



The Excel Center – Gary

Application for Charter Renewal

October 2022

Presented to the Indiana Charter School Board

By Goodwill LEADS, Inc.

Exhibit A

Application Checklist - Renewal

#	Document	Page Limit	Format	Completed
	Renewal Proposal Overview	Use Template in <u>Exhibit B</u>	PDF	
	Renewal Application	30	MS Word or PDF	
1	Budget and Staffing Workbook	Template	MS Excel	
2	Budget Narrative	5 pages	MS Word or PDF	
3	Statement of Assurances (only one form required)	Use Template in <u>Exhibit C</u>	PDF	
4	Entire Application (excluding items exempt from Indiana's Public Access Laws assuming prior written approval from Indiana's Public Access Counselor)		PDF	

Exhibit B

Renewal Application Overview

The applicant group’s **designated representative** will serve as the contact for all communications, interviews, and notices from the ICSB regarding the submitted application.

Charter School Name: The Excel Center – Gary

Charter School Address: 4610 W. Ridge Road
Gary, IN 46408

Designated Representative and Contact Information (Phone & Email): Dr. Christopher Alber
574-472-7381
calber@excelcenterhs.org

Mission Statement: The mission of the Excel Center of Northern Indiana is to provide adults the coursework and support needed to earn an Indiana High School diploma to pursue career and college pathways

School Leader/Principal: Theresa A. Knipe

Current Board of Directors	
Debie Coble – President / CEO	Bishop Eddie Miller
Anthony Allison – Chair	Mary Pat Latowski
Andrea Pearman – Vice Chair	Pastor Kelly Williams
Dana Trowbridge – Treasurer	Louis Gonzales
Juliann Jankowski	Marguerite Taylor
Ann Carol Nash	Wally McQuade

Grade Levels and Student Enrollment

Complete Tab 1 of either the Enrollment Plan for K-12 Schools or the Enrollment Plan for Adult High Schools, as applicable. Please ensure that you are completing the correct Enrollment Plan.

Identify ESP or partner organization (if applicable): Not applicable

Executive Summary

Mission and Vision

The vision of The Excel Center Gary is to deliver on the mission of Goodwill Industries of Michiana, Inc.: to strengthen communities by empowering individuals and families through education, training, and job placement.

The Excel Center Gary brings this mission closer to home by committing that it will provide adults the educational opportunities and support services needed to earn an Indiana High School Core 40 diploma and begin post-secondary education to pursue career and college pathways. The Excel Center Gary works to develop career paths that offer greater employment opportunities and individualized career planning. The Excel Centers “meet students where they are” in their education by providing flexible structure and supportive relationships to help students manage work, life, and family concerns as they achieve their educational goals.

The Excel Center Gary is committed to reaching the thousands of students that drop out of high school each year, allowing them access to accelerated learning, post-secondary education, high-growth jobs, and enhanced career potential. The desire is for individuals to find the hope of stability as they discover self-sufficiency and break the cycle of poverty in their families and communities with the power of education that The Excel Center provides.

History

In 2014, Goodwill Industries of Michiana, Inc. (GIM) leadership created Goodwill LEADS, Inc. (GWL) a not-for-profit entity, to operate charter schools. With the Indiana Charter School Board Authorization, the first GIM Excel Center opened in South Bend in 2015, thus beginning GIM and GWL’s experience in operating schools.

The Excel Center Gary follows the model under a license from Goodwill Education Initiatives, Inc. (GEI) and is a high school designed for adults who previously dropped out of high school and are seeking to re-engage in their education to earn a high school diploma with the goal of either increasing the value in the job market or begin postsecondary education.

The concept of GIM creating a place for adults to achieve their high school diploma was well received in the community due to GIM’s positive reputation of assisting individuals with finding employment. Understanding the two greatest barriers after fear of returning to school are transportation and childcare, The Excel Centers offer both transportation support and childcare. However, childcare is beyond babysitting. The Kids Excel program is a drop-in center that offers the High Scope curriculum.

The Excel Center Gary is uniquely positioned on the Goodwill campus which also houses a

Career Center providing students additional support and services through GIM. GWL's confidence in the success of the South Bend campus led to approving the expansion in 2017 to Hammond and to Gary in 2018. The fourth Excel Center opened in Elkhart in 2021.

Community Need

Many students are failing to graduate high school, so The Excel Center is filling the need to get these students back in school to get their Core 40 diploma. In 2019, there were nearly 3,700 Indiana students that dropped out¹. Even though some were categorized as leaving to home-school, many never did. Because students leave public high schools for different reasons, public charter schools have become more competitive in the Lake County area with 10 schools servicing 9-12 students and The Excel Center Gary being one of them.

In only six years, GIM started four Excel Centers and remains committed to serving the communities in north central and northwest Indiana. The Excel Center Gary has a history of support from the mayor, and the community as they embrace the center as a resource to Gary and the surrounding cities. This is evident as the city added The Excel Center on the route of the Gary Public Transportation.

Outcomes

The Excel Centers experienced challenges during the 2020 pandemic which created a negative impact on enrollment, and finances. Students, teachers, and staff worked hard to navigate the barriers of online education. According to the US Census Bureau Household Pulse Survey², the most socioeconomically disadvantaged households do not use online educational resources for distance learning at the same rates as high-income households. While the teachers and staff worked to make a student-friendly virtual learning environment, the Gary adult learners faced these socioeconomical disadvantages which caused them to be less engaged virtually, as well as less likely to continue their education post-pandemic. The Excel Center Gary was placed on the list of schools Held Harmless as academic standards and expectations were greatly impacted by COVID-19. While The Excel Center Gary has seen the hardship of a pandemic, it has chosen to focus on being a sustainable and successful resource to a community that continues to need the support of adult education. The Excel Center Gary is now at its highest enrollment post-pandemic at 137 students with the 2022-23 September count. The projected school enrollment for the next five years is included below. As of June 2022, the Excel Centers operated by GWL have produced over 500 graduates. (Table 1)

School Enrollment Projections
(must align with Renewal Application Enrollment Plan)

School Name: Goodwill LEADS, Inc. d/b/a The Excel Center - Gary
 Location: Gary Community School Corp
 Renewal Year: 2023 - 24 SY

Is the school an Adult High School (please see instructions): Yes No Complete Rows 32 and 37-40 only.

Enrollment	Current Year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Notes & Instructions
	2022 - 23 SY	2023 - 24 SY	2024 - 25 SY	2025 - 26 SY	2026 - 27 SY	2027 - 28 SY	
Kindergarten							<p>Please complete the enrollment table for the school's current year, and provide enrollment projections for the next five (5) years beginning with the Renewal Year.</p> <p>1) An "adult high school" is a charter school that has a majority of enrolled students that: (1) belong to a graduation cohort that has already graduated; or (2) are over the age of eighteen (18) years of age; at the time the student was first enrolled at the school. <u>If you are an adult high school, complete Rows 32, and 37-40 only.</u></p> <p>2) A "virtual student" is defined as a student for whom at least fifty percent (50%) of the instructional services received from the school is virtual instruction. Virtual instruction means instruction that is provided in an interactive learning environment created through technology in which students are separated from their teacher by time or space, or both. Students receiving more than 50% of their instruction virtually generate eighty-five percent (85%) of the foundation formula amount rather than 100%. The analysis is applicable on a per student basis.</p> <p>3) The "basic" tuition support grant for K-12 schools is equal to the following (Foundation Amount X ADM) + ((Complexity Multiplier X Complexity Index) X ADM)</p> <p>The Distribution calculations are an estimate based on projected enrollment multiplied by basic tuition support in the amounts as set forth in the most recently passed (2021-23 FY) budget- Foundation = \$5,995 for the 2021-22 SY and \$6,235 for the 2022-23 SY (and beyond) and Complexity Multiplier = \$3,775. The school's actual distribution will be based on the school's ADM count of eligible pupils enrolled in the school on two count dates (in September and February) multiplied by the basic tuition support calculation. The calculation uses the Complexity Index for the school corporation in which the proposed charter school will be located- the school's actual Complexity Index amount will likely differ. The Special Education Grant amount is calculated on Tab 4 and uses the grant amount for mild/moderate disabilities (\$2,657 for the 2022-23 SY). The grant amount for severe disabilities is \$10,575 for the 2022-23 SY).</p> <p>4) The Adult Learner Grant amount for adult high schools is \$6,750. The Adult Distribution is calculated</p>
Grade 1							
Grade 2							
Grade 3							
Grade 4							
Grade 5							
Grade 6							
Grade 7							
Grade 8							
Grade 9							
Grade 10							
Grade 11							
Grade 12							
Total K-12 Enrollment:	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Adult Learners (1)	137	150	165	189	217	249	
Total Adult Enrollment:	137	150	165	189	217	249	
Estimated % of Students:							
Special Education	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	
English Learners	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%	
Free/Reduced Priced Lunch	46%	46%	46%	46%	46%	46%	
Virtual Students (2)							
K-12 Distribution (3)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
Adult Distribution (4)	\$ 924,750.00	\$ 1,012,500.00	\$ 1,113,750.00	\$ 1,275,750.00	\$ 1,464,750.00	\$ 1,680,750.00	

Table 1: Goodwill Education Initiatives, Inc., School Graduates

	South Bend	Hammond	Gary	Elkhart	Total
15-16	7				7
16-17	32				32
17-18	37	14			51
18-19	49	40	7		96
19-20	45	25	16		86
20-21	34	48	34		116
21-22	39	45	31	10	125
Overall	243	168	88	10	513

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- 1) New policy aims to stop Indiana high schools from writing off students who fall behind, Chalkbeat Indiana, Retrieved from <https://in.chalkbeat.org/2020/7/9/21319180/indiana-high-schools-with-hidden-dropouts-could-see-dips-in-grad-rates>
 - 2) Schooling During the COVID-19 Pandemic, US Census Bureau. Retrieved from [Schooling During the COVID-19 Pandemic \(census.gov\)](#)

Section I – Performance Review

Successes

Since opening its doors in the 2018-19 school year, The Excel Center Gary has had many successes with partnerships, community events, and increasing enrollment. However, in March of 2020 we encountered a challenge to these successes with the spread of COVID-19.

Despite the closing of the school building during the pandemic, the teachers were able to engage the students online using a variety of delivery methods and programs including, but not limited to: Read Works, Common Lit, Newsela, Boom Writer, USA Test Prep, Plato, Khan Academy, and Google Classroom. The Excel Center Gary’s commitment to their students during these trying times helped deliver successful instruction to our student body.

The Excel Center Gary graduation and College and Career Readiness (CCR) rates have been a strong indicator of graduate quality throughout the school’s history. According to the ICSB graduation statistics utilizing Metrics 1.1 & 1.3, the data is inconsistent with The Excel Center Gary’s graduation rate data that is collected through Synergy, the schools’ student management system. Table 2 displays The Excel Center’s Graduation Information from opening in the 2018-19 school year through the end of the 2021-22 school year. Reviewing the data, The Excel Center Gary’s College and Career Readiness (CCR) rate has been 100% all four years. The Excel Center is accountable to the adult high school graduation rate and is not accountable to the metric of a 4-year graduation cohort in the same way as a high school for traditional age students and by reviewing the data in Table 2 is strong in this area as well.

**Table 2: The Excel Center
Gary Graduation Data**

	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	Comprehensive
# Graduates	7	16	34	31	88
# Terms Enrolled (avg)	2.4	4.8	3.6	5.1	4
# Classes/ Term (avg)	2.6	3.2	2.8	3.5	3
# Credits Obtained (avg)	19.7	26.7	22.2	21.8	22.6
Career College Readiness					
State Test Out	43%	6.3%	14.9%	13.4%	19.0%
Pathway Option	57%	93.8%	85.1%	86.6%	81.0%
Service Based	0	33.3%	1.0%	6.7%	10.0%
Work Based	100%	66.7%	97.9%	93.3%	89.0%
Project Based	0%	0.0%	1.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Certifications	71%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	93.0%
Dual Credit	29%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	7.0%

Demographics					
18 - 25	57%	25.0%	67.2%	71.8%	55.0%
26 - 32	29%	43.8%	14.1%	9.1%	24.0%
33 - 40	14%	12.5%	4.2%	15.8%	12.0%
41 - 47	0%	12.5%	12.2%	0.0%	6.0%
48 - 55	0%	0.0%	2.4%	0.0%	1.0%
56+	0%	6.3%	0.0%	3.3%	2.0%
Ethnicity					
Black	86%	62.5%	46.4%	69.8%	66.0%
Hispanic	0%	18.8%	10.0%	16.8%	11.0%
White	14%	18.8%	26.7%	3.0%	16.0%
Other	0%	0.0%	1.0%	10.4%	3.0%
Sex					
Female	57%	93.8%	50.0%	54.3%	64.0%
Male	43%	6.3%	50.0%	45.7%	36.0%
English Learners	0%	6.3%	4.8%	3.0%	3.5%
Special Education	0%	0.0%	6.3%	0.1%	1.6%

Performance Dashboard Summary Measures Not Meeting or Exceeding Standard

The Excel Center Gary is not currently meeting eight of the ten Financial Accountability Indicators. There are a few key factors that are affecting several of the indicators.

The following Indicators are impacted by GIM's Line of Credit (LOC) that has been extended to the Gary campus:

- Current Ratio
- Debt to Asset Ratio
- Debt Service Coverage Ratio

GIM has extended a line of credit to The Excel Center Gary campus to support operations as the school pursues a profitable status. In years 2019, 2020 and 2021 respectively, the outstanding balance of the LOC was \$335,000, \$638,000, and \$703,000. There is a maximum availability of \$750,000. No draws have been made on the LOC for 2022. The Excel Center Gary is paying the interest portion of the LOC monthly, but principal payments are not currently being made. It is GW's intention to not call this note, but to allow the school to pay it off over time as profitability allows. The GWL Board of Directors, as sponsor for the school, has confirmed this position in several conversations over the last year.

The LOC shows as a current liability for each of the years being measured. Given the position by GIM, if the LOC was excluded from the calculation, the current ratio for 2019 would be 3.6, for 2020 would be 3.85 and for 2021 would be .48. The 2021 current ratio has been significantly affected by the drop in students related to the pandemic from February 2020 to September 2020 and the very low unemployment rate from February 2021 to September 2021. The student count rebounded in February 2022 and has continued to grow in September of 2022.

Days Cash on Hand and Cash Flow Indicators have also been impacted by reduced student count. Cash on Hand dropped from 64 days in 2020 to 8 days in 2021. Cash Flow dropped from positive \$306,400 to negative \$190,600. As mentioned above, because The Excel Centers meet the mission of GIM, the organization will continue to financially support the school until it meets its profitability goals. Ways that GIM is supporting the Excel Gary campus include providing in-kind administrative services for some positions, such as accounting and HR, and in-kind advertising dollars.

Throughout the last year as cash flow became more challenging the team reviewed all expenses to determine if any could be reduced. As a result of that review, several expense line items were eliminated as not needed or reduced through efficiencies. Examples include expenses related to third party security services, printing and other IT/telephone expenses, and advertising among others.

Net Assets Margins are negative in current year and aggregated three-year. As mentioned above, as student count increases and expense controls are implemented, these indicators will improve.

Section II: Improvement

(1) Sustain and build academic, organizational, and operational success over the next term.

- a. Governing board**
- b. Leadership team**
- c. Teaching staff**
- d. Academic achievement**

The governing body of The Excel Centers of Michiana is the Goodwill L.E.A.D.S. Board of Directors (GWL). The board is committed to the well-being of our schools through a focus of sustaining success and encouraging continuous improvement in our Excel Center programming. The four Excel Centers, including The Excel Center Gary, are a part of the GWL network established in 2014 with a sustained track record of success. The GWL board collaborated with our southern neighbors, The Goodwill Education Initiatives, Inc. (GEI), to provide an educational opportunity for our communities in Northern Indiana.

a) Governing Board

The GWL Board of Directors functions as the governing authority over the four campuses of the Excel Centers in northern Indiana, which includes The Excel Center Gary. The GWL board has managed the school network operations since 2014 in a manner that successfully incorporates the needs of the community to create a successful educational opportunity for our adult learners.

The GWL Board of Directors is composed of civic leaders across northern Indiana representing the business, financial, educational, and workforce development sectors. The board members have considerable management and organizational experience in both for-profit and non-for-profit business ventures. The diverse board reflects the communities and educational needs in Elkhart, South Bend, Hammond, and Gary. The GWL Board is dedicated to the mission of GIM, to improve the educational opportunities for our adults. At any point in time, there is one to three GWL board members that serve on the GIM board, which provides continuity of the mission. This board strives to remain student-centered and assist our adults in earning a Core 40 diploma and provide opportunities for postsecondary and career options that lead to a successful and productive life.

The GWL Board of Directors follow five key principles to guide their decision-making. The principles include Learn, Educate, Advance, Develop, and Students. The board's focus is to create meaningful and engaging learning opportunities for adults. These adult learners need an

opportunity to advance and develop their skills that are incorporated in The Excel Center diploma. The Excel Center is concerned about the students' post-high school opportunities, therefore the GWL and GIM are continuing to expand the Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses and Partnerships with the Center for Workforce Innovation (CWI). The GWL and GIM provide the funding which allows the students to receive training in careers that will move them past "just getting by" and into "abundant living."

The GWL board plays a critical role in the success of the programming by providing oversight which include, but not limited to, the areas listed below:

- Establish policy
- Approve annual plans
- Approve annual budget
- Examine key performance indicators
- Secure our financial resources
- Assess our performance
- Monitor procedures to stay in compliance with all applicable laws, regulations, and contracts, including the requirements of the schools' charters

Ultimately, the GWL Board of Directors is committed to the continuous improvement of the Excel Centers in northern Indiana. This process includes evaluating the schools to determine if they are meeting the expectations of a quality educational program with academics, fiscal responsibility, and compliance with local and federal laws.

Communication is a key component of the GWL Board and The Excel Center administration. The Vice President of The Excel Centers provides a weekly update in his Excel Edition newsletter highlighting accomplishments in the domains of guaranteed and viable curriculum, safety, and community engagement. The board meets quarterly with the Vice President and the five directors to analyze information and make data-driven decisions to employ best practices across the network.

b) Leadership Team

Debie Coble is the President & CEO for Goodwill Industries of Michiana, Inc. She started with the organization in 1990 as a store manager, became the Vice President of Workforce Development Services in 1996, and in November of 2013, she began serving as the President & CEO. Under Ms. Coble's leadership, Goodwill Industries of Michiana, Inc. has added several new programs including Nurse Family Partnership, Excel Center High Schools, Group Violence Initiative, Senior Community Employment Services, Workforce Investment Opportunity Act

(youth), as well as various Career and Technical trainings, including but not limited to automotive, CNC, welding, and customer service. She completed Goodwill Industries International's Executive Training Program in 2007 and serves on several boards: Indiana University Advisory Board, Group Violence Intervention Taskforce, South Bend Regional Chamber and Northwest Indiana Influential Women's Association.

Dr. Chris Alber is the Vice President of the Excel Centers of Michiana. He was hired on July 1, 2022, with 28 years of experience in education. Dr. Alber is committed to growing the leadership opportunities for our administration and faculty. He arranged a central office member to attend the Synergy Connect 2022 conference in Nashville, Tennessee in October of 2022. Dr. Alber, a school director and the Lead Life at Gary will all attend the Learning Lab professional development in Memphis, Tennessee to learn student recruitment and retention strategies in October of 2022. Mrs. Coble and Dr. Alber will attend the National Excel Center Advocacy Day in Washington, D.C. in February of 2023. They are representing the National Excel Center Office to educate members of Congress on the benefits of charter schools and their pivotal role in adult education.

Serving as Director of Instruction at The Excel Center Gary, Theresa Knipe has dedicated most of her professional life to ensuring people are making the best for themselves in either the STEM community, education, or both. Ms. Knipe worked in the business sector for several years but returned to her true calling in education where she has remained for 19 years. Ms. Knipe's unusual career path has allowed her to travel across the country to present at workshops, receive national grants, and participate in distinctive fellowships. Throughout this time, she has built many networks in her local community, at the state level, through the state Department of Education, and across the U.S. which has strengthened her popularity in public relations, instructional teaching, and leadership speaking.

c) Teaching Staff

The Excel Center Gary currently has six full-time licensed instructors. Always looking to increase rigor in the classroom, teachers meet after school in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to work on curriculum, classroom lessons, student activities, and school culture.

The Excel Center Gary invites different speakers from various forms of industry such as, banking, environmental, business, and public services. Another way Gary incorporates the community is by inviting college speakers to give information about their programs, available scholarships, and student life activities for post-graduation options. Gary Excel also works very closely with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) program to help students obtain their certifications. WIOA helps pay for certifications while students work through their program and

seek job assistance post-certification. The Excel Center Gary has a partnership with Purdue Extensions where the Healthy Nutrition program is embedded into the health curriculum and with Ivy Tech College where students are privileged to a free class after graduation.

Coaching & Advancement

The Excel Center Gary has a Lead Life Coach and two Life Coaches. The College and Career Readiness (CCR) Life Coach teaches Senior Seminar in person and online while ensuring that students follow graduation pathways. The other is the Media Specialist/Life Coach who is responsible for the monthly contact with students regarding schedules, graduation plans, and barriers encountered during his/her time at The Excel Center. The Lead Life Coach assists in the guidance of life coaches. Some of the responsibilities of a Lead Life Coach include, but are not limited to:

- Networking and Outreach
- Enrollment and Retention
- Maintain McKinney Vento participation to provide aid for students
- Form partnerships with certification training facilities and colleges
- Look out for new opportunities for Excel students
- Link students with different resources such as food banks, financial institutions, transportation, health clinics, and shelters.

The Excel Centers have formed a partnership with Youth WIOA which assist in paying for youth certification training. The WIOA Youth Career Advisor visits the schools weekly to meet with our students, and The Excel Centers administer the TABE test at The Excel Center instead of the WorkOne offices.

Certifications obtained:

- 1st year: Certified Business Professional (CBP), Hire Tech, Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), SERV Safe.
- 2nd year: Hire Tech; SERV Safe
- 3rd year: National Center for Construction Education & Research (NCCER), Certified Nursing Assistant (C.N.A), SERV Safe
- 4th year: Pharmacy Tech, Certified Clinical Medical Assistant (CCMA), NCCER, Emergency Telecommunicator Certification (ETC), C.N.A
- 5th year: Pharmacy Tech, CCMA, C.N.A

The collaboration between WorkOne Youth and The Excel Center Gary has opened many doors for the students. They have an ample selection of certifications and students with no work

experience, can obtain work experiences with pay. A few students have also obtained their driver's licenses while in school which is one less barrier that they must encounter.

Life Coaches assist students with referrals to Vocational Rehabilitation, Nurse-Family Practitioners, and the Larry Neff Career Center. College, career, and resource fairs are also coordinated during the year. These fairs are well attended by many local agencies and training facilities. The schools also have partnered with Ivy Tech for students to earn free college credits.

The Excel Center Gary had to go virtual for several months during the pandemic. Life Coaches reached out to students by phone, social media, as well as other means to stay connected. Social media included Facebook, Zoom, Team Meets, and iPhone facetime. Gradually, students were able to meet in person with their Life Coaches but still had the option to meet virtually. A positive aspect of this situation included students who were not able to meet in person before could now complete classes virtually. This worked well for employed or homebound individuals. While there was a positive aspect, it also created a struggle for students with no computers or Wi-Fi at home. The Excel Center Gary provided them with resources where they could obtain low-cost WI-FI, the use of school Chromebooks, or paper copies.

Kids Excel

The Excel Center addresses needs outside the classroom and provides free (drop-in), childcare centers. In the GIM network High Scope, a research and evidence-based early childhood curriculum, is utilized. It is a program that began in 1962 in Ypsilanti, Michigan with academically, at-risk children (High Scope Educational Research Foundation, 2019). Children who are raised in homes with limited education need a variety of new experiences and need to be fully engaged with the world around them in High Scope classrooms, children interact with materials and are encouraged to develop critical thinking and reasoning as they talk and explore the world around them. Teachers are trained in "best practices" with young children and offer a range of developmentally appropriate activities each day. Children are encouraged to make choices and to be "active learners" in all they do (High Scope Educational Research Foundation, 2019). Children in the care of Kids Excel receive comprehensive child assessment, which keys their parents into child development. In addition, Kids Excel focuses a great deal of time on parent education and family engagement, with the understanding that these are keys to the student's success long after they leave the doors of the Excel Center.

d) Academic Achievement

Upon his arrival to the GIM network, Dr Alber has identified the main goal as "to get our students here and help them transition to a career." Dr. Alber is ensuring the schools are

focusing on three domains to achieve the goal which are: Safety, Community Engagement and Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum. Ensuring school safety is a very important component of mental and physical well-being for both students and staff. Dr. Alber is addressing each building needs by working with Goodwill's security team. Community Engagement is another domain where each building has their niche but working on expanding. Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum, however, is the domain that is receiving the most attention because this ensures the quality of the teaching in the network. Each of the four campuses are actively engaged in examining and aligning in-class curriculum, instruction, assessments, and PLATO recovery courses. This is done through bi-monthly Professional Learning Communities organized by subjects. During this shared time, pacing guides, needs assessment, and obstacles are discussed to find an agreed upon remedy. This practice ensures building-wide support for better transition and professional delivery. Dr. Alber's educational philosophy is described in four tenets:

- Treat others respectfully
- Follow established procedures
- Inspect what you expect
- Hope is not a strategy

2) Identify any particular weaknesses, challenges, areas for improvement, and detail school's plan for addressing these needs.

a. Strengths

The Excel Center Gary has a strength in forming relationships with community businesses, colleges, and schools. Every partnership formed has helped the school attract students for enrollment. The approach provides an outreach with all staff members so that there is a constant influx of students throughout the year to grow our enrollment. The Excel Center Gary is still in the process of getting name recognition in the area, therefore staff networking is a priority for staff. Another focus is the school's presence on social media. The sites are updated daily to advertise the community's upcoming events to promote enrollment.

b. Weaknesses

The data collection determined student retention was a necessary area of improvement that impacted the enrollment count. The Excel Center Gary has made it a priority to focus on student retention by creating more opportunities for student engagement outside of the classroom with Pep rallies, the formation of a Student Council, and attendance incentives to correct this issue.

c. Challenges

An identified challenge for The Excel Center Gary is the amount of competing charter schools in the immediate area that also service 11-12 grade students. The Excel Center Gary has an advantage over these schools with face-to-face instructors, the Core 40 diploma, free transportation and childcare, and free tuition.

d. Opportunities

The Excel Center Gary is constantly looking for opportunities to strengthen its program and serve the community. In collaboration with Ivy Tech Lake County, a manufacturing course to support production has been created and has a dedicated classroom for instruction housed in The Excel Center Gary. This course will be available to students and community members.

e. Areas for Improvement

As previously mentioned, enrollment and retention are the priority at The Excel Center Gary. Ms. Knipe and the staff decided to use the information and create opportunities for students and increase the retention rates and it was successful in exceeding the 50% student retention goal during the 2021-22 school year. The Excel Center Gary's retention data for the 2021-22 is as follows:

Term 1: 46.41%

Term 2: 60.28%

Term 3: 61.85%

Term 4: 45.23%

Term 5: 67.85%

Overall Average: 53.44%

Using this information, the school has expanded on its ICSB SMART Goal for the 2022-23 school year which is: *To increase student credits earned average to 55% (up 5% from 21-22) or higher for the 2022-23 school year through student retention and new enrollment programs which will rely on each staff members' participation.* Calculations for this value is as such: *% credits earned = (actual / attempted) for all students; average based on five terms throughout the school year.*

3) **Any additional evidence, beyond data in dashboard, that supports school's case for renewal.**

All evidence and explanation have been provided throughout the sections of this renewal application.

Section III: Proposed Changes to Charter Agreement

No formal changes are being requested to the charter for The Excel Center – Gary at this time.

Total Payroll Taxes and Benefits:	\$ 129,515.67	\$ 133,082.49	\$ 136,732.23	\$ 140,440.66	\$ 144,326.88	\$ 148,327.51
Total Personnel Expenses:	\$ 754,379.42	\$ 776,693.24	\$ 795,650.73	\$ 823,245.16	\$ 847,616.38	\$ 872,716.76
Instructional Supplies and Resources - See Footnotes						
Textbooks	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Library/Media Services (Other than Staff)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Technology Supporting Instruction (computers, tablets, etc.)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Student Assessment	\$ 10,936.00	\$ 11,264.00	\$ 11,602.00	\$ 11,950.00	\$ 12,309.00	\$ 12,668.00
Instructional Software	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Professional Development	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,150.00	\$ 5,305.00	\$ 5,464.00	\$ 5,628.00	\$ 5,796.00
Enrichment Programs (athletics or extra-curricular activities)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Other Instructional Supplies (please describe)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total Instructional Supplies and Resources:	\$ 15,936.00	\$ 16,414.00	\$ 16,907.00	\$ 17,414.00	\$ 17,937.00	\$ 18,464.00
Administrative Resources						
Administrative Technology - Computers & Software (not SIS)	\$ 3,428.00	\$ 3,531.00	\$ 3,637.00	\$ 3,746.00	\$ 3,858.00	\$ 3,974.00
Other Administrative Expenses (please describe)	\$ 3,768.00	\$ 3,881.00	\$ 3,997.00	\$ 4,117.00	\$ 4,241.00	\$ 4,368.00
Total Administrative Resources:	\$ 7,196.00	\$ 7,412.00	\$ 7,634.00	\$ 7,863.00	\$ 8,099.00	\$ 8,342.00
Governing Board Expenses						
Legal Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Other Governing Board Expenses (please describe)	\$ 344.00	\$ 354.00	\$ 365.00	\$ 376.00	\$ 387.00	\$ 399.00
Total Governing Board Expenses:	\$ 344.00	\$ 354.00	\$ 365.00	\$ 376.00	\$ 387.00	\$ 399.00
Purchased or Other Services (do not include staff expenses)						
Audit Services	\$ 8,892.00	\$ 9,159.00	\$ 9,434.00	\$ 9,717.00	\$ 10,008.00	\$ 10,308.00
Payroll Services	\$ 5,792.00	\$ 5,966.00	\$ 6,145.00	\$ 6,329.00	\$ 6,519.00	\$ 6,715.00
Financial Accounting	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Printing, Publishing, Duplicating Services	\$ 2,344.00	\$ 2,414.00	\$ 2,487.00	\$ 2,561.00	\$ 2,638.00	\$ 2,717.00
Telecommunication & IT Services	\$ 25,532.00	\$ 26,298.00	\$ 27,087.00	\$ 27,899.00	\$ 28,736.00	\$ 29,599.00
Insurance (non-facility)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Travel	\$ 1,824.00	\$ 1,878.00	\$ 1,935.00	\$ 1,993.00	\$ 2,053.00	\$ 2,115.00
Mail Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Special Education Administration	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Student Information Services or Systems	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Food Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Transportation Services	\$ 8,048.00	\$ 8,289.00	\$ 8,538.00	\$ 8,794.00	\$ 9,058.00	\$ 9,329.00
Marketing Expenses	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,600.00	\$ 21,218.00	\$ 21,855.00	\$ 22,510.00	\$ 23,185.00
Other Services (please describe)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total Professional Purchased or Other Services:	\$ 72,432.00	\$ 74,604.00	\$ 76,844.00	\$ 79,148.00	\$ 81,522.00	\$ 83,968.00
Facilities Expenses (do not include staff expenses, e.g. custodian)						
Facility Lease/Mortgage Payments (please describe)	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 60,000.00
Capital Improvements	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Other Principal Payments	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 250,000.00	\$ 353,000.00
Operating Leases	\$ 2,020.00	\$ 2,081.00	\$ 2,143.00	\$ 2,207.00	\$ 2,274.00	\$ 2,342.00
Interest Payments	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Interest Expense	\$ 22,840.00	\$ 22,840.00	\$ 22,840.00	\$ 20,285.00	\$ 14,713.00	\$ 5,108.00
Depreciation Expense	\$ 72,916.00	\$ 72,916.00	\$ 72,916.00	\$ 72,916.00	\$ 72,916.00	\$ 72,916.00
Insurance (Facility)	\$ 9,668.00	\$ 9,958.00	\$ 10,257.00	\$ 10,565.00	\$ 10,882.00	\$ 11,208.00
Purchase of Furniture, Fixtures, & Equipment	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Electric & Gas	\$ 32,836.00	\$ 33,821.00	\$ 34,836.00	\$ 35,881.00	\$ 36,957.00	\$ 38,066.00
Water & Sewage	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Repair and Maintenance Services (including cost of supplies)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Custodial Services (including cost of supplies)	\$ 40,576.00	\$ 41,793.00	\$ 43,047.00	\$ 44,338.00	\$ 45,669.00	\$ 47,039.00
Waste Disposal	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Security Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Other Facility Expenses (please describe)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total Facilities Expenses:	\$ 240,856.00	\$ 243,409.00	\$ 246,039.00	\$ 246,192.00	\$ 249,411.00	\$ 253,679.00
Other Expenses - See Footnotes						
Indiana Charter School Board Administrative Fee (6)	\$ -	\$ 6,935.63	\$ 7,593.75	\$ 8,353.13	\$ 9,568.13	\$ 10,985.63
Management Fee (7)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Bank Fees	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Escrow	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Other Expenses (please describe)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total Other Expenses:	\$ -	\$ 6,935.63	\$ 7,593.75	\$ 8,353.13	\$ 9,568.13	\$ 10,985.63
TOTAL EXPENSES:	\$ 1,091,143.42	\$ 1,125,821.87	\$ 1,155,033.48	\$ 1,282,591.28	\$ 1,458,540.51	\$ 1,584,554.38
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS:	\$ (0.00)	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 24,223.91	\$ 39,506.56	\$ 132,043.41

Other Instructional Supplies and Resources (Row 108)

Other Administrative Expenses (Row 114)
 Goodwill staff working on behalf of LEADS. This includes financial and payroll services. Other expenses include graduation, general office, due/fees and Kid Excel supply expenses.

Other Governing Board Expenses (Row 120)
 Software used for submitting LEADS Board meeting material for member review prior to these meetings.

Other Services (Row 138)

Lease, Mortgage, & Other Facilities (Rows 143, 158)

Other Expenses (Row 167)

Footnotes:

- Including, but not limited to: alternative education program grants (IC 20-30-8); educational technology plan grants (IC 20-20-13); school safety plan grants (IC 5-2-10-1-6); secured school fund grants (IC 10-21-1-2); dual language pilot program grants (IC 20-20-41-2); teacher and student achievement fund grants (IC 20-20-43-3); student and parent support services grants (IC 20-34-9); etc.
- This is a competitive grant. Funding is not guaranteed. The funding for the PCSP grant is distributed through a reimbursement process. Contact IDOE's Office of Title Grants and Support for more information.
- Office of Superintendent includes the Head of School, School Leader, Executive Director, Chief Executive Officer, as well as associate or assistant executive positions; Office of the Principal includes Vice- and Assistant Principals; Other School Administration includes Chief Academic Officers; Directors, Deans, and Coordinators of: Curriculum, Instruction, Faculty, Students, Assessment, Student Affairs, Student Achievement, and similar positions.
- Includes Staffing for Instruction and Curriculum Development, Instructional Staff Training, etc.
- Secretary; Receptionist; Attendance Clerk; Office Manager; Cafeteria Worker, and other full or part-time employees not specifically described.
- Three quarters of one percent (0.75%) of the basic tuition support or adult learner grant amount received by the school.
- Include only those fees (per-pupil, contingent, or fixed) paid to a management company for educational or management services and describe how the fee is calculated in the budget narrative. All amounts separate from a specific "management fee" paid to a management company or an affiliate of the management company must be included elsewhere in the worksheet (e.g., lease payments, instructional supplies, software, technology, etc.) and described in the "Other Expenses" Column and/or in the Budget Narrative.

The Excel Center – Gary

Budget Narrative

State Funding:

State funding through the Adult Learners appropriation is assumed to remain at \$6,750 per student during Years 6-10. An increase in available seats is going to be requested in January 2023.

Federal Funding:

Federal funding includes Part B Special Education grants. The Excel Center – Gary will also have funding from ESSER II and ESSER III grants through 2024.

Other Revenue:

The amount budgeted in other revenue in current year through year 2 represents E-Rate reimbursement plus additional contributions from Goodwill Industries of Michiana, Inc. Years 3 through 5 only represents E-Rate reimbursement.

Inflation:

Certain expenditures are projected to increase year over year due to inflation. The budget projections assume a 3% increase annually.

Salaries/Wages:

Salaries and wages were budgeted to assume a 3% increase annually.

Instructional Supplies and Resources:

Current year budget was used to develop the 5-year projection, assuming 3% increase in most areas. Internet expense was budgeted at full cost. The expected e-rate reimbursement was budgeted in Other Income.

Board Expenses:

Board expenses for training, development and supplies are included in the amounts on line 119 of the 5-year budget tab.

Professional or Contracted Services:

The annual audit was budgeted to increase by 3% annually over the 5-year term.

Facilities Expense:

Goodwill Industries of Michiana, Inc. owns the building in Gary. The Excel Center – Gary pays rent of \$5,000 per month back to Goodwill. This rent is expected to remain flat over the 5-year period.

Other Principal Payments from Year 3 through Year 5 are principal payments to pay the debt from the borrowing against the line of credit that is on the books.

Depreciation is planned to remain flat over the period as well.

Other Financial Considerations, Depending on Potential State Funding Changes:

If the Indiana General Assembly makes any changes to state funding, The Excel Center – Gary has other layers of support. Goodwill LEADS operates as a network, so the utilization of network cash is an option. They can also utilize contributions from Goodwill Industries of Michiana, Inc. to cover any shortfalls.

Exhibit C

Statement of Assurances

The charter school agrees to comply with the following provisions: (*Read and check*)

- 1. A resolution or motion has been adopted by the charter school applicant's governing body that authorizes the submission of this application, including all understanding and assurances contained herein, directing and authorizing the applicant's designated representative to act in connection with the application and to provide such additional information as required.
- 2. Recipients operate (or will operate if not yet open) a charter school in compliance with all federal and state laws, including Indiana Charter Schools Law as described in all relevant sections of IC § 20-24.
- 3. Recipients will, for the life of the charter, participate in all data reporting and evaluation activities as required by ICSB and IDOE. See in particular IC § 20-20-8-3 and relevant sections of IC § 20-24.
- 4. Recipients will comply with all relevant federal laws including, but not limited to, the *Age Discrimination in Employment Act* of 1975, Title VI of the *Civil Rights Act* of 1964, Title IX of the *Education Amendments of 1972*, section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act* of 1973, Part B of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*, and section 427 of the *General Education Provision Act*.
- 5. Recipients will comply with all provisions of the Non regulatory Guidance—Public Charter Schools Program of the U.S. Department of Education, which includes the use of a lottery for enrollment if the charter school is oversubscribed, as well as with applicable Indiana law. See also relevant sections of IC § 20-24.
- 6. Recipients shall ensure that a student's records, and, if applicable, a student's individualized education program as defined at 20 U.S.C. § 1401(14) of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*, will follow the student, in accordance with applicable federal and state law.
- 7. Recipients will comply with all provisions of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 ("ESSA")*, including but not limited to, provisions on school prayer, the Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act, the Armed Forces Recruiter Access to Students and Student Recruiting Information, the Unsafe School Choice Option, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA") and assessments.
- 8. Recipients will operate with the organizer serving in the capacity of fiscal agent for the charter school and in compliance with generally accepted accounting principles.
- 9. Recipients will at all times maintain all necessary and appropriate insurance coverage.

- 10. Recipients will indemnify and hold harmless ICSB, the State of Indiana, all school corporations providing funds to the charter school (if applicable), and their officers, directors, agents and employees, and any successors and assigns from any and all liability, cause of action, or other injury or damage in any way relating to the charter school or its operation.
- 11. Recipients understand that ICSB may revoke the charter if ICSB deems that the recipient is not fulfilling the academic goals, fiscal management, or legal and operational responsibilities outlined in the charter.

I, the undersigned, am an authorized representative of the charter school applicant and do hereby certify that the information submitted in this application is accurate and true to the best of my knowledge and belief. In addition, I do hereby certify to the assurances contained above.

Christopher M. Alber

Vice-President of the Excel Centers

Name

Christopher M. Alber

Title

10/19/2022

Signature

Date

Enrollment Plan for Adult High Schools Authorized by the Indiana Charter School Board

1. Please complete all appropriate grey cells. The first seven (7) lines are required.
 2. The Enrollment Plan Approval Date on line 13 is the date the initial Enrollment Plan was approved as part of a Charter Application.
 3. Enrollment Plan Amendments list the amendments, effective year, and approval date of those amendments to the school's Enrollment Plan that are approved pursuant to ICSB's Enrollment Plan Amendment Policy.

Charter School Network:	Excel Centers for Adult Learners
Name of Charter School:	The Excel Center - Gary
Designated Representative:	Dr. Chris Alber
Contact Information:	calber@excelcenterhs.org 219-363-7042
Grade Span (Format: "X-X"):	AHS
Maximum Enrollment:	350
Year 1 (Format: "YYYY"):	2023
Initial Approval Date:	

Yearly Enrollment By Grade Level

Grade Level	Year 1 2023-24	Year 2 2024-25	Year 3 2025-26	Year 4 2026-27	Year 5 2027-28	Maximum
9						
10						
11						
12						
AHS	150	165	189	217	249	350
Total Enrollment (School):	150	165	189	217	249	350

Approved Amendments
(Completed by ICSB)

Approval Date:

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Amended Enrollment			
0	0	0	0

Amendment Notes

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