themselves in careers. More information on the community need in Anderson – including maps highlighting areas of most severe need – is included in Attachment 18.

The need in Anderson also indicates that growth of the Excel Center is possible all across the state.

Census data indicates that 509,670 individuals aged 18-64 lack a high school diploma across the state. Poor educational attainment among our young people severely limits their career potential: there are 122,652 young people ages 18-22 who lack a high school diploma (23% of the people in that age bracket), severely limiting their growth.[1]

Leaders in Indiana have recognized that this lack of skills is limiting the productivity of the state and what opportunities will exist for Hoosiers in the future. In *Indiana's Forgotten Middle Skill Jobs: Meeting the Demands of a 21st-Centruy Economy,* the Skills2Compete-Indiana Campaign presents the issue clearly:

> "Indiana needs a bold and broad vision to address the educational and economic challenges facing the state during these tough economic times and beyond. Those challenges demand a truly transformative vision that allows every worker to be a part of the economic recovery: guaranteed access to two years of postsecondary education or training. Every Hoosier must have the opportunity to earn the equivalent of at least two years of education or training past high school that leads to a vocational credential, industry certification, associate's degree, or one's first two years of college. It must be available at whatever point and pace makes sense for individual workers and industries. Indiana must further ensure that every resident has access to the basic skills needed to pursue such education.
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> […]
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> Like the nation as a whole, Indiana faces substantial challenges when it comes to basic skills. In 2003, 8 percent of Indiana residents lacked basic prose literacy skills. Over one-half million working age Indiana residents do not have a high school diploma…What is more, only about 8 percent of Indiana adults with less than a high school diploma are enrolled in adult basic education, and less than 12 percent of residents with limited English proficiency are enrolled in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes.
>
> This evidence suggests that Indiana faces challenges in meeting the basic skill attainment levels needed to grow its middle-skill workforce. By better aligning adult basic education with industry-focused training, many more Indiana residents could prepare to enter and succeed in middle-skill jobs and businesses would have a pipeline of workers to help meet immediate demand."[iii]

School Leader and Leadership Team

Betsy Delgado: Betsy Delgado has been Managing Director of the Excel Center since June 2011. During her time as leading the Excel Center's three sites, she has made several key adjustments to academic instruction, life coaching, and post-secondary attainment to increase the relevance of the education for adult learners and improve educational success. Previously, Delgado was involved in Community and Continuing Education at the Metropolitan School District of Washington Township, where she was

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[1] Statistics come from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2005-2009).

involved with adult education efforts for the school district. Serving in that role for six years, Delgado was responsible for managing a staff of 50 involved in adult education. Previously, Delgado has served as an English teacher in California and England. Delgado holds a Bachelor of English and Education from the University of North Dakota and is projected to complete a Masters in Administration from Ball State University in 2012.

Since she joined the Excel Center, the school's performance has already seen significant gains. Before she joined – in the Excel Center's first year of operation – students in the Michigan Street location earned 400 credits over the course of the year. In the first eight-week term that was recently completed – roughly one fifth of the academic year - students have earned 777 credits and demonstrated learning standards. These changes – along with other revisions to the original Excel Center model – indicate that her revisions to the Excel Center's process, academic instruction, and focus on students has generated immediate dividends.

Immediately after approval, Delgado will devote most of her time to the development of the Anderson Excel Center site. The sites in Marion County will have been in operation for over a year, and site-level directors will manage day-to-day operations of these locations. Delgado will only provide oversight and follow-up of these mature locations, and can therefore devote significant time to establishing an effective Excel Center site in Anderson. Immediately upon arriving at GEI, Delgado was responsible for the establishment of both new Excel Center locations in Marion County, including selecting school leadership, hiring staff, and building processes to move in to new locations. While she works on the new Anderson location Delgado will be compensated with funds GEI has available from other sources, including Goodwill support. When the new site is opened, Delgado's compensation will be split proportionally by the number of students operating in all of the sites across Indiana.

Local Site Director Selection Process

The local school leader who will be responsible for the operations of the Excel Center in Anderson has not been selected. This person will be hired by January or February 2012, and then will devote his/her work to preparing the school to open in Anderson in July 2012.

The director of an Excel Center location will ensure that instructors and school curriculum are applied according to the principles of the Excel Center and that school is meeting the desired educational and student outcomes. Essential functions include: supervision and management of faculty and staff, creating and maintaining a safe and secure educational environment for 300 students and managing the fiscal activities of the school. The position will work with the leadership of Goodwill Education Initiatives, Inc. in establishing school goals and objectives. The director will report to the Managing Director of the Excel Center. This position requires a Bachelor's degree in relevant field required, Master's degree preferred.

Other qualifications include:

- Current Indiana Secondary Administrator's License preferred but not required.
- 5+ years in a school-related leadership role.
- Prior experience managing groups of professionals.

- Strong communicator at a variety of levels. Demonstrates effective presentation and communication skills.
- Solid planning and organizing skills.

Sourcing and initial screening of this candidate will be managed by Goodwill's Talent Acquisition team. After screening resumes and having the candidate answer key questions, the Talent Acquisition Team will schedule panel interviews to assess the prospective candidate. These interviews will include GEI's Chief Operating Officer, Chief Academic Officer, the Managing Director of the Excel Center, current Excel Center teachers and Goodwill leadership.

GEI leadership has been effective at managing the operations of the Indianapolis Metropolitan High Scholl and the Excel Center. Collectively, the group has an array of skills in school management and performance management; business and finance operations, curriculum, instruction and assessment; special education; community and student outreach; college and career readiness, and management of the Excel Center model. GEI's leadership includes:

- Scott Bess – Chief Operating Officer
- Betsy Delgado – Managing Director
- Schauna Findlay – Chief Academic Officer
- Gregory McClure – Special Education
- Courtney Rent – Community Outreach
- Tieree Smith – College and Career Readiness

Background information on this leadership team is included in Attachment 3, excluding those leaders who were included in Attachments 1 and 2. More detailed information in this leadership team is also available in the Network Management section.

Education Plan

Curriculum and Instructional Design
The Excel Center model was designed with 3 R's as foundational to its design: Relationships, Relevance, and Rigor. Adult learners benefit from strong relationships with peers and staff; these relationships provide consistent support for student education, strengthen motivation to achieve goals, and build resiliency to overcome obstacles that might impede progress. Students who have dropped out require flexibility in their educational programs; students will enroll in The Excel Center at various skill levels and will balance their educations with many life obstacles, including work and family obligations. Therefore, The Excel Center will use a "one student at a time" method where each student will establish his or her educational goals and move at his or her own pace to achieve learning goals. The Excel Center's primary focus is to develop each student's ability to be successful in post-secondary academic environments and to develop the skills required in modern working environments.

The Excel Center education plan has three main pillars: an academic philosophy that meets the goals and needs of adult students, a concentrated focus on College and Career Readiness, and a coaching platform designed to address what barriers impede with a student's continued educational success.

The Excel Center Model

Key Pillars:

Secondary-Level Education

- Accelerated pace of learning and credit attainment
- Instruction by both licensed instructors and tutoring by unlicensed resource staff
- Classroom instruction paired with online credit recovery
- Resource Area provides intensive support to students in need of additional assistance
- Credits can be earned for valid and relevant work experience
- Student testing used to measure student progress & postsecondary readiness

Postsecondary Education and Career Pathways

- Strong relationship with local community college provider
- *Test-approved* students able to enroll while still taking high school classes
- Dual credit course offerings available for students
- Students can work towards certificates and associates degrees
- Extensive preparation & follow along for students in college
- Partnering with industries to present career options for students for relevant postsecondary education plans

Coaching

- Goal to promote continued retention of students by addressing life barriers
- Students placed into cohorts and meet one-on-one with a coach
- Coaching addresses life skills, locating community resources, and creating future plans
- Proactive barrier removal for critical life / work issues
- Effective selection of coaches as a key barometer of success

Structures and practices for student success

- Flexible scheduling available to meet needs of working and busy adults
- Available transportation and easy access for non-driving students
- Child care provided for students with children
- Facility has sufficient space for a resource area, classrooms, cohort and one-on-one meeting spaces
- Mature learning environment: Student population is a mix of younger and older students

Academic Instruction for students who have dropped out requires flexibility in the design of the educational program. Students will enroll in The Excel Center at various skill levels, have different numbers of credits to achieve, and many will balance their educations with life obstacles, including work and family obligations. Therefore, The Excel Center will use a "one student at a time" method where each student will establish his or her educational goals and move at his or her own pace to achieve learning goals. Every student at The Excel Center will have a unique educational plan, and the school staff will work with each student to craft an educational program that fits his or her specific needs.

The environment within the Excel Center is designed to meet adults' learning needs by encouraging them to see the relevance and importance of their education while providing a mature environment for learning and discussion. The school is designed to reflect the characteristics of educational environments that benefit adult learners, including open discussion, self-directed learning and personal accountability.

The Excel Center has established a learning environment that meets adults where they are. Students participate in fixed-time classes where they cover key academic subjects in language arts, mathematics, social studies and science. These courses are designed to build skills, learn material, and engage with students. However, many students come to the Excel Center requiring significant remediation and special supports. For these students, reading, math, and basic skills labs allow students to learn critical information when they need it. Classes will involve between 10 and 15 students in each course. Courses often integrate material from multiple disciplines, allowing students to demonstrate learning standards in an integrated plan that brings together a number of different skills, and precedents.

Additional resources support the unique needs for adults outside of the core fixed-length courses. A portion of credits are attainable via online credit recovery format. In addition, students who have demonstrated high skill levels (as shown on by high scores on the COMPASS exam) are be eligible to enroll in dual credit courses, thereby beginning their pathway and success in working towards postsecondary education.

Technology features prominently in the design and delivery of academic content in the Excel Center. Coursework is presented in multimedia formats, reaching different personalities and groups. In addition, students are able to participate in computer-based instruction for online credit recovery, TABE and for tutoring-based work.

Postsecondary Education and College and Career Readiness prepares students to learn the general skills necessary to become successful in 21st-century workplaces. The Partnership for 21st Century Skills developed a framework that identified many of the critical competencies and skills essential to students preparing to enter the workforce in the 21st century. These skills are grouped into four general categories: a strong mastery of core subjects and knowledge of 21st century issues; life and career skills; learning and innovation skills; and information, media and technology skills.[iv] Building upon the Common Core's focus on 21st Century Skills, Excel Center's emphasizes these skills so that they are better prepared in the modern workforce. Students will build on themes and case studies applied in workplace contexts, encouraging students to develop and demonstrate skills that will be valuable in workplace environments. Opportunities for students to demonstrate these skills are woven into core content and school progress.

The school's emphasis on these skills will enable each student to understand how mastery of the core curriculum can be used as a means to develop skills that will be important in his or her career.

Career Pathways and College Transition
Many individuals who have dropped out of school will re-enter the educational system when they recognize that there are few employment opportunities available for individuals who lack a high school diploma. To respond to this demand, The Excel Center's coursework and learning environment enables students to access greater career opportunities. Students' educational plans will build towards post-secondary certificates and/or advanced degrees that lead to career pathways that have better-than-average growth potential in the Indianapolis economy. These academic goals will include courses at post-secondary institutions, including Ivy Tech Community College, that offer tangible skills training to equip students for future careers.

The Excel Center promotes students' awareness and access to valuable careers. In 2011, the Excel Centers received a gift to establish the Albert G. and Sara I. Reuben College and Career Counseling Centers in each Excel Center site it opens. These sites will introduce students to the benefits, details, and possibilities of a number of careers, and helps outline the path a student may take to enter a career in a given field. Every Excel Center site prioritizes a particular industry to highlight and present to its students. For most of the Excel Center's students, earning a high school diploma was the primary reason for them to go to school, but few students have thought about what career to enter after graduating. Therefore, each Excel Center spends significant amounts of time introducing students to industries and fields where there are good prospects of finding stable employment and finding a career in an industry with growth potential. Currently, one Excel Center site focuses on IT and technology careers, another focuses on medical careers, and the last site focuses on logistics and advanced manufacturing.

Coaching in the Excel model is an attempt to address the life barriers and issues that prevent students from being successful. The Excel Center coaches are responsible for keeping students engaged and motivated in the school. The relationship that coaches create with each student is a critical factor in student success, as that relationship will provide security, confidence and encouragement for students to continue when the work becomes difficult and life barriers become difficult to manage. Coaches will work with students to identify potential barriers to students' continued education, whether through short-term barriers (such as housing and childcare) or long-term challenges (including student self-efficacy and self-confidence).

Curriculum and Instructional Design

The Excel Center will prepare students for and introduce them to post-secondary education through opportunities that are relevant to their educational and career goals. Students will cover the basic requirements to receive a high school diploma and enroll in some form of post-secondary education, whether a certificate or credential program or a track moving towards an associate's degree.

Teaching methods
The Excel Center's teaching style provides sufficient structure and accountability to keep adult learners involved in their education. For at-risk populations that often face immediate crises and short-term

barriers to an education, the long-term path it takes to earn a diploma (or even to earn course credit) can seem a long way away, and students can become disengaged or discouraged at the time it takes to make tangible progress towards student goals. To mitigate this belief, courses are designed into 8-week schedules that accelerate learning and the pace in which a student can attain course credit. Students are able earn credits faster than in a traditional calendar, providing more immediate feedback that a student is making progress towards earning a high school diploma. Classes meet in extended blocks and in face-to-face settings, permitting teachers to establish relationships of trust, relevance, and respect with students. Courses are often co- or team-taught between several instructors, blending coursework across multiple domains to increase the relevance of education and to encourage students to think creatively about how coursework blends interdisciplinary work.

Evidence-based support
The curricular foundation of the Excel Center is based upon significant evidence that its model meets the educational needs of adults. The foundation of The Excel Center's curricular approach is found in Brookfield, S. (1987). *Developing critical thinkers: Challenging adults to explore alternative ways of thinking and acting.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass., Cohen, N. (1995). *Mentoring adult learners: A guide for educators and trainers.* Malabar, FL: Krieger, and Daloz, L. (1999). *Mentor: Guiding the journey of adult learners.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

A significant number of both youth and adults who have dropped out of school, nevertheless, show a strong desire to continue their education. Jobs for the Future analyzed the National Educational Longitudinal Survey and discovered that dropouts are persistent in trying to further their education: over the course of their lives, more than 60 percent of dropouts eventually do earn a high school credential – most often a General Education Development (GED) certificate.[v] However, many students struggle to complete their education, as skill deficits and life challenges often impede progress. Nationally, only about two percent of all high school dropouts will take a GED test in a given year,[vi] and only ten percent of the estimated 3.8 million young people ages 18-24 without a diploma receive their GED.[vii]

Although many dropouts would like to continue their education, they face limited options to achieve their goals. GED tests are the most common avenue for adult education, and studies have challenged the long-term benefits of earning a GED. Economists have argued that the wage benefits earned by GED recipients are largely explained by GED earners' higher initial skills.[viii] However, other reports have shown strong psychological and social benefits of earning a GED, especially when a GED is used to prepare students for post-secondary education. Unfortunately, most people who earn a GED struggle at the post-secondary level: although 65% of GED test takers plan on attending college, between 30 and 35 percent are able to attend. Ultimately, only five to ten percent of GED recipients are able to finish their first year of college.[ix]

Many of these struggles indicate that traditional approaches to re-engaging this population are often insufficient to address the array of challenges the population of dropouts face. The 2006 Gates Foundation report, "The Silent Epidemic," surveyed dropouts about the reasons they left school. The research indicated that failing in school was cited by only 35 percent as a reason for dropping out, and a substantial portion of students left school for other-than-academic reasons. In particular, life circumstances such as needing to work, pregnancy and parenting, or caring for other family members were most prominent.[x]

These challenges also affect the structure of how students continue their education.

Complete College America's 2011 report, "Time is the Enemy," highlights how, for many adults in college, an extended period of time to progress through school is a major detriment to their lasting success. Although the report's findings focused on postsecondary education, its lessons about adult learners have been incorporated into the design of the Excel Center. For students that are balancing commute times, family obligations, work, and school, lengthy educational programs with few rewards are a major barrier to ongoing success. The following elements of Complete College America's recommendations have been incorporated into the academic design of the Excel Center:

- Use block schedules with fixed and predictable classroom meeting times
- Allow students to proceed at a faster pace
- Simplify the registration process
- Form peer support and learning networks
- Embed remediation into the regular educational design[xi]

Instructional Strategies

TABE testing of students at intake indicates that less than one third of current Excel Center students entered the school at high-school reading and math levels. Therefore, to prepare students for high school-level content, the school provides an array of instructional strategies to help students catch up and progress quickly. The Excel Center operates resource area that will be open for students from the early morning into the night. The Excel Center's extended hours of operation – open six days a week, beginning early in the morning into the night – will allow working adults the opportunity to be in school when their schedules permit. Resource staff and tutors are available to answer students' questions and provide one-on-one instruction on requests from students.

Students in need of remediation are able to enroll in Basic Skills: Reading and Basic Skills: Math courses to prepare for higher-level coursework. These courses blend online learning (through Lexia, iLearn, and Reading Plus) with scheduled group work to cover material that a number of students could benefit from learning from an instructor.

The core of the Excel Center model, however, is fixed-time classes. Over 8-week schedules, students learn in classes that blend content from a number of disciplines to ensure that coursework is engaging, and that students learn to connect lessons from one discipline to another.

A significant portion of the Excel Center's coursework will be delivered through an on-line system available to students at all times. For students taking courses focused on online credit recovery, the school will use the A+nywhere Learning System. The A+nywhere credit recovery system allows students to complete course requirements to earn credits in subjects that are not related to each student's primary interests, allowing for the classroom-based instruction to focus on material that is essential to students' long-term success and career interests. Students may progress through on-line material at their own pace and will cover only the material that is relevant to their own personal learning plan.

Ways the Educational Model will Differ

Every site of the Excel Center explores what potential careers exist in their local community. As a component of the Excel Center's model, the Anderson site will include an industry focus that fits the community. This adaptation of the educational model will necessarily work towards that end. In Anderson, the school will be a blend of Information Technology and Logistics careers. As a component of its logistics focus, the Excel Center has established working relationships with Conexus Indiana, an initiative to capitalize on emerging opportunities in advanced manufacturing and logistics, aligning resources and expertise to make Indiana a leader in these exciting industries. APICS does much the same kind of support.

The Excel Center's curriculum is an individualized road map to student success, and serves as a customizable guide that assists in planning each student's instructional program. The Excel Center's curriculum has two overall goals: 1) teach the necessary content to graduate from with a high school diploma and 2) develop proficiency in the skills - both technical and 21st-century - required to be successful in modern careers. The objective of the curriculum is to ensure that specific skills are taught and mastered in a timely manner and in ways consistent with Indiana state standards. The school blends coursework in engaging, and interesting ways that also allow students to learn what they need. Instead of discrete grade levels, The Excel Center uses mastery to determine if a student is eligible to attend courses. An overview of the curriculum and the scope and sequence of Excel Center courses is included as Attachment 4.

Pupil Performance Standards
The Excel Center's academic content is aligned with Indiana's Academic Standards and the Common Core Standards. A complete set of these standards is included in Attachment 5.

The Excel Center uses Indiana Academic Standards and the Common Core standards throughout its coursework and lesson plans. All courses in the Excel Center are aligned with Indiana Academic Standards and Common Core standards. All English and Math courses are using the Common Core, and all science and social studies courses are using Indiana Academic Standards in addition to the Common Core literacy standards. All standards were deconstructed and opportunities for integrating courses were utilized to make the content explicit and meaningful.

Grade Level Groupings at the Excel Center

The number of credits a student has completed (at previous schools or through The Excel Center) will determine the student's grade level. Students will be categorized by grade level to meet Indiana Department of Education reporting requirements. Students with less than ten credits will have freshman status; sophomores will have less than 20; juniors will have up to 30, and seniors will have more than 30.

Students will not be told their grade level, and this label will have little significance in assessing or accelerating student progress. Although they it can be useful in conventional academic situations with more traditional student populations, a grade level categorization would have little benefit to a typical Excel Center student. The "freshman" label on an adult learner might create the a mistaken belief that it will take several years to complete the work in The Excel Center, even though the student's self-directed pace may mean that he or she could complete his or her requirements before that time. Instead of discrete

grade levels, students will only be measured on the amount of credits he/she needs in order to graduate from the school.

Exit standards for graduating students are included in Attachment 5.

High School Graduation Requirements
To graduate, an Excel Center must fulfill the graduation requirements for the State of Indiana as established by the Department of Education. Students will work for a Core 40 diploma, earning credits with the following requirements:

- English / Language Arts: 8 Credits
- Mathematics: 6 Credits
- Science: 6 Credits
- Social Studies: 6 Credits

- Directed Elective: 5 Credits
- Physical Education: 2 Credits
- Health and Wellness: 1 Credit
- General Electives: 6 Credits

Students will earn credit hours by successfully demonstrating mastery over the standards established in each course. Teachers assess mastery by monitoring student work and evaluating their growth. By integrating coursework across domains, scheduled classes may allow students to earn multiple credits through the work of one class. Each class is mapped to indicate which credits towards a Core 40 diploma. Students earn credit by demonstrating satisfactory completion of a course and earn a passing grade higher than a D in that course.

Student transcripts from other schools will also be reviewed to determine if any coursework completed prior to enrolling at the Excel Center may also apply to the Core 40 diploma requirements. In addition, students who can demonstrate proficiency through ECA testing can also earn credits for courses in which they have already demonstrated knowledge. Students may also earn credit by enrolling in dual-credit programs at a local community college. In these instances, these credits are listed as transfer credits and not as credits explicitly granted by the Excel Center. Some courses that are required for the Core 40 will be available for students to take via online credit recovery courses. In addition, other courses can be earned through dual credit programs as established by Ivy Tech Community College.

Student grade point averages are calculated based upon the grades that students earn in each course. Grade Point averages are calculated on the following scale (at right) and are averaged upon the points earned for each credit. In courses that are awarded multiple credits, the student's letter grade applies the same point for each of those credits earned. For blended courses, a student earns a GPA based upon their performance for that particular domain within the course and earns credit for that portion of the classroom setting.

GPA Calculation	
Letter Grade	Points Per Course
A	4.0
A-	3.667
B+	3.333
B	3.0
B-	2.667
C+	2.333
C	2.0
C-	1.667
D+	1.333
D	1.0
D-	0.667
F	0 points

Student transcripts include the student's contact and demographic, the school's contact information. In addition, the transcript details the time period (in terms) during which the student was enrolled at the school, and his/her record of courses taken and credits earned. Each course includes the grade earned Grade Point equivalent for that class. Transcripts also include the student's performance on standardized testing, including GQE (for older students) and ECA, ACT and TABE scores.

The Excel Center offers elective courses that meet the educational needs of students. Most of these electives prepare the student to explore the viability of a career in an industry of a given program. Electives offered include:

Career Technical Education (CTE)

- Business Math
- Career Planning and Success Skills
- Child Development and Parenting
- Computer Applications
- Interdisciplinary Cooperative Education
- Medical Terminology
- Personal Financial Responsibility
- Preparing for College and Careers
- Professional Career Internship
- Advanced CTE, College Credit
- CTE Certifications awarded in the Excel Center include:
- Logistics Readiness
- Patient Access
- EMT
- CNA
- IT Networking

Fine Arts

- Piano and Electronic Keyboarding
- Electronic Music
- College Credit

Additional graduation requirements
Students in the Excel Center work towards a Core 40 diploma. They earn credits and meet all the requirements to earn that diploma. However, in some cases, students are better suited to seek a General Education diploma due to their unique situation (student limitations, etc.). In these cases, the Excel Center desires that these students are still prepared to have some viable means of contributing productively in their communities. Therefore, the Excel Center requires that students who seek a General Education diploma must earn some form of certification that will improve their lifelong employability. This certification must be work-related.

The Excel Center provides a number of supports for students at risk of dropping out or not meeting graduation requirements. The Excel Center is designed to meet the needs of students who have already dropped out of a high school. Its curricular focus is around accelerating the pace at which a student can earn a high school diploma, gain exposure to new careers (and what postsecondary education is required to enter those careers), and to become reengaged in the educational system. Students who continue to make consistent academic progress – no matter the pace – will be encouraged to continue working towards their high school diploma.

In order to graduate successfully, students must also pass End of Course Assessments. For many students, the limited testing windows of ECA means that students may have completed all of their credits

only to wait for a significant period of time until ECA testing is again possible. For these students, the Excel Center encourages them to begin enrolling in postsecondary courses and, to meet their short-term goal of graduating, the school also structures significant time to ECA preparation work. ECA preparation is one of the primary goals for the 4-week shortened academic period that takes place November-December of each year.

School Calendar and Schedule
The Excel Center calendar operates year-round with minimal breaks. The 2012-2013 academic calendar for the school is included as Attachment 6.

As "Time is the Enemy" highlights, for many adults in college, lengthy timeframes needed to progress through an academic program is a major detriment to their lasting success. The Excel Center's schedule is designed to reinforce educational success by accelerating the pace in which students can earn credits. The school's class schedule operates on 8-week cycles, using extended teaching times (90 minutes, although some courses merge two periods together for 3 ¼ hour blocks). This accelerated pace of schedules gives students the chance to earn credits on a faster pace than in a traditional 15-week semester. After an 8-week cycle is completed, students are then assigned into a new schedule with new coursework.

In its first year of operation, the school will be open 251 days. This schedule includes five eight-week sessions and one month-long shortened cycle during the Holidays. Each session is structured so that, at the end, students have earned credits towards meeting their diploma requirements. As a function of this year-round calendar, Excel staff - including teachers and coaches - will accrue vacation time and will be able to take paid time off.

The School Week

The Excel Center school week includes four days of fixed-time classroom instruction and two days of self-directed student learning. Classes take place Mondays through Thursdays. Fridays are available for teachers and staff to prepare for classes and meet with students in a one-on-one format. On Saturdays the Resource Area remains open, although there are no regularly scheduled classes taking place on those days (except for classes scheduled to meet a critical student need, on a case-by-case basis).

Monday through Thursday, the school schedule has classes from 8:30 am until 8:45pm. This extended schedule allows for adults with other commitments – work, family, or others – to attend classes when their schedules allow. A variety of activities will take place in the facility throughout each school day, including classes, one-on-one tutoring, self-directed study, and coaching activities. Resource staff will be available to assist students with particular questions related to their coursework. Schedules will be written based upon student availability and need: at enrollment, students will establish their most typical attendance patterns in the school. Based on these recommendations, staff will adjust classroom schedules to meet the students' ability to attend classes. The weekly schedule – including the amount of academic time devoted to core subjects – is included in Attachment 6. In addition, to further reflect the diversity of student schedules, two sample schedules for students are also included in Attachment 6.

Academic Instruction Time available:

	Fixed-Time Courses:	**Resource Area:**

	Hours per day (Mon.-Thurs.)	Hours per week	Hours per day	Hours per week
Offered by the School	540 minutes / 9 hours	2,160 minutes / 36 hours	13.5 hours (Mon.-Fri.); 6 hours (Sat.)	4,130 minutes / 73 hours
Student Average	360 minutes / 6 hours	1,440 minutes / 24 hours	*Variable*	*Variable*

On Friday and Saturday, students participate in self-directed learning. They are able to continue on online credit recovery courses, take TABE examinations, work with a tutor and/or meet with their instructors in one-on-one meetings.

Each day the Resource Area is open from 8:00am until 9:30pm. The Resource Area is monitored by licensed instructors and has the support of unlicensed resource staff. Online credit recovery courses are students at all times, so students are continue their education at any time they have available. During the resource area's operating hours, teachers, resource staff and tutors will be accessible that students may have while working on-line. A staff rotation will be created to ensure that there is always a staff person on duty, and any questions asked to staff outside of working hours will have a response by an instructor or resource staff person the next morning. Periodically, scheduled fixed-time courses are also held on Saturdays to accommodate student needs, prepare for ECA exams, or other purposes.

Class schedules, meeting times, and locations will be adjusted every eight weeks to reflect any changes or development in student plans. Coaches will ask each of their students if their attendance schedules will likely change in the coming months, and schedulers will adjust the schedules to reflect students' needs, progress, or changes in community locations.

For parents with children, the child drop-in center will be open from 8:00am to 8:00pm in a small room in the two-story wing of the building. During the daytime hours, attendance is limited to children ages 0-3, and in the evening, children up to age 12 are allowed to attend. More information on the drop-in center is included in the Supplemental Programming section.

School Culture
The environment within the Excel Center is designed to meet young adults' learning needs by encouraging them to see the relevance and importance of their education while providing a mature environment for learning and discussion. The school's format reflects the characteristics of educational environments that benefit adult learners, including open discussion, self-directed learning and personal accountability.

Many traditional adult education programs lack the flexibility that young adult learners require to become successful. In Indiana, adult education programs follow a process-oriented model that requires adults to learn at the pace established by the program. These programs do not meet the needs of adults who must balance work, life and family concerns with their learning goals. Classes for adults are offered on a few nights each week (most only on Tuesdays or Thursday evenings), limiting access to resources and prohibiting highly-motivated students from progressing faster than the adult education process allows.

The Excel Center's academic environment is designed to prepare students for post-secondary education, which requires self-direction, initiative and personal discipline. The school will provide a variety of

academic opportunities for growth that fit students' needs and learning styles. In order to allow students the freedom to explore these goals, students will determine the pace and content of their academic program. Students who have previously dropped out of school have the freedom not to continue their education, and the students who enroll have demonstrated a clear motivation and value of education. This distinction is critical to understanding the Excel Center's culture: each student has, at some point in his/her life, recognized the challenges of life without a high school diploma and has made the choice to return to school. The model is designed around students who have recognized the need for an education and have demonstrated a certain level of motivation to continue their education, and will provide supports to students to continue in this approach by helping overcome life barriers and set realistic goals to mark and continue their progress.

Specifically, students will develop confidence in their own abilities, receive encouragement and support from coaches, and receive advance confirmation that he or she can be successful in post-secondary environments by enrolling in dual credit courses. These supports are intended to develop each student's sense of self-efficacy in achieving his or her educational and career goals.

Developing the Excel Center culture
Excel Center staff work with a challenging student population, so staff development often focuses on the ways in which staff can interact with students in productive ways.   A critical component of the Excel Center's success is the hiring process, wherein teachers are selected in part based upon their emotional intelligence and build relationships with students. This need is even more particular with adults, who respond better in a respectful learning environment that respects what perspectives, experiences and views the student brings to the classroom.

As a part of new staff development, staff learn more about the population they will be serving in the Excel Center. In a group setting, staff watch videos of students' communication styles, and examine case studies of student barriers. Staff debrief these experiences, brainstorm ways of working with this student population, and set expectations for their work in the school in the future. Administrators from GEI and the other Excel Center sites also assist new staff in learning how to work with this population and to share ideas and best practices on means of promoting student engagement and success. This process is repeated at the beginning of the new academic year in January, allowing staff to recalibrate and prepare for a new academic year.

iExcel New Student Orientation
Many adults who have the desire to return to school to earn their high school diploma may not realize fully the level of commitment that is required of them to earn a high school diploma. For many students – especially students who still have dozens of credits they have yet to attain – setting realistic expectations of how quickly they can progress through to their high school diploma is a critical first step. To illustrate this path, and to introduce students to the ways that Excel Centers are structured, new students go through the iExcel program to learn about the school and what their educational path will be. Students are given the opportunity to ask and answer questions about the Excel Center experience, and staff meet to discuss the new student experience and begin to answer questions students may have about the school.

The iExcel orientation introduces students to the culture of the school and its expectations. At the beginning of the student term, this two-day session introduces students to their coaches, performs initial TABE assessments, and establishes motivation and goal-setting for their time in the Excel Center. The

orientation also exposes students to what post-secondary opportunities exist after earning a high school diploma.

The iExcel orientation also presents to students the role and benefits of their coach. The Excel Center coaches are responsible for keeping students engaged and motivated in the school. The relationship that a coach will create with each student is a critical factor in student success, as that relationship will provide security, confidence and encouragement for students to continue when the work becomes challenging and life barriers become difficult to manage. Coaches will work with students to identify potential solutions to students' continued challenges, whether through short-term crises (such as housing and childcare) or long-term coping skills (including student self-efficacy and self-confidence). Coaches will meet with each of their students at least biweekly to check in and identify whether there are additional supports or questions needed to keep each student engaged.

The coach will need excellent communication skills and an ability to make connections with individuals from various backgrounds, cultural groups, and ways of living. The coach will require a strong level of emotional intelligence to cope with the barriers that students face and to provide motivation and encouragement to struggling students. Additional responsibilities include: administering the intake process, assessing life experiences, determining education tracks with instructional staff, connecting students with supportive services to ensure success.

How the culture fits students with special needs

The Excel Center's curricular approach supports students with unique needs and those at risk of academic failure. For most students, their presence at the Excel Center indicates that they require an additional level of support. Students are able to engage with material that meets their needs at their level of ability, allowing students below grade level to have a variety of opportunities to catch up. The integrated curricular model permits students to build on their own work and life experiences while simultaneously learning new content. This individualized and mastery-based approach ensures that students develop mastery of concepts and techniques to connect students to future plans.

The Excel Center anticipates that some students will have a native language other than English. GEI staff will connect English Language Learners (ELLs) with the resources they need to learn and remain engaged in schoolwork. Where possible, some on-line content will be available for Spanish speakers, and there will be bilingual staff available to assist ELLs to access the resources of the school. GEI will contract with outside providers in order to meet the educational needs of any second-language students who do not speak Spanish. Students with limited English proficiency will benefit from the school's focus on tangible, skills-based coursework. In particular, skills-based training in industry-specific certificate programs will assist limited English speakers with vocabulary and terminology needed to work in particular industries. On-line resources are available in Spanish and other languages as well.

Excel Center teachers and resource staff are be trained on strategies to identify students with learning disabilities and other challenges. In addition, since many adults struggle with the stigma of a learning disability and will try to hide that information, the identification process involves each student's coach to provide emotional support. Like other Excel Center students, students in special education will create individualized learning plans to accomplish their learning goals. However, these plans will include more

robust analysis of resources to support their learning. Dedicated special education supports are offered until students age out of the special education program at 21. At that time, students may be able to receive additional support through Vocational Rehabilitation Services. Students with disabilities will be able to access the instructional methods that best suit their abilities, whether online, one-on-one, or within a classroom setting.   Accessibility options with on-line curriculum allow students to access the same material as other students and work at their own pace.

A Day in the Life of the School:

Students at the Excel Center attend when their schedules allow. As a result, there is no one set experience of a typical day for a student, as each student's instructional program, community supports and resources will create a unique educational experience. Additional schedules illustrating the variety in student school days are available in Attachment 6. Nonetheless, a typical day for a student with a young child would look as follows:

- A 21-year-old student arrives to the Excel Center at 8:00am. Before unpacking her items, she drops off her 2-year old at the Excel drop-in center, recognizing that she must pick up her child at noon.
- For the next half hour, the student works independently on an online credit recovery course in Biology. At infrequent intervals, she calls over resource staff and work-study tutors to help answer her particular questions.
- At 8:45am, she enters a classroom and attends an American Studies A class with 11 other students to discuss the Federalist Papers.   Students break up into small groups to discuss the word choice James Madison used and how they supported his argument.
- Except a short break, the class continues until 12:00pm. When class ends, she returns to the drop-in center to pick up her child. A relative arrives at 12:15 to take care of her child for the afternoon, and the student has lunch.
- At 12:45, the student attends a Writing Composition course, which ends at 2:15pm.
- During her break from 2:15pm to 2:30pm, the student continues work on her Biology work in online credit recovery.
- At 2:30pm, the student attends a Basic Skills Development: Math course (designed for students in need of significant math remediation). When that Lab is over at 4:00pm, the student leaves for the day.

A day in the life of an instructor is as follows:

- At 7:45am, a Math teacher arrives at the resource area to monitor student progress and to answer any questions students may have. In the early morning, students have few questions, so she uses her free time to review her upcoming schedule and plan out writing and project prompts for upcoming portfolio assignments.
- The teacher uses the 15-minute preparation time from 8:30 until 8:45 to prepare for an Algebra I block course. She teaches that course with a partner instructor until 12:00pm.
- The teacher takes lunch from 12:00pm until 12:45pm. He uses the final 15 minutes of his lunch break to prepare for the next course.

- At 12:45pm he begins teaching the second group of students in an Algebra I block course. This course also lasts at 4:00pm.
- On this particular day, the teacher is scheduled to monitor the Resource Area and answer student questions that evening. He works until 9:30, grading student work during the moments in which students do not require any additional assistance. The teacher's schedule is adjusted to a half-day on Friday as an acknowledgement of this additional time on duty for that evening.

Supplemental Programming

The Excel Center's calendar operates year-round with no difference in pace and structure during the summer. The only exception to this cycle of 8-week courses is a shortened 4-week course during the Holiday season, which is focused on ECA preparation to assist students to take the test and meet graduation requirements. The school will operate at full capacity during this period and will have full participation of students and staff. Staff in the Excel Center are paid full-time, and they accrue paid time off. Therefore, the summer months are paid like any other part of the Excel Center's schedule.

Many adults who balance school with life, work, and family concerns fight the balance of insufficient time with their learning needs. As a result, the Excel Center will not provide many traditional extracurricular activities like clubs or teams, as many of these activities are not relevant to the needs of Excel Center students. Instead, the school provides supports for students to continue their education while they balance their academic goals with the obligations of family, work, and other concerns.

The Excel Center Child Drop-in Center

Some Excel Center students will have to take care of their children while also trying to continue their education. To help students continue their education, each Excel Center site operates a child drop-in center. This center allows for children of students to be cared for while his/her parent is involved at the school.

The primary focus of drop-in center is give students who are parents the opportunity to focus on their education knowing that their children are in a safe and secure environment. Due to licensing requirements, parents will be able to drop off their children for a maximum of four hours each day. In addition, parents will provide all necessary care materials (including diapers, wipes, or formula) for their children, and the drop-in center will not provide any meals for participating children.

Some parents will need more robust child development opportunities for their children, but these needs are beyond the scope of what the Excel Center can currently provide. Parents are encouraged to find other childcare options that are able to take care of children for longer periods of time. Finding quality, affordable childcare is a major challenge for an Excel Center student who cares for a child. A student with this challenge will present these issues to his/her coach, and the coach will work with community partners and other infrastructure in order to meet that need for his/her students.

Coaches will be the primarily liaison between school and the families of Excel Center students. Coaches will meet with students and their families to understand the family dynamics affecting student success, and parents and other family members will be invited to attend demonstrations of student materials and special Excel Team meetings that are open to other family members. Students in the Excel Center will have a higher degree of independence than traditional high school students; many students will no longer

live with parents or guardians, and many students will be taking care of their own children. Where necessary, GEI's Student and Family Services will be used to help address any issues or barriers to family well-being that affect a student's ability to be successful in school. Most often, these barriers will relate to providing care for young children of students.

Special Populations and At-Risk Students
The Excel Center's unique curricular format provides ample support for special student populations. Students arrive at the Excel Center at a variety of levels, and the Excel Center's structure is designed to provide the appropriate instructional method to meet their unique needs. This structure allows students with special needs to receive appropriate support, whether they have Individualized Education Programs, Section 504 plans, English Language Learners or students at risk of leaving school. Gifted students – most of which were distracted from educational success for other reasons – the relevance of an education that leads to a valuable career and dual-credit options for postsecondary education. The population of students who has dropped out of school faces challenges on a number of fronts, and an array of supports are necessary to meet students wherever they are.

Students with mild, moderate and severe disabilities
Like other Excel Center students, students in special education will create individualized learning plans to accomplish their learning goals. However, these plans will include more robust analysis of resources to support their learning. Dedicated special education supports will be available until students age out of the special education program at age 22. Excel Center students who are below this age ceiling who qualify for special education services will receive full services, and instructors and coaches will work in collaboration to create 504 plans for the students who are older.

The Excel Center staff has experience working with special education students. Among its students served in Indianapolis, about 10 percent of the student population has Individualized Education Plans, and roughly half of Excel Center students have 504 plans. All Excel Center staff are trained on strategies to manage students with behavior problems while promoting an environment of pro-social behavior and reinforcement. A General Education Intervention and Response to Instruction team will serve as the backbone for not only identifying students with learning disabilities, but also creating a rigorous and relevant curriculum and supporting teachers in differentiating instruction for every learner.

Students will assess whether students need special education services through an array of supports. Initial testing at intake will identify whether students are being successful with their educational program. In addition, the school will request records for incoming students via Child Find to identify any students in need of special education services.

Special Education staff will write IEPs for students with special educations and will be responsible for notifying instructors and coaches of their specialized plan. Students with disabilities will be able to access the instructional methods that best suit their abilities, whether online, one-on-one, or within a classroom setting. Accessibility options with on-line curriculum allow students to access the same material as other students and work at their own pace. These staff will work with instructors to ensure that students receive appropriate services to ensure they can remain on track to graduate.

The Excel Center's schedule allows Fridays to be used to hold regular meetings for special education. Instructors are responsible for attending case conferences and to work with SPED team members to implement necessary accommodations and develop instruction to meet the needs of diverse learners. In addition, teachers are to communicate attendance and behavior issues to SPED staff to assist in revising the educational format of the school. Coaches will attend case conferences and write 504 plans in collaboration with SPED staff. They also are required to communicate any attendance or behavior issues with SPED staff. SPED staff develop curricular designs for students, assisting in the development o individualized communications. Each Excel Center site has one dedicated SPED staff person. Site-specific staff meet with leadership from other sites in order to direction and establish strategic priorities for Special Education from GEI's Director of Special Education.

Because students all have flexible calendars based upon their unique situation, it is common to adjust plans to accommodate students with special needs. Staff work with students to establish what academic schedules are appropriate for their unique needs and make that work. Some students are able to attend one classroom session and then spend the rest of the day in General Skills Lab where they work with other students. Other students are eligible to participate in on-line directed course content, where they can work at their own pace.

English Language Learners
English Language Learners are first identified during enrollment at the Excel Center. Students fill out a Home Language Survey during which they self-disclose what languages are spoken at home other than English. These students who indicate any languages other than English take the LAS Links exam to indicate the degree to which they need assistance in foreign languages. LAS Links exams are taken annually in the fall, with re-tests at regular intervals throughout the school year to determine the level of support students require. English Language Learners' collective data on student growth on TABE scores, credit attainment and intermediate grades will be used to determine whether the school is providing sufficient supports for ELLs.

In its hiring processes, the Excel Center seeks bilingual staff who are able to work with students who speak other languages, but it is unlikely that staff will be able to provide language support for every student who comes in speaking a language other than English. Course content – most notably in online formats – is available in many foreign languages. The Excel Center will contract with interpreting services to ensure that students are able to participate in the regular academic functions of the school. Student case conferences will review student progress and determine whether additional academic supports may be needed to ensure ELL students have what they need.

Students Performing Below Grade Level
A student who enrolls in the Excel Center having dropped out of another school most likely continues to face many of the risk factors that led to his/her leaving school. Many students arrive at the Excel Center in need of significant remediation: TABE scores taken at intake reveal that 70% of students test below a sixth grade skill level in math, and 45% score below a sixth grade level in reading.

Students who test below a sixth grade math level and a seventh grade reading level are eligible to participate in Basic Skills Development: Math and Basic Skills Development: Reading. These courses are designed to increase basic proficiency in skills and to ensure that students can build the basic skills to

succeed in secondary-level coursework. These courses include online education (through Lexia, iLearn, and/or Reading Plus) coupled with direct instruction by licensed staff on course topics and skills that a large number of students are struggling to master. These students are encouraged to make consistent academic progress and learn at their own pace.

For many students, behavioral issues are indicative of problems that occur outside of school environments. Therefore, Excel coaches have the particular challenge of identifying potential issues that might affect student conduct. Where possible, the coach will try to connect the student to community resources or other organizations that might be able to ameliorate some of the deeper issues that can result in poor student behavior.

Students labeled as intellectually gifted
Students who have been labeled as intellectually gifted will be encouraged to explore educational options at the post-secondary level. Students who can pass the COMPASS Placement Exam will have the chance to attend Ivy Tech – at no cost to the student – and take credit courses. The Excel Center will build on Ivy Tech's dual credit course offerings for high school students. In the dual credit arrangement, an Excel Center student is dual-enrolled as both an Excel Center and an Ivy Tech student, and completion of an Ivy Tech course grants both high school and post-secondary credit. The Excel Center will pay the tuition costs for Excel Center students to take Ivy Tech courses. Dual credit has been shown to have significant outcomes in improving postsecondary success and high school credit attainment.[xii]

Research indicates that many gifted students dropped out of school due to life issues that impeded their economic progress. Reports have shown that for males, reasons for dropping out are related to economic issues and the need to find work, whereas for female gifted students, personal issues are more likely.[xiii] In both cases, the Excel Center's coach is a critical support to identify what out-of-school challenges may interfere with that student's educational success.

Student Recruitment and Enrollment
At full capacity, any one Excel Center site will enroll about 300 students. The Excel Center's individualized approach will work best in a small-school environment. Adult students will learn better in an intimate setting that gives each student the flexibility and freedom to learn at his or her own pace. Te school is designed to promote meaningful relationships of support between staff and students, and a school size that is too large will inhibit these relationships from forming. Staff will need frequent and open communication in order to operate in the school's flexible approach; schedulers, coaches, teachers and administrative staff must be able to touch base on various topics throughout the day. The school's small size will encourage this consistent communication that would be difficult to achieve with a larger school.

It is difficult to attain the grade level caps for a given Excel Center; some students can earn credits faster than others, while others may have brought in many credits but testing at levels indicating the need for lengthy remediation. Students will progress at variable paces, and as a result, there will not be hard grade level caps for this school. Moreover, the school handles admission on a rolling basis: if a student

graduates or withdraws from the school, another student who has applied is eligible to take his/her place within the same school year.[2]

Student Enrollment Plan

The Excel Center for Adult Learners will be assisted by Goodwill Industries in the development of the school's marketing plan, and Goodwill Education Initiatives staff will be responsible for student recruitment for the Excel Center.

The Excel Center will be available to any adult who would like to continue his or her education, and the school's student body will likely include students of various ages. However, the school staff will actively target young adults between 18 and 22 years of age because this age group is the most-represented within the schools (40% are 18-25), and reflects that the median age of the applicants to the Excel Center (to Indianapolis sites) is 23. Moreover, the average and locally there are more options for younger adults to succeed in post-secondary education; the majority of Ivy Tech Community College's central Indiana student population is aged 15-24. [xiv]

GEI central staff will manage the student intake process at the school, allowing the people and process that have generated over 2,800 applications for the Excel Center to recruit students in Anderson. Because of its uniqueness in providing educational opportunities, a number of community providers will refer students to The Excel Center. Ivy Tech will refer students with low academic skills to The Excel Center to catch up and then enroll when they have reached a baseline level of proficiency.

Research shows that underrepresented and minority student groups are more likely to drop out of school; academically low-achieving students, students with disabilities, and other at-risk youth all have higher rates of not completing school than others. Therefore, by attempting to fill the Excel Center with older students who have not graduated from high school, the Excel Center will intentionally seek out students from under-represented and marginalized groups. Goodwill Industries has decades of experience reaching out to this group, and, while it spends considerable effort recruiting students via media campaigns, educating community partners, and building referral networks, often the most successful means of generating interest is through word of mouth. In Marion County, the Excel Center's applicants largely heard about the school via word of mouth, and it is likely that, once individuals begin to hear about the Excel Center, interest will grow rapidly. Interestingly, during the past two years, 23 Anderson residents have applied to attend the Excel Center sites in Indianapolis, indicating a willingness to drive considerable lengths in hopes of continuing their education.

The Excel Center's enrollment policy and its application processes are included in Attachment 7.

If a large number of students apply during the summer of 2012, the Excel Center will use a lottery to select its first 300 students. Students who are unable to enroll in the school will be assigned a place on a waiting list to be added when spots become available. Enrolled students will graduate at various times

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[2] Growth of the Excel Center may be accomplished by opening up additional locations in communities that demonstrate significant need. More information can be found in the Replication Capacity section.

throughout the year, and new spaces will be filled from a waiting list of interested students on a first-come, first-serve basis they become available.

Student Discipline
The school has a strong emphasis on self-discipline and regulating one's own behavior: students must behave as they would in a professional environment.

Nevertheless, discipline issues will likely arise at The Excel Center. Unfortunately, methods of discipline found in traditional high schools are not effective with this student population, because students may simply decide to leave school if they do not agree with the school's decisions. Parental notification, in-school and out-of-school suspensions are used sparingly, because many students will simply elect not to return from school. A student who is unable to behave in a self-directed learning environment will struggle to be successful long-term in The Excel Center, in post-secondary education or in the workforce. As a result, the school takes a zero tolerance policy towards gross violations of student behavior, including fighting, threats of violence, or other significant violations of student behavior. As a result, when gross violations of student conduct occur, students will be expelled from the school.

For many students, behavioral issues are indicative of problems that occur outside of school environments. Therefore, Excel coaches have the particular challenge of identifying potential issues that might affect student conduct. Where possible, the coach will try to connect the student to community resources or other organizations that might be able to ameliorate some of the deeper issues that can result in poor student behavior.

The school's discipline policy is included in Attachment 8.

Performance Management

The anticipated student population of the Excel Center faces significant academic and non-academic challenges. Students will likely be behind schedule in their academic progress, and The Excel Center's school-specific goals mirror the particular challenges of working with this target population. In addition to the school performance metrics to be established by the state Charter Board, these goals reflect the school's primary mission: to help students complete a high school diploma and become ready for post-secondary education.

To support student progress, GEI will create a supportive environment that promotes flexible and individualized learning while adult learners manage the various demands and challenges of work and life. This approach requires robust infrastructure to assist students in meeting their specific needs, and GEI will maintain the financial, administrative, and support infrastructure in order to operate this non-traditional academic model.

Academic Performance Goal	Methods of Assessment
The Excel Center will enable students who have dropped out of school or who are at high risk of dropping out to earn a high school diploma.	The Excel Center will measure the total number of diplomas earned by Excel Center students since the school's opening.
Students who have been behind academically will be able to catch up and will learn the	The Excel Center's rate of student growth will outperform other Indiana high schools as established

necessary skills and content continue their education.	by the Indiana Department of Education Growth Model.
Students who graduate from The Excel Center will demonstrate the ability to succeed in post-secondary academic environments.	Upon graduation, the Excel Center will measure the average number of courses a student has completed at the post-secondary level as shown from student transcripts.

The Excel Center performance goals reflect the mission of the school by focusing on rapid student progress, graduating from high school, and connecting students to post-secondary education. The Excel Center does not intend to establish any specific organizational goals.

GEI will also administer regular testing to monitor academic growth. Each student's Individual Learning Plan will detail any basic skills development that should take place in order for students to perform at or above his or her grade levels. Excel Center students will also take end-of-course assessments. Based on its target demographics, the Excel Center may not have high initial standardized test scores, but these scores will help determine which content and coursework will be important for students to build on and engage. While test scores do provide a point-in time assessment of student attainment, the Excel Center will focus on promoting student growth. Other standardized tests will provide additional evidence of student progress. At enrollment, each student takes the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE). The TABE test determines a student's baseline skill level in reading and math and helps determine where the student will begin his or her coursework. This baseline skill level determines which courses the student must take to complete his or her diploma requirements. Students will use this information to create a learning plan that combines these courses and, where possible, any skills-based instruction through a local post-secondary institution.

TABE is taken on an ongoing basis to ensure that students are making adequate progress. Students involved in remediation will take the test every 8 weeks, while students in general education courses will take the test every six months. TABE is widely used in adult education programs, and the school will be eligible to receive supplemental adult education funding from organizations that determine performance requirements by TABE scores. Level gains on TABE will be a standard assessment of progress and engagement in the school. Because students are often balancing other concerns with their education, rapid progression through the Excel Center is critical to long-term student success, so the pace of TABE score improvements will be an important indicator of rapid student progress.

To become eligible for enrollment at Ivy Tech and other post-secondary institutions, Excel Center students must pass the English and/or Mathematics portions of the COMPASS® College Placement assessment test. The Excel Center will be an approved COMPASS testing site. Students will be able to take the test as many times as required until they pass the test, and they will elect the time when they are able to take the entrance test.

Measuring and Improving Progress in the School

The Excel Center will use a number of indicators to measure progress and to refine instruction and organizational performance. These measurements will be relevant for individual and school-wide levels;

however the school will not organize information at the cohort level. A student who has dropped out of school and then returned will be out of his/her cohort; since students will arrive and finish at various times, the cohort-level measurements will have little bearing on the performance of the school. The chart below outlines the key measurements for students at each level of measurement.

Group	Ongoing Indicators	Year-End Indicators	Term-Long Indicators
Individual Students	• Attendance • Credit Attainment • Performance Grades • TABE Scores	• Pace of Credit Attainment • Attendance • Student Growth • Net TABE increase	• Course completion • ECA Results • Post-Secondary Enrollment • Post-Secondary Persistence and Completion
Student Cohorts*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*
School-Wide	• Attendance (school-wide) • Net credit attainment • Net TABE increase	• Number of graduates • Percent of graduates enrolling in post-secondary education • Total number of credits earned	• Total number of graduates from the Excel Center • Post-secondary persistence and completion

On an ongoing basis, individual students will be monitored on a number of key indicators, including attendance, credit attainment (including intermediate student grades mid-session), and increases in TABE scores over time. Instructors are responsible reporting on intermediate metrics and logging them in the student management system. Attendance metrics are gathered daily and reported weekly, and TABE scores are recorded by remediation and special education staff. These ongoing metrics will be used by the location director, who will evaluate these metrics as a means of monitoring growth.

These indicators will be used to will help instructors re-evaluate the student's lesson plans and suggest alternative learning methods address subjects or areas of concern. Consistently low scores in certain subject areas within general student population will lead The Excel Center's staff to re-evaluate the basic structure of certain courses by readjusting the default instructional methods available to each student. Students who progressing at academic levels above the school's performance standard will be encouraged to take courses at the postsecondary level in order to both high school and postsecondary credit.

On an annual basis, the Excel Center measures the progress that students make in reaching their educational goals. In addition to higher-level attendance analysis, the site director will lead the staff in evaluating the pace that students are earning credit, noting that a consistent pace of credit attainment towards graduation indicates progress. In addition, for students who are involved primarily in remediation will be evaluated based on the net increase in TABE scores, indicating a growth in skills prior to being able to earn credits. The long-term success of individual students is related to whether students are able to graduate (as measured by credit attainment and passing end of course assessments) and whether students enroll and complete and/or persist in postsecondary education. GEI's registrar will

measure graduation attainment and, in by submitting requests to the National Student Clearinghouse, GEI will continue to monitor the postsecondary success of students who graduate.

On an ongoing basis, school-wide data indicators will be used to monitor whether the school environment is providing sufficient academic opportunities for the people that come in to the school. School-wide attendance metrics, credit attainment, and TABE scores are all used to ensure that the school is operating effectively and that there are not any major performance difficulties affecting the school. Annual school-wide indicators provide a report of what the community benefit has been for the Excel Center during its time. These annual indicators – the total number of graduates for the given year – provide an ongoing metric of how many individuals have achieved the Excel Center's primary goal of graduating students who have not previously succeeded. The postsecondary enrollment metrics indicate whether students have created plans for continuing their education beyond the Excel Center.

On a term-wide basis, the Excel Center will be evaluated based upon how many individuals are able to complete a high school diploma and how successful they are in postsecondary education. The longer-term view on success will permit the Excel Center and its staff to determine how graduates fare after leaving the school, and whether they are successful in the next stage of their education and/or career. Students who require significant remediation at the postsecondary level are highly unlikely to continue their education, so this metric of postsecondary completion (and persistence, for those students still in school) serves to evaluate how successful the Excel Center's educational program was at preparing students to be successful in college.

Staff will submit many of these indicators (attendance, grades and TABE scores) on an ongoing basis. This data is managed by GEI's registrar, who monitors the data quality and operations of the Excel Center's data management system. The registrar is also responsible for generating performance reports. This data is delivered to Excel Center leadership, who analyze the data and use the data to improve performance, revise instruction, and develop staff. The Managing Director (with assistance from the Chief Academic Officer) guides local directors and staff in interpreting the data, comparing progress across multiple Excel Center sites, and training staff on how to use data to improve their own performance.

GEI uses the Harmony student data management system as its tracking systems in both schools. Harmony is developed and supported by Logic Key, Inc and is now active in 103 school corporations in Indiana. Harmony is monitored by Goodwill's IT Department, and it is managed on a day-to-day basis by GEI's registrar, Robin Bess. The Registrar monitors the quality of data, runs reports to be analyzed and delivers relevant indicators to Excel Center leadership.

It is a key priority of Excel Center's professional development plan to equip school staff to use and analyze data to improve instruction. Through implementing the RISE Evaluation and Development System, GEI instructors are using the framework related to data management as a part of the school's plan to improve educational practice. The evaluation of site directors will be based in part on their ability to use bring teams together to use data as a basis in making decisions in a transparent manner (RISE competency 2.3.3). GEI's Chief Academic Officer and the Managing Director establish trainings during which teachers are encouraged to use assessment data to plan their curriculum (RISE competency 1.1)

and for teachers to track student data and analyze progress (1.5). Their use of data factors into their annual evaluation and their development plans to improve their instruction.

Data will be used to monitor progress at the individual student, classroom and school levels. In the event that progress falls short of the Excel Center's goals, an array of strategies will take place to improve student outcomes.

- At the individual level, assessment data will reveal that student progress is not up to proper standards. In these cases, staff will meet to discuss alternate ways of providing supports for students, including increasing the amount of one-on-one attention a student receives; altering the balance of online credit recovery and classroom instruction; working with the coach to identify any potential life barriers that may be impeding academic progress; or altering the pace at which the student is learning.
- At the classroom level, poor performance indicates that instructional staff have not been successful at monitoring and encouraging student growth. If data indicates that students are not demonstrating mastery, then the instructor is in need of additional supports to improve skills and work. Corrective actions are a part of the diagnosis as provided by RISE. In the rare instance of extremely poor performance, it may be necessary to move that teacher into another assignment and have staff work on achieving better outcomes.
- At the school level, consistently poor performance may be the result of a number of factors, including organizational culture, poor process orientation, and leadership deficiencies. Because the Excel Center will also be operating other sites in Indianapolis, the Managing Director has the ability to assess whether the Excel Center in Anderson is operating in fidelity to the Excel Center model, and what particular tools may be needed to improve school performance. Working with the Chief Academic Officer, the Managing Director may be able to schedule intensive trainings, peer mentoring among site directors, and hands-on management for the school if performance is not successful. In cases where a school consistently falls short of expectations, it may be necessary to find other leadership to operate the school.

Governance and Management

Governance Structure and Composition

Goodwill Education Initiatives, Inc. (GEI) will hold the charter for the Excel Center in Anderson. GEI is a 501(c)(3) entity established in 2004 by Goodwill Industries of Central Indiana, Inc. GEI holds the charter for the Indianapolis Metropolitan High School in addition to the Excel Center's Marion County sites. Both existing schools are chartered by the Mayor of Indianapolis. Articles of Incorporation, IRS letter of documentation, and By-Laws are found in Attachment 9. GEI's Statement of Assurances is included in Attachment 10.

The GEI board serves as a network-level board that governs all the schools within its portfolio. GEI manages one Excel Center charter across multiple sites, allowing GEI management to work with a number of school locations to monitor performance, educate staff, and revise the Excel Center model when necessary. The GEI board will meet regularly in Goodwill Industries of Central Indiana, Inc.'s headquarters, in Indianapolis. To accommodate Public Access regulations, these meetings will be

recorded and broadcast live in each of the Excel Centers for locations that are beyond a half hour drive of the location of the meeting. A room in each Excel Center location will show the board meeting, and it will be open to the public allowing for parents and other members of the community to view the proceedings of GEI board meetings.

The GEI Board consists of no more than ten individuals. GEI has a Board of Directors composed of ten persons, a majority of whom are appointed by the board of Goodwill Industries of Central Indiana, Inc. (GICI). The president of GICI is also the president of GEI and is a non-voting ex-officio member of GEI's Board. The board will remain the same size of ten individuals throughout its functioning. Currently, the board has eight occupied positions, and two more positions will be filled at the beginning of 2012.

Roles and Responsibilities

The GEI Board is the ultimate governing body for the Excel Center. The board concerns itself more with long-term rather than short-term matters, matters of policy rather than operational concerns, and matters of paramount rather than ordinary importance. The Board's specific responsibilities include:
- Monitoring the school's key performance indicators
- Establishing policy
- Approving long-range plans
- Approving annual plans and budgets
- Approving any actions that would create or have the potential to create significant obligations for the schools
- Ensuring financial solvency
- Interpreting the schools to the community
- Assessing its own performance
- Taking other actions as necessary and ensuring that structures and mechanisms are in place to ensure that GEI is in compliance with all applicable laws, regulations, and contracts, including requirements of the school's charter

In addition, the GEI Board is responsible for periodically (no less than annually) reviewing and evaluating the relationship between GEI and GICI to ensure that services provided the schools by GICI are meeting quality expectations, providing good value for the school, and are enhancing GEI's objective of being a good steward of its resources.

The GEI Board currently includes the following voting members:

- C. Perry Griffith, Chair
- Gina DelSanto, Vice Chair
- Holly Hill-Brooks, Secretary
- Juan Gonzalez
- Jeffrey Harrison
- Bruce Jacobson

- Michael O'Connor
- Fred C. Tucker, III

The Founding Group for this Excel Center application will also serve as the Board of the Excel Center in Anderson. The GEI board has operated for seven years. The group brings together an array of business experience in industries, public policy, education, finance, and workforce development. The Founding Group includes majority board members. Board members choose to serve on the GEI board for a number of reasons, including: a desire to improve the educational systems available to children, a belief in the performance and mission of GEI, helping individuals reach their maximum potential, and hoping to see more individuals earn the basic credential most needed for a successful, productive life – a high school diploma.

Information on board members is included in Attachment 12.

Procedures
GEI has a Board of Directors composed of a maximum of ten persons, a majority of whom are appointed by the board of Goodwill Industries of Central Indiana, Inc. (GICI). The president of GICI is also the president of GEI and is a non-voting ex-officio member of GEI's Board. The Board of Directors of Goodwill Industries of Central Indiana, Inc. appoints a majority of the members of the GEI board. Candidates for the remaining positions on the board are recommended by the board's governance committee and are voted upon by the board of directors. Candidates are selected to give the overall board an optimal combination of skills, expertise, experiences, and perspectives for effective governance of a publicly chartered high school. Directors are elected or appointed for three-year terms, with the terms of approximately 1/3 of the directors expiring each year.

The GEI board meets five times each calendar year. During meetings, the boards oversee key student performance metrics. Each member of the board receives a monthly report of the school's operations, as well as a financial report. In addition, they express their preference in policies, manage the key staff of the school, and provide strategic direction for the operations of the schools.

Financial management for the school will be overseen by the board of directors. Day-to-day financial management will be provided by the business manager of GEI, who also acts as the assistant treasurer for the board. This person will be assisted and supported by the chief financial officer of Goodwill, who is also the board treasurer of GEI, and the controller of Goodwill. Also included in the financial operations is Bookkeeping Plus, who produces all of the required state financial reports. GEI's chief operating officer also helps oversee the financial matters of the school. The State Board of Accounts conducts a bi-annual audit as part of normal state oversight.

The annual budget will be developed each year by GEI's Chief Operating Officer, the School Director, and the GEI Business Manager with assistance from GICI's President/CEO and Chief Financial Officer and other GICI staff as needed. The budget will be presented to the GEI Board for review, modification as it deems necessary, and adoption.

Ongoing board development includes presentations at board meetings on various aspects of the school's operation. The GEI board also has the following subcommittees:

- The governance committee, which is responsible for the selection, development, and management of the board
- The finance and audit committee, which is responsible for managing the finances of the schools
- The compensation committee, which monitors the compensation of key GEI leaders

The school will comply with Indiana's Public Access Laws. Notification of the board meeting is posted at least 48 hours prior to the meeting. All GEI board meetings will be recorded with a video camera and broadcast live in each of the locations of GEI schools. These broadcasts will be viewable to members of the public, and notice of these meetings will be posted prior to the meeting in each school location. Minutes are also available to the public upon request.

Ethics and Conflicts of Interest
Most of the school's support services are provided in-kind by Goodwill Industries of Central Indiana. Board members are not compensated for their service on the board and sign a conflict of interest statement that is used by all of the boards of directors with organizational ties to Goodwill Industries. GEI's conflict of interest policy is included as Attachment 13.

Advisory Groups
Each location of the Excel Center outside of Indianapolis will have an advisory group to ensure that the Excel Center is providing a relevant educational program that meets the local community's need. These advisory groups will meet six times each year in each site location and will be a means by which the Excel Center will communicate with individuals in the community.

The advisory group will be responsible for providing input to the school on what factors are at play in the local environment, including major economic changes or shocks, changes in the political environment, and any major news that would affect the performance and/or long-term success of the Excel Center location. Moreover, advisory groups will provide a community voice to schools.

Advisory groups will consist of 8-10 members and include relevant stakeholders in the Excel Centers' success, drawing on expertise in from postsecondary institutions, community groups, K-12 education, government/public policy, and business. These groups will also include teachers and students (either past or present) to ensure that students have a voice in the feedback of school operations.

The local site director will be responsible for managing the relationship between the school and the advisory group; he/she will set agendas for each meeting in collaboration with GEI central leadership.

Board Expansion, Development, and Succession
Development of the board is an ongoing process. As a board that has been in continuous operation for the past seven years, the board is familiar with the operations, details, and political realities of operating charter schools. All new members of the board receive an in-depth orientation, which includes an extensive explanation of how the school operates and the relationships between the school and Goodwill.

Ongoing board development includes presentations at board meetings on various aspects of the school's operation. Board members are also invited to attend student demonstrations.

The Chief Operating Officer of GEI takes every effort to ensure that board members are aware of the effects a rapidly-changing educational environment has on the performance of GEI's schools and, more generally, how changes are affecting the educational system as a whole. In regular biweekly emails, the COO updates the board on new developments in topics like school accountability, school choice, teacher performance, and a number of other developments involved in education reform.

Grievance Process

In the event of a parent or student having an objection to a governing board policy or decision, GEI staff will be made aware of that grievance. After investigating the

In case of a student or parent complaint, the request will be forwarded to the local site director. If the site director is unable to resolve the question, the student/parent is able to take that request to the managing director. The next stage of escalation would go to the COO of GEI. The GEI board has an active policy not to hear on matters of expulsion, so the next step of conflict mediation would be to seek restitution in the courts.

Documents related to the meetings business of the GEI board are available to individuals free of charge. Students are also able to receive a student handbook – which outlines the policies and procedures of the school – to students and parents at no cost to them. Students are also able to receive their transcript free of charge.

School Management Contracts – Not Applicable.

Network Management

GEI's network management team also serves as the leadership team for the school. Key leaders include:

Jim McClelland, President & CEO – The president provides overall executive leadership for GEI. Specific responsibilities include the following:
- Providing staff support for the board of directors
- Articulating a vision for GEI
- Leading strategic planning activities, including planning for physical plant and capital equipment for the schools
- Monitoring the external environment to detect changes that might pose a threat or create an opportunity
- Hiring, developing, and assessing the performance of the COO
- Setting high standards; measuring and monitoring key performance indicators
- Exemplifying the values of the school and ensuring that they are being upheld throughout GEI and schools operated by GEI
- Developing and maintaining relationships that are essential or that could be helpful to the school and/or its students
- Assisting in interpreting the school to the community

- Assisting in raising financial support for the schools

Scott Bess, Chief Operating Officer – The chief operating officer's responsibilities include:

- Providing overall leadership for the operation of the schools
- Arranging for the non-academic supports needed for effective operation of the schools
- Coordinating wraparound services needed by students and their families
- Serving as GEI's primary relationship manager with education-focused stakeholders, including the Mayor's Office of Charter Schools, Indiana Department of Education, and others
- Reporting to the president any concerns regarding performance of staff of the school or of GICI that might adversely affect the school's effectiveness

Schauna Findlay, Chief Academic Officer – The Chief Academic Officer leads the development of curriculum and overall educational strategies for GEI's schools, including:

- Leading the development of curriculum and overall educational strategies
- Leading the scheduling teams in the development of the master schedule and appropriate course offerings
- Assisting instructors in setting academic priorities
- Providing leadership in the development of new partnerships and/or methodologies in response to the changing needs concerning students, test results, and/or Indiana Academic and Common Core State Standards
- Providing training to and assisting Excel Center directors and lead teachers in observing teachers, providing effective feedback, and completing evaluations
- Assisting school leaders in coordinating and administering in-service education programs for the instructional staff
- Providing research, recommendations, training, and supervision of academic interventions and tools through the Response to Instruction Framework

Betsy Delgado, Managing Director – The Managing Director provides a hands-on approach to leadership in the directing, planning, managing, and coordinating the educational goals and vision of the Excel Center schools. Specific duties include:

- Assisting the Superintendent in developing strategies, goals and objectives for the schools and leads directors in managing the implementation of these objectives.
- Leading the development of the Excel Model and communicates the vision to staff.
- Providing leadership and supports training of directors and lead teachers in evaluating performance data.
- Providing leadership in the development of new partnerships and/or methodologies in response to the changing needs concerning students, test results, and/or Indiana Academic and Common Core State Standards
- Implementing the Excel Model in new locations, including coordinating staff hiring, training and development, facilities and infrastructure, scheduling and reporting.
- Providing training to and assists Excel Center directors and lead teachers in observing teachers, providing effective feedback, and completing evaluations.

- Assisting school leaders in coordinating and administering in-service education programs for the instructional staff
- Facilitating and supports directors in the day-to-day function of schools.
- Representing GEI, as appropriate, in community planning and policy making activities

GEI leadership also includes the following director-level staff. Resumes on these leaders are included in Attachment 3.

Greg McClure, Director, Special Education. McClure oversees the strategic formation and planning of special education services for the Indianapolis Met and the Excel Center.

Courtney Rent, Director, Community Outreach. Rent coordinates student outreach and recruitment, assisting families with student applications, enrollment, and waiting list policies. In her duties, she serves both the Indianapolis Met High School and the Excel Center.

Tieree Smith, Director, College and Career Readiness. Smith establishes criteria and support for students' work in postsecondary education. Also serves to support career readiness and the exploration of new careers for students.

To clarify the levels of decision-making within the Network, the chart below further differentiates "Network / Management Decision Making" between the activities of GEI, Inc., and the activities of Goodwill Industries, which provides operating support and lends support through several support functions for the school.

GICI provides an array of support infrastructure that allows GEI staff to focus on academic instruction and operating a school. The local site level includes community-level outreach and other support.

GEI administrative staff are responsible for setting broad strategic goals and ensuring that site-level staff have the resources and support required to perform their functions in local sites. Specialist staff in Excel Center locations (including special education and college and career readiness) are responsible for implementing these strategic priorities while working with students in their local school. These staff report to the site director. Student support and engagement services shared by both schools will include:
- Student recruitment
- Transportation
- Student administration / registrar
- Special education services
- College counseling, enrollment and retention
- Management of Excel Centers in multiple locations

Function	Network / Management Decision Making		School Decision-Making
	GEI, Inc.	GICI, Inc.	
Performance Goals	X		
Curriculum	X		
Professional Development	X		
Data Management and Interim Assessments	X		
Promotion Criteria	X		
Culture	X		
Budgeting, Finance, and Accounting	X		
Student Recruitment			X
School Staff Recruitment and Hiring	X	X	X
H/R Services (payroll, benefits, etc.)	X (payroll)	X (benefits)	
Development		X	
Community Relations			X
IT		X	
Facilities Management		X	
Vendor Management / Procurement	X		
Other operational services			

In some instances – most notably recruiting – all three levels are engaged in providing essential students for the school. In this case, Goodwill staff provide the initial sourcing and screening of candidates, and GEI and the local school participate in panel interviews to select the proper candidate.

School Staffing

Staff Structure

A staffing chart – including profiles of key Excel Center positions – is included in Attachment 15.

The Excel Center will have a total of 28 staff positions. 14 of these positions are devoted to instruction, 5 are devoted to coaching and life skills assistance, 2 are devoted to career pathways and college transition, and one is devoted to special education. The school will have a (licensed) teacher-student ratio of 21 students for every teacher, and 11 students for every staff person in the school.

Senior administrative staff will provide direction and guidance to the local site director to support the formation of his/her team. The site director will be responsible for managing, developing, and monitoring performance of his/her staff. Management will conduct annual performance reviews with these staff and will provide supports.

Staffing Plans

Employees of the Excel Center will be employed by GEI, Inc. They will be at-will employees and will not use contracts. The employee manual for GEI is included in Attachment 16. Salaries for the Excel Center positions are listed at right below.

The following are the basic benefit programs in which full-time employees may participate:

- Comprehensive Health Plan
- Wellness Program
- Employee & Dependent Life Insurance
- Comprehensive Dental/Vision Plan
- Section 125 Plan
  - ➢ Pre-tax Health & Dental/Vision Plan premiums are automatic when you enroll
  - ➢ Pre-tax savings for health and dependent care expenses not covered by the group plans
- Retirement:
  - ➢ 403(b) Retirement Savings Plan
  - ➢ FICA
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- Long Term Disability Plan
- Tuition Reimbursement

Position	Base Salary
Lead Teacher	$60,000
Science Instructor	$42,000
Social Studies Instructor	$42,000
English Instructor	$42,000
Math Instructor	$42,000
Resource Specialist	$35,000
Special Education Specialist	$43,000
Coaches	$35,000
College Transition Counselor	$43,000
Career Pathways Specialist	$43,000
Site Director	$99,000
Assistant Director	$66,000
Receptionist	$25,000
Childcare Director	$30,000
Childcare Attendant	$20,800

GEI includes incentives in order to reward high performing teachers via merit increases. This incentive program aims to reward high-performing teachers by increasing their compensation. Teachers who are identified as "highly effective" during their RISE evaluation are eligible for a performance-based bonus. In addition, effective and highly effective teachers are eligible for merit-based raises. Ineffective teachers will not be eligible for pay increases.

Hiring the right individuals is a critical success factor for the new Excel Center. Staff recruitment will be managed by Goodwill's Employee and Organizational Development (EOD) division. EOD staff currently recruit all teachers and staff members for the Indianapolis Metropolitan High School. The talent acquisition plan is based on Targeted Selection®, a competency-based behavioral interviewing system used across the Goodwill organization. EOD's talent acquisition strategies approach assesses applicants' behaviors, motivations, and technical knowledge necessary to accomplish the tasks of the target position.

Goodwill staff are responsible for sourcing and screening candidates for its available positions. In accordance with the requirements of IC 20-24-6-5, Goodwill staff verify the licensing of all of the teaching staff that are presented as candidates.

New staff are selected after an array of interviews with Goodwill staff, GEI administration, and peer interviews. Candidates attend several panel interviews, and the team of staff assess whether that candidate has the required grasp on instruction, fits the organizational culture, and has the emotional intelligence to build relationships with the Excel Center's student population. For management-level positions, GEI administration are responsible for making the final decision on hiring. For school-level positions, this decision is the responsibility for the site director.

GEI recruitment uses a number of resources to source candidates, including:

- CareerBuilder/Star Diversity Fair sponsor
- Teach for America Job Fair
- Teacher Candidate Recruitment Day
- University of Southern Indiana Job Fair
- Xavier University Recruitment Fair
- National Association of School Principals
- National Association of Black School Educators
- Indiana School Personnel Job Bank (Department of Education)
- LinkedIn
- CareerBuilder database

Goodwill staff also post job announcements at the following universities: Anderson University, Ball State University, Butler University, Indiana University (Bloomington), Indiana University – Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI), Martin University, Marian College, NISH, Purdue University and University of Indianapolis.

All offers of employment under GEI are conditional pending a national background check. All employees are required to work in consort with GEI's Basic Principles, Historic Values, and Standards of Conduct. Failure to abide by the Standards of Conduct will lead to disciplinary action, including termination of employment. More information on these Standards is available in Attachment 16.

Performance Development

Teachers and leaders in GEI schools will participate in rigorous annual evaluations that present teachers with valuable feedback tied to personalized and meaningful professional development. GEI uses the RISE Evaluation and Development System to monitor teacher performance and to provide development

opportunities for teachers to improve instruction. This assessment tool evaluates teacher performance in four domains: planning, instruction, leadership, and core professionalism.

Evaluations are conducted by the Site Director. The Chief Academic Officer of GEI assists in training directors, educating staff on the system, and monitoring performance development. The RISE evaluation tool used in evaluating staff is included in Attachment 17. Site Directors, in turn, are evaluated by the Managing Director using the RISE evaluation tool for principals (also included in Attachment 17).

In the event that leadership or teacher performance is unsatisfactory, a number of targeted interventions would take place to improve performance. In the case of leadership/teacher changes and turnover, assistance will come from the Managing Director and other GEI administrative staff to maintain school functioning until new staff can be hired. Changes in site-level leadership will require the Managing Director of the Excel Center's multiple sites to intervene in the local site, and begin work immediately on finding a new director. Changes in staff and instructors would lead to the school covering that position until Goodwill staff can recommend a suitable candidate as a replacement.

In addition to being a critical best practice for effective instruction, the Excel Center's academic philosophy is designed to provide ample supports for professional development to help teachers improve instruction and improve their delivery with the Excel Center's population. Professional Development is coordinated across all of GEI schools and is designed to reinforce teacher awareness of common core standards, and to promote awareness of best practices in education. Network Administration in GEI will assess whether common professional development needs to take place across the schools in GEI's network. The Chief Academic Officer is responsible for monitoring RISE evaluations, TABE and academic data and, in collaboration with the Managing Director, establishes a schedule in which common development may take place.

At the site level, the Site Director is responsible for developing the culture and establishing strong connections with local community career pathways. He/she is responsible for reporting what additional professional development needs to be delivered at a local site.

Professional Development During the School Year
At the beginning of the new school year, new staff will undergo a two-week orientation where teachers learn about the population they will be serving, more information about Goodwill and the Excel Center, and to receive an overview of the Excel Center's curriculum, instructional resources, and industry sectors. This development covers many administrative needs, presents teachers with the principles of blended courses and instruction.

- **Day 1:** Learning about the Adult Student Population & Poverty Simulation
- **Days 2 and 3:** Staff Retreat and Teambuilding
- **Day 4:** Orientation of GEI staff and GEI schools
- **Day 5:** Tour of Goodwill Industries and Key Areas; Training on online credit recovery
- **Day 6:** Operational introductions (IT, online testing, staff/student handbooks, transcripts)
- **Day 7:** Coaching Practices and Discipline
- **Day 8:** Curriculum Overview and Blended Courses
- **Day 9:** Contextualized Learning and Career Pathways
- **Day 10:** Tours of industry partners and Staff Pairing Work.

Twelve days are scheduled throughout the year for dedicated, planned professional development. These days allow staff to hone their skills, build skills. These courses are designed to support and maintain performance in the school in three key areas: (1) curriculum design and planning, (2) promoting student attendance and retention; and (3) career planning and workforce preparation.

Teachers do not hold fixed-time classes on Fridays, and that day is reserved for teacher preparation and staff collaboration. There are 42 scheduled planning days in The Excel Center's 2012-2013 school calendar, and they are designed for staff to hold meetings, teachers to plan lessons and establish collaborative plans, for Special Education conferences to be held, and for students to meet one-on-one with students.

RISE will be used as the primary template for teacher evaluation. As a result of RISE's template, each teacher receives a final score that is calculated from a teacher's ratings on the first three domains (planning, instruction, and leadership). The effectiveness of this program will be evaluated by the rate of growth in these RISE final scores and in what domains are the gains being made most quickly.

Parent & Community Involvement

The opening of an Excel Center site in Anderson is primarily the result of local community interest in the school. The efforts of the Anderson Impact Center have been essential in creating an opportunity for the community to be involved in the school.

It is unlikely that many parents of students will be involved in the school. Students in the Excel Center will have a higher degree of independence than traditional high school students; many students will no longer live with parents or guardians, and many students may be taking care of their own children. The school has been designed with the expectation that most students live on their own and are more likely to be responsible for their own lives.

In cases where students are still below age 18, Excel Center staff and coaches make every effort to work with parents in the same focus as traditional high schools. Coaches are often the line of communication between the school and families. Coaches communicate school expectations with parents, provide opportunities for parents to be involved with life of the school, and work with families to address any challenges or barriers that may keep younger students from continuing their education. Coaches will be the primarily liaison between school and the families of Excel Center students. Coaches will meet with students and their families to understand the family dynamics affecting student success. Where necessary, GEI's Student and Family Services will be used to help address any issues or barriers to family well-being that affect a student's ability to be successful in school. Most often, these barriers will relate to providing care for young children of students.

Community partners will be critical to the school's success. Tangible examples of community partnerships might include:

- Connecting students to post-secondary academic opportunities. Through Ivy Tech Community College's Dual Credit offerings, a student would be able to take courses leading to an HVAC certification while enrolled in the school. These courses will allow each student to earn high school credit.

- The Anderson Impact Center plans on using the Robinson Elementary School to house additional community supports and not-for-profit organizations located in the same building. This coordination of community services will provide much more targeted supports for students of the Excel Center in the same building. For example, many of the adults in adult education or job training programs may be parents or relatives of children in the Excel school.
- Goodwill Industries operates a Goodwill store in Anderson. Students who can make working in the store a viable option can be employed by Goodwill.

Evidence of community support is included in Attachment 18.

Start-Up & Operations

A start-up plan for the school is included in Attachment 19.

The Budget and Financial Planning Worksheet for the school is included in Attachment 20.

Transportation

The Excel Center's extended hours of operation make it difficult to coordinate large-scale transportation programs for each student, and unlike more traditional schools, each student's physical attendance at the Excel Center will be based upon his or her work and family schedules, with students arriving and leaving the Center at various times.
The school will use several options for student transportation.

1) The school – and its additional satellite locations – will be located in areas with significant need, so that The Excel Center is within walking distance of many students' homes or work locations. Additional locations for The Excel Center will be chosen, in part, based on geographic availability and demographic need.
2) The school will be located on or very near a bus line, and students may use the City of Anderson Transportation System (CATS) to get to school. For those students who qualify for income[3] may use the CATS and not be able to afford bus passes. CATS staff have indicated a willingness to work with Excel Center staff to accommodate their bus routes to ensure that buses are running to make sure students are on time.
3) Many students will have their own cars and will be able to transport themselves to and from school.

The Excel Center does not anticipate scheduling many extracurricular events like field trips or athletic events. However, in the rare event that the Excel Center needs additional transportation assistance, the buses used by the Indianapolis Metropolitan High School may be used to transport students to special events.

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[3] Although the Excel Center does not participate in the federal lunch program, it uses Free or Reduced Lunch status as the means of determining that an individual's income qualifies the student to receive a bus pass.

The Excel Center will provide an array of supports to homeless students and will not withdraw any critical school services to students who are homeless. These students may enroll without school records and will be given transportation support (via bus passes) like other students. Because the main means of transporting students is through the city bus system, students are able to use CATS from any location in the city.

Safety and Security

Goodwill has developed its Safety, Loss Prevention and Security department to manage security and safety in its facilities. Each Goodwill location is regularly audited for compliance with applicable safety, including, inventory management, labor reporting/payroll, and back-office processing policies and procedures. Security audit scores lower than 90% result in immediate follow-up and remediation until the known exposures are corrected. Goodwill also has a high resolution digital security camera system in operation in many locations. The camera system is both a deterrent to theft / misappropriation / misbehavior, and a tremendous tool for training, investigation, and prosecution of those who would steal from or otherwise harm Goodwill and/or those it serves.

Goodwill's chief financial officer and safety director work actively with the insurance agents and carriers for risk assessments, audits, training, policy reviews, additions and deletions to listed coverage, and for business development practices. Only the chief financial officer or the chief executive officer can make changes to insurance coverage, identify a third party as an additional insured, or provide proof of insurance to a third party.

Goodwill has developed a comprehensive disaster recovery and business continuity plan, including a fully redundant data hot site at our Airport Place retail outlet facility. Goodwill conducts regular drills and audits to assess our preparedness in the unlikely event of a total or partial loss of the Michigan Street headquarters facility.

Technology Specifications and Requirements

The Excel Center will equip its classroom space and resource area for students to use for self-directed online learning, TABE, and computer instruction. Laptop computers will be available for students to use in certain areas of the building. The school will also have smart boards in selected classrooms, media projectors to lead courses, and laptop computers for staff. Computers will be equipped with standard office software – including word processing, spreadsheets and presentation software (in Microsoft Office).

Core educational content will be delivered via web-based connections; this structure stores student work on Goodwill services or through vendors who use cloud-based storage of student work. This arrangement ensures that students do not need to purchase their own storage media, nor will they need to pay for any aspect of the Excel Center's technology plan. In addition, students – most of whom do not have Internet access at home – will not be required to use this technology at home, nor will they be required to purchase or obtain any equipment to use the school's online system.

Each computer and/or piece of technology will be assigned to a particular classroom to be used in that location. Students will be able to log in to any computer in the Excel Center to retrieve and access his/her information. All media equipment will be tagged and monitored by Goodwill Industries' IT functions.

Goodwill Industries' IT staff is responsible for maintaining the upkeep and operations of all technology. Goodwill support staff provide support and access across all of Goodwill's locations in its 29-county area. Goodwill provides telephone-based support and monitors upkeep of its technology platform 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Staff and students are able to contact tech support at any time by calling x4444 on the Excel Center's telephone network.

In the event that the school's data connection is impaired or lost, Goodwill IT staff begin working to repair the connection immediately. Any equipment that fails or needs to be replaced will be done so by Goodwill. If the data connection is not working, Excel Center instructors will provide more in-paper instruction and students will be able to continue their online credit recovery program at other times. TABE and other student tests will be delivered in paper formats. Access to the Goodwill network is secured. Data is retained by Goodwill staff and secured. Goodwill also maintains a disaster recovery hot site that activates a back-up server in the event of a major failure of its technology system. All vendors of online content used by Goodwill (currently the A+nywhere Learning System, Lexia, iLearn and Reading Plus) have similar data backup policies and procedures.

Insurance Coverage

Goodwill Education Initiatives already has a policy for liability insurance through Gregory and Appel, Inc. Gregory and Appel has an A-BEST insurance rating and is able to accommodate coverage for the Excel Center for the amounts required by the Mayor. This current policy applies for all Excel Centers in Indiana and this policy would apply to a site in Anderson. Proof of this insurance coverage is included as Attachment 20.

Facilities

In partnership with the Anderson Impact Center, GEI has identified the Robinson School Building as the identified site for the Excel Center in Anderson. The Robinson School building is easily accessible to youth and adults throughout the Impact Center's target area and from other parts of the city as well. The building appears to be in good condition and is large enough to accommodate the various ancillary programs the Impact Center programs has planned to incorporate into its vision for the local community.

The Robinson Elementary School is located at 630 Nichol Avenue, Anderson, IN 46016. The Impact Center has a vision for using this building to house an Excel Center location and, in another part of the building, an array of community supports for partners to provide services. The Robinson Elementary School building has an array of classrooms with collapsible and movable walls, which allows for flexibility in establishing larger classroom space out of the existing facility. In addition, the space allows for a drop-in center with an outside play area, a resource area, and a student meeting area near GEI leadership and other places. The space allows for 16 classrooms, a Resource Area. All of this space can be adjusted easily to accommodate larger classrooms, team-taught rooms and general meeting space.

Facility Layout
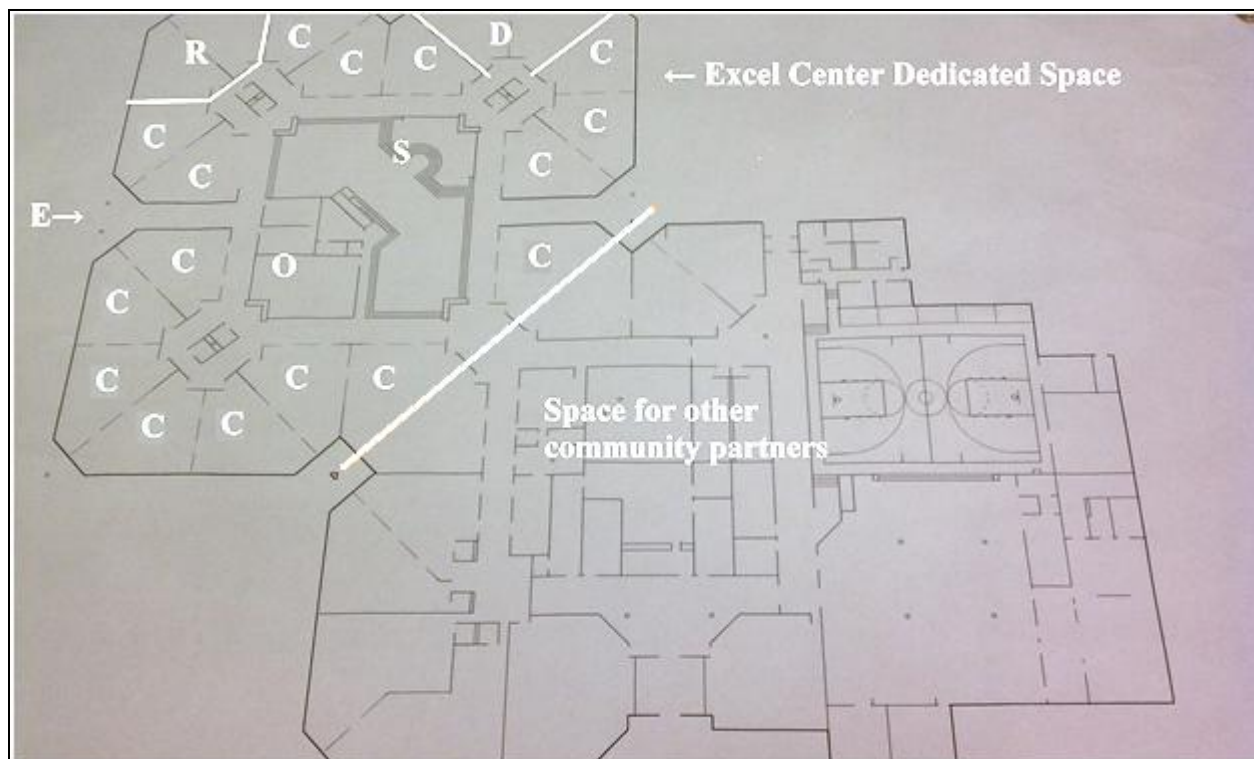
Key:

- E – Entrance to School
- C – Classroom
- R – Resource Area
- O – Office Space for Coaches
- S – Student Meeting Area
- D – Drop in Center (with outside play area)

Budget & Finance

Goodwill Education Initiatives follows Generally Accepted Accounting Practices and State Board of Account requirements in all of its bookkeeping for its schools. Day-to-day financial management is provided by the business manager of GEI, who also acts as the assistant treasurer for the board. This person will be assisted and supported by the chief financial officer of Goodwill, who is also the board treasurer of GEI, and the controller of Goodwill. Payroll is managed by GEI staff for all of its employees. Also included in the financial operations is Bookkeeping Plus, who produces all of the required state financial reports. GEI's chief operating officer also helps oversee the financial matters of the school. The State Board of Accounts conducts a bi-annual audit as part of normal state oversight. GEI does not contract for any additional business services other than what is provided by Goodwill Industries of Central Indiana, Inc.

Goodwill Education Initiatives is subject to an annual audit as a part of Goodwill Industries' annual audits.

Replication Capacity

GEI currently operates two charters in Marion County, Indiana. Both charters were authorized by the Mayor of Indianapolis. Under the agreement with the Mayor, the one Excel Center charter allows the school to operate in three sites in Marion County. This structure allows for a robust administrative support – including partnering with local community groups – while still maintaining a small, intimate and collegial classroom environment in each specific site. Each new site is approved by the Mayor prior to opening.

Interest in the Excel Center reaches across the state of Indiana, and there is strong interest in opening Excel Centers in additional sites across the state. Because the management capacity of the school can reach much of central Indiana – and the need is so great in many communities across Indiana – the Excel Center can be extended to multiple sites. GEI management has established a structure that allows administrative staff to monitor and provide oversight across a number of Excel Center locations, training staff and ensuring that the school's culture is aligned with the Excel Center model.

The size and skill level of GEI's current administration – along with the support of Goodwill Industries of Central Indiana – allows the Excel Center leadership to explore opening up additional sites within Indiana. The organization is familiar with replicating new sites – as they do with Goodwill stores – and can bring its educational model to more individuals when it can. In addition, the support of Goodwill Industries allows the school to grow financially and meet the obligations of charter school start-up funding, and the support staff that support the school have additional capacity to grow. This structure already allows GEI staff to explore opening up new sites and allows local-level management to focus exclusively on maintaining a quality educational environment.

Portfolio Review & Performance Record

GEI has two schools in its portfolio, The Indianapolis Metropolitan High School and the Excel Center. Both schools' performance records are discussed below.

The Indianapolis Met

Results: The Indianapolis Metropolitan School educates students with significant challenges and prepares them for lifelong academic growth. The Met's PL221 Grade indicated improvement of 7.2% for the year, with performance rated at 77.2%. These scores indicated that the Met would have received an "A" rating, except the school did not make Adequate Yearly Progress and therefore is capped at a "C" rating.

Many students who enroll in the met come from challenging family situations and are academically behind. While the school has a marginal four-year graduation rate, its five-year graduation rate is better than other schools of similar complexity – free/reduced lunch status. The school has a five-year graduation rate of 74.0%,

Causes: The Indianapolis Met's organizational culture establishes strong relationships between staff and students. The school spends considerable effort trying to ensure relevance of its educational program, and, given enough time, the school is able to bring students who are behind in their academic progress to the point where they can continue on to postsecondary education.

Challenges: The Indianapolis Met has a challenging student population to work with: high rates of free/reduced lunch and special education – coupled with students who are on average two grade levels

behind when they enroll – makes it difficult to achieve short-term success with this population. The Met focuses on long-term growth, and enables students to work to achieve their goals even if it takes five or six years to do so.

Value to Network: As the first school that GEI operates, the Indianapolis Metropolitan High School has been instrumental in shaping the operations, philosophy, and vision of all of GEI's schools. The school works with a non-traditional student population with significant educational obstacles: most students enter the Met at least two grade levels behind. The school has high levels of free and reduced lunch, and many students come from broken homes, struggle with homelessness, and have few resources. The Indianapolis Met follows the pattern of Relationships, Relevance and Rigor that remain instrumental to the Excel Center's approach. In addition, the Indianapolis Met has helped GEI learn the basic operations of operating and managing a charter school.

Perhaps most notably, the Excel Center concept was a product of realizing that many students in the Indianapolis Met high school were ill-suited to the academic environment within a high school of traditional-age students (roughly 14 to 18). These students were predominantly older and under-credited (for example, 19-year olds at a freshman level), and very few of these students were able to succeed in the Met's environment. Recognizing that, in reality, there were few viable options that met the particular needs of this older student population, Bess explored the concept of the Excel Center as a means of re-engaging older youth and adults with a high school education.

The Excel Center is the other school in GEI's portfolio.

Results: It is difficult to assess the progress for the Excel Center so far, as the first year of operation still has yet to give valid data. The Excel Center's PL221 Grade is based upon a cohort of 10 students, which does not allow for valid extrapolations to the entire student body.

Causes: The newness of the educational model for the Excel Center is a challenge to measure and assess. In addition, a school composed of students who have not been successful elsewhere has a unique set of challenges that are difficult to measure by traditional, one-size-fits-all approaches. To accurately measure the progress of the Excel Center, it should be evaluated on the merits of its approach with its target population, using relevant and strict accountability measures that take its unusual student body into account. Performance is sought to be improved by refining the instructional methods as new data is gathered about how students are progressing. Since its first year, the academic model has moved away from student-led pacing (which often was too slow to lead to results) and a stronger focus on workplace readiness. These indicators have already seen improvements in the pace of credit attainment and student growth (as measured on TABE). In addition, while the school granted 400 credits to students over the course of its first year, the first eight-week term of 2011 saw students earn 777 credits.

Financial statements for GEI's schools are included in Attachment 24. Statements for Goodwill Industries and its affiliated entities are included in Attachment 25.

GEI has not experienced a termination of contract with a charter school. No charters have been revoked, non-renewed, shortened or been conditionally approved. The Indianapolis Met received a full seven-year charter renewal from the Mayor of Indianapolis in 2010. GEI's schools have not had any performance deficiencies or violations that led to authorizer intervention. GEI has no prior history of litigation.

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