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:	Steel City Academy
Charter School Address:	2650 W. 35th Avenue Gary, IN 46408
Designated Representative and Contact Information (Phone & Email):	Katie Kirley, Founder and Executive Director katie.kirley@steelcityacademy.org; 219-750-1010
Mission Statement:	Steel City Academy will prepare our graduates with the knowledge, purpose, and transformative experiences to choose from boundless opportunities through college, career, and/or military pathways while offering a new narrative of what is possible for the students and families of Gary, Indiana.
School Leader/Principal:	Jazmin Pratt

Current Board of Directors	
Dr. Catherine Burns (Board Chair)	
Erica Young (Vice Board Chair)	
Ashley O'Neal (Parent Liaison & Secretary)	
Anthony Washington (Treasurer)	
Dr. Gloria McDaniel - Hall (Member)	
Michael Collins (Member)	

Identify ESP or partner organization (if applicable): N/A

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.

Steel City Academy Charter Renewal Application

Section I: Performance Review

Over the past five years, Steel City Academy has demonstrated unwavering follow-through on our improvement plan outlined in our last charter renewal application. When we entered the previous charter term, we were rated does not meet standard in every financial indicator and had multiple organizational compliance areas below standard. Through disciplined planning, transparent financial management, and a relentless commitment to operational excellence, we have achieved a complete turnaround—now earning green in every financial and organizational indicator. This transformation reflects our deep accountability to the commitments made in our last renewal and our continued dedication to strong governance, sound financial stewardship, and sustainable growth.

We intend to do the same in our next charter term. Below, you will find our outlined priorities, analysis of how we got here, the actions we have taken, and the critical milestones that will guide us to meeting and exceeding standard in the years ahead.

1. Academic Success

A. Math Academic Result Indicators - Did Not Meet Standard or Approaches Standard

- **1.6b. Proficiency on the state assessment in Math for each subgroup compared with the traditional school corporation.**
    - Black Students (Approaches Standard)
    - Free or Reduced Price Meals (Does Not Meet Standard)
    - General Education (Approaches Standard)
    - Non English Language Learners (Approaches Standard)
- **1.6.d. The change in proficiency on the state assessment in Math for each subgroup compared with the previous school year.**
    - Black (Does Not Meet Standard)
    - Free or Reduced Price meals (Does Not Meet Standard)
    - General Education (Approaches Standard)
    - Special Education (Does Not Meet Standard)
    - Non English Language Learners (Approaches Standard)
- **1.4.f. Two year student proficiency in Math (Does Not Meet Standard)**
- **1.4.d. Grade level proficiency on the state assessment in Math compared with the traditional school corporation**
    - Grade 3 (Does Not Meet Standard)
    - Grade 4 (Does Not Meet Standard)
    - Grade 5 (Does Not Meet Standard)
    - Total (Approaches Standard)
- **1.4.b. Grade level proficiency on the state assessment in Math compared with the previous school year.**

- Grade 3 (Does Not Meet Standard)
- Grade 5 (Does Not Meet Standard)
- Grade 7 (Does Not Meet Standard)
- Total (Approaches Standard)

Root Cause of Math Academic Data

Steel City Academy's math performance and growth indicators show that while pockets of positive trends are emerging, proficiency rates across several subgroups and grade levels remain below the ICSB standard. These outcomes reflect both strategic prioritization decisions and systemic challenges in staffing, scheduling, and instructional continuity over the past charter term. Our analysis points to three primary root causes:

1. The intentional focus on literacy development as our core academic priority.
2. Persistent challenges in recruiting and retaining highly qualified math educators, particularly within the STEM pipeline in Gary.
3. A master schedule design that prioritized literacy over math, limiting access and intervention opportunities.

Root Cause 1: Strategic Prioritization of Literacy Over Math

Steel City's philosophy has long been that "if you focus on everything, nothing matters." Over the past three years, our academic priorities and professional learning structures aligned schoolwide professional development, coaching cycles, and intervention systems to the state's literacy priority. This deliberate focus produced measurable gains in ELA growth and proficiency—especially among early elementary students on IREAD and high school students on the SAT.

However, this focus came at the cost of sustained, schoolwide investment in mathematics instruction. Math PLCs met less frequently than ELA teams, and professional development sessions were largely devoted to the Science of Reading, data-driven student cycles, and Tier 2 and 3 interventions using Orton-Gillingham. Consequently, instructional coherence in math lagged behind, with varying levels of implementation fidelity to the adopted curriculum, infrequent feedback on math instructional quality, and inconsistent use of formative data to drive reteaching and intervention.

Impact

- Teachers received limited real-time coaching on math discourse, implementation of Eureka Math, conceptual understanding, and data-driven small-group instruction.
- Students experienced strong gains in reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition but uneven progress in numeracy and algebraic reasoning.
- Subgroups who benefit most from scaffolded, concept-to-procedure instruction—Black students, students from low-income households, and students with disabilities—did not experience the same rate of accelerated growth seen in ELA.

Root Cause 2: Shortage of Qualified STEM Educators and Gaps in Math Content Expertise

Gary continues to face a critical shortage of licensed, high-quality math teachers. Historically, Steel City relied on programs such as Teach For America to fill hard-to-staff STEM positions. With those programs' withdrawal from the region, our recruitment pool for certified math and science educators narrowed substantially. As a result, math teacher roles have remained open for months at a time with very few viable applicants.

While we were fortunate to hire teachers who brought strong classroom management skills, relational capacity, and strengths in other subjects, many lacked deep content knowledge and a full understanding of the instructional shifts embedded in Indiana's math standards—specifically the emphasis on focus, coherence, and rigor. This gap often resulted in instruction that prioritized procedural fluency over conceptual understanding and, at times, did not align with the cognitive rigor or application tasks measured by ILEARN and the SAT.

Even within our high-dosage tutoring initiative through the Indiana Learns Program, the majority of staff provided support in English Language Arts—both because it aligned with our schoolwide literacy priority and because most of our educators possessed stronger training and expertise in reading and writing instruction than in mathematics.

Despite competitive compensation and strong overall teacher retention, turnover among math staff has been higher than in other content areas. These staffing realities led to:

- Inconsistent instructional rigor and pacing where conceptual understanding is foundational for algebraic reasoning.
- Fragmented vertical alignment, with inconsistent use of curriculum materials and uneven understanding of priority standards from grade to grade.
- Some math classes were taught by non-math specialists who followed the curriculum with limited content knowledge, resulting in reduced instructional depth and rigor.

Over time, these instructional inconsistencies compounded, creating unfinished learning in foundational numeracy and algebraic skills that widened as students advanced through the grades.

Contributing Factors

- Limited availability of qualified math educators in the regional hiring market.
- Pandemic-era interruptions that further disrupted math concept mastery and pacing.

Root Cause 3: Master Schedule Design Prioritized Literacy Over Math, Limiting Access and Intervention

Over the past three years, Steel City's master schedule was intentionally designed to support our schoolwide literacy priority. While this focus accelerated growth and proficiency in ELA, it unintentionally limited instructional time, targeted interventions, and course access needed to achieve comparable results in math.

At the elementary level, literacy received a 90-minute core block anchored in the Science of Reading, supplemented by small-group instruction and structured phonics intervention. In contrast, math instruction was allocated a 60-minute daily block, with no consistent, schoolwide math intervention period. This imbalance meant that students struggling with foundational numeracy or computation had fewer opportunities for reteaching, cumulative practice, or targeted support.

At the middle and high school levels, scheduling challenges intensified due to staffing constraints as a small high school and new state graduation requirements. Students participating in dual-credit courses through Indiana University Northwest or Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs through the Gary Area Career Center often had highly individualized schedules with limited elective flexibility. In some cases, these students were unable to take a math course for an entire academic year. This disproportionately affected students in college- and career-bound pathways who required continuity in math coursework to remain on track for Algebra II, quantitative reasoning, or college algebra proficiency.

Additionally, high school schedule complexity—created by rotating CTE attendance, flexible block periods, and transportation logistics—further restricted our ability to embed consistent math support or enrichment labs during the school day.

Impact

- Students in early grades lacked sustained, protected time for math intervention compared to literacy.
- Students entering secondary grades with unfinished math learning had limited opportunities for remediation or acceleration.
- High school students on specialized academic or career pathways experienced year-to-year math enrollment gaps, negatively affecting ILEARN and SAT proficiency rates.

Contributing Factors

- Master schedule design choices made in good faith to align with state literacy priorities and funding initiatives (e.g., Early Literacy Grant, Paraprofessional Training Grant, Literacy Cadre).
- Insufficient certified math teachers to expand course offerings or staff dedicated intervention blocks.
- Limited scheduling flexibility for dual-enrolled and CTE students due to external partner calendars and transportation requirements.

Actions Taken to Address Math Root Causes & Early Improvements

Urgent Staffing Decisions

Following the analysis of our 2022–2023 academic data, we recognized that—despite being in the midst of a literacy-focused cycle—immediate and strategic action was needed to address our math outcomes and respond to the identified root causes. With limited access to qualified math candidates and classroom results that did not yet reflect the potential of our students, Executive Director Katie Kirley and Director of Instruction Christine Combs—both math teachers by training—stepped into the classroom themselves.

This decision was driven by both urgency and intentionality. The goal was not only to directly improve academic outcomes for students, but also to use the experience as a real-time coaching and training model to build the next generation of Steel City math teachers. Steel City prides itself on developing internal talent pipelines, including our Gear Up Program, which supports paraprofessionals in becoming certified lead teachers. Ms. Kirley and Mrs. Combs were paired with one of our paraprofessionals, who, while completing her teaching program, had the opportunity to observe and engage in high-quality math instruction every day.

Early Evidence of Improvement in Middle School Grades

This staffing change produced immediate results. In 2023, our 7th-grade cohort exceeded standards in math, and by the 2024–2025 school year, students in grades 6, 7, and 8 met or exceeded standards on the ILEARN math assessment compared with our traditional school corporation. In both 2023 and 2024 we saw our Special Education students meet standards in proficiency on the Math state assessment, with our Black and Free & Reduced Price Meal students meeting standards in 2023.

1.6.b. Proficiency on the state assessment in Math for each subgroup compared with traditional school corporation.

Category	2019			2021			2022			2023			2024		
	%	Diff	Rate	%	Diff	Rate	%	Diff	Rate	%	Diff	Rate	%	Diff	Rate
Black	3.88%	(8.22%)	●	7.46%	5.69%	●	4.39%	1.15%	●	6.54%	2.80%	●	5.38%	0.42%	●
Hispanic	***	—		***	—		***	—		***	—		***	—	
Multiracial	***	—		No Data	—		***	—		***	—		***	—	
White	No Data	—		No Data	—		No Data	—		***	—		***	—	
Paid Meals	No Data	—		27.27%	—		4.76%	0.84%	●	0.00%	(4.09%)	●	16.67%	11.49%	●
Free or Reduced Price Meals	4.32%	(7.68%)	●	3.64%	—		4.04%	0.45%	●	6.93%	3.08%	●	3.03%	(2.10%)	●
General Education	5.04%	(8.48%)	●	***	—		4.55%	0.43%	●	5.61%	0.98%	●	7.02%	0.98%	●
Special Education	0.00%	(2.07%)	●	***	—		0.00%	(1.48%)	●	10.00%	9.66%	●	4.76%	3.55%	●
Non English Language Learners	***	—		7.58%	5.60%	●	4.17%	0.53%	●	5.98%	2.03%	●	6.67%	1.46%	●
English Language Learners	***	—		No Data	—		No Data	—		No Data	—		No Data	—	

1.4.d. Grade level proficiency on the state assessment in Math compared with traditional school corporation.

Category	2019			2021			2022			2023			2024		
	%	Diff	Rate	%	Diff	Rate	%	Diff	Rate	%	Diff	Rate	%	Diff	Rate
Grade 3	No Data	—		14.81%	11.02%	●	0.00%	(6.29%)	●	14.29%	6.51%	●	4.35%	(5.89%)	●
Grade 4	No Data	—		No Data	—		3.57%	(1.89%)	●	0.00%	(6.03%)	●	4.55%	(2.10%)	●
Grade 5	No Data	—		No Data	—		***	—		4.00%	0.54%	●	0.00%	(3.89%)	●
Grade 6	No Data	—		No Data	—		11.11%	11.11%	●	0.00%	(0.91%)	●	7.14%	3.22%	●
Grade 7	6.00%	3.97%	●	0.00%	(1.18%)	●	0.00%	(2.39%)	●	13.64%	13.18%	●	7.14%	5.71%	●
Grade 8	3.37%	1.34%	●	4.00%	4.00%	●	4.00%	3.13%	●	0.00%	(1.32%)	●	17.39%	16.53%	●
Total	4.32%	(7.66%)	●	7.14%	5.19%	●	4.17%	0.67%	●	5.98%	2.08%	●	6.67%	1.52%	●

Strategic Shift and Capacity Building

Entering the 2025–2026 school year, Steel City formally pivoted from a schoolwide academic focus on literacy to a schoolwide focus on mathematics. Over the summer, we created a Math Instructional Leadership Team composed of the Executive Director, Principal, Managing Director of Diverse Learners, and Director of Instruction.

Recognizing the importance of deep content understanding and standards alignment, this team attended the UnboundEd Standards Institute—a four-day, nationally recognized professional learning experience focused on unpacking math standards and the instructional shifts of focus, coherence, and rigor. The experience served as a launchpad for our next phase of improvement.

We know that in order to sustainably change math academic outcomes, we must build the capacity of our team. During summer professional development, our staff created a Coherence Standards Map across math domains to better understand focus standards at each grade level and their vertical connections across the K–12 continuum. Additionally, our Math Instructional Leadership Team the team implemented schoolwide, grade-band Math PLCs (referred to as our Mathletes) that meet monthly and include lead teachers, paraprofessionals, and “Build the Bench” educators who we are preparing to become lead math teachers - either for just a course or a grade. The PLCs began with intentional reflection on math identity—examining our own experiences as learners and developing strategies to strengthen both staff and student confidence in mathematics. Building on this foundation, staff engaged in deep study of the three instructional shifts in math, with an emphasis on coherence and rigor.

Curricular Alignment and the Indiana Mathematics Framework

Building on our focus on coherence and rigor, Steel City Academy has adopted the *Indiana Mathematics Framework* as a core reference tool for guiding our Math PLCs and professional learning cycles. The Framework now anchors our collective understanding of the instructional shifts necessary to ensure that every student engages in grade-level, standards-aligned math learning. This year, our

Math Instructional Leadership Team is leading a comprehensive crosswalk between the Framework and our core curriculum, *Eureka Math*, to ensure our instructional sequence and learning progressions are fully aligned to both the *ILEARN* blueprints and Indiana's *most essential standards*. This crosswalk process allows us to identify intentional checkpoints for mastery, prioritize essential skills, and vertically align content from early numeracy through algebraic reasoning. As shown in the attached crosswalk, this alignment work is strengthening the coherence between our classroom instruction, intervention systems, and state assessment expectations—helping teachers plan with clarity and confidence while ensuring students are well-prepared for each step of their mathematical journey.

2020 Standard	2023 Standard	Level of Priority	Overview of Standard	Checkpoint	Eureka Lesson and Module	Number of Items for ILEARN Spring 2025
6.NS.1	6.NS.1 (E)	Essential	Use positive and negative numbers to represent and compare quantities in real-world contexts, explaining the meaning of 0 in each situation. (E)	Checkpoint 1	Module 3 Lesson 1,4	1-3
6.NS.2	6.NS.2	Standard	Explain how opposite signs of numbers indicate locations on opposite sides of 0 on the number line; identify the opposite of the opposite of a number.	Checkpoint 1	Module 3 Lesson 2-4	0-2
6.NS.3	6.NS.3	Standard	Compare and order rational numbers and plot them on a number line. Write, interpret, and explain statements of order for rational numbers in real-world contexts.	Checkpoint 1	Module 3 Lesson 3, 5-9, 11-13, 15-17	0-2
6.C.3	6.NS.4 (E)	Essential	Solve real-world problems with positive fractions and decimals by using one or two operations. (E)	Checkpoint 1	Module 2 Lesson 6-24	0-2
6.C.6	6.NS.5 (E)	Essential	Apply the order of operations and properties of operations (i.e., identity, inverse, commutative properties of addition and multiplication, associative properties of addition and multiplication, and distributive property) to evaluate numerical expressions with nonnegative rational numbers, including those using grouping symbols, such as parentheses, and involving whole number exponents. (E)	Checkpoint 1	Module 4 Lesson 7-9, 11-12, 17; Module 5 Lesson 1, 3, 12-14, 16	0-2
			Compute with positive fractions and positive decimals fluently		Module 4 Lesson 7-9	

Early Evidence of Improvement in Foundational Grades

We are already beginning to see early signs of progress in our foundational grades. In 2024-2025 summative FastBridge assessment data indicate measurable growth in early numeracy and math readiness among K–2 students. We attribute these gains to the transferability of our existing data-driven instructional cycles and coaching practices originally developed through our Literacy Cadre initiative. The same intentional focus on lesson planning, small-group instruction, progress monitoring, and evidence-based interventions that accelerated reading outcomes are now being leveraged to strengthen math instruction. These early trends reinforce our belief that consistent instructional quality and robust data use are transferable across content areas. With sustained implementation and continued investment in teacher development, we are confident this foundation will yield increased math mastery and long-term achievement gains across upper elementary and middle grades in the coming years.

Beginning of Year Data 2024-2025

Kindergarten-Second Grade FastBridge Math BOY					
Grade Level	On Grade Level (Both College Pathway/Low Risk)	College Pathway	Low Risk	Some Risk	High Risk
Kindergarten	50.00%	12.50%	37.50%	12.50%	37.50%
1st Grade	71.43%	33.33%	38.10%	23.81%	4.76%

2nd Grade	42.86%	23.81%	19.05%	52.38%	4.76%
K-2nd	55.17%	24.14%	31.03%	31.03%	13.79%

End of Year Data 2024-2025

Kindergarten-Second Grade FastBridge Math EOY					
Grade Level	On Grade Level (Both College Pathway/Low Risk)	College Pathway	Low Risk	Some Risk	High Risk
Kindergarten	58.46%	35.38%	23.08%	15.38%	26.16%
1st Grade	72.22%	33.33%	38.89%	27.78%	0.00%
2nd Grade	52.63%	21.05%	31.58%	31.58%	15.79%
K-2nd	61.10%	29.92%	31.18%	24.91%	13.98%

End of Year Growth Data 2024-2025

Fastbridge MOY % of Students with Band Growth **(Goal: 60% of students)**		
K	**1st**	**2nd**
40.77%	44.44%	42.11%
Either band growth **or stayed at College Ready**		

Fastbridge MOY % of Students with Any Growth **(Goal: 80% of students)**		
K	**1st**	**2nd**

46.15%	88.89%	78.95%

Instructional Systems and Tools

To strengthen ongoing implementation, we established math data meetings with our teachers and the Principal and Director of Instruction. These meetings focus not only on formative and summative assessment data, but also on student work analysis to evaluate the balance of procedural fluency, conceptual understanding, and application.

We invested in Eureka Math professional development and adopted Eureka Equip as a Tier 2 and Tier 3 intervention tool for students with math skill gaps. This program will also serve as the foundation for our high-dosage tutoring initiative, ensuring coherence between classroom instruction and intervention.

Additionally, we redesigned the master schedule to include Gear Time, a daily intervention block for all K–12 students with a dedicated focus on mathematics.

Talent Alignment and Scheduling Improvements

We have intentionally leveraged our strongest math educators to teach in the most critical areas:

- Our strongest elementary math teacher now teaches two grade levels of math to maximize impact.
- Two senior leaders, as well as our Director of Instruction—are teaching math sections to model excellence and build internal capacity.
- Our former paraprofessional, who trained under Ms. Kirley and Mrs. Combs, now serves as the lead middle school math teacher.

At the high school level, we made several key scheduling adjustments to ensure that 100% of students are enrolled in a math course every year. This structural change not only supports student readiness for ILEARN and SAT assessments but also guarantees that all students meet the math components of Indiana's new graduation requirements.

STEM Certification and Leadership as a Lever for Math Improvement

In alignment with Indiana's priorities for STEM education, Steel City Academy is actively pursuing Indiana STEM School Certification as a next phase of our academic improvement strategy. This work builds directly upon our math improvement plan and positions math instruction within a broader, future-focused vision that emphasizes inquiry, problem-solving, and interdisciplinary application.

We have established a STEM Leadership Team comprised of diverse stakeholders—including teachers across grade levels and content areas, school leaders, community partners, and representatives from local universities and industry sectors. This team is guiding the certification process and ensuring that math instruction is not only standards-aligned but also connected to authentic, real-world contexts that foster engagement and relevance for students.

The pursuit of STEM certification strengthens each of our identified areas for growth:

- **Instructional Quality:** Integrating STEM-based, project-driven learning deepens teacher content knowledge and aligns instruction with the three math shifts of focus, coherence, and rigor.
- **Curriculum and Coherence:** The STEM framework enhances cross-curricular alignment, helping students make meaningful connections between math, science, technology, and engineering concepts.

- **Talent Development:** Through coaching cycles and professional learning tied to STEM pedagogy, we are expanding the pipeline of teachers equipped to deliver rigorous, standards-based math instruction—reducing dependence on external recruitment programs.
- **Student Engagement and Identity:** STEM learning fosters curiosity, productive struggle, and problem-solving, building students' confidence in mathematics and strengthening their math identity.

By pursuing STEM certification, Steel City is ensuring that math improvement is not an isolated initiative but part of a sustainable, systemwide approach to excellence in teaching and learning. These efforts are designed to ensure that the school not only meets but exceeds ICSB standards for math proficiency and growth in the next charter term.

Summary

Through these combined actions—grounded in data, leadership, professional learning, and instructional coherence—Steel City Academy has established the conditions necessary for sustained improvement in mathematics. Our intentional investment in people, systems, and structures reflects our belief that when we build adult capacity, we expand student opportunity. The early results in middle grades confirm the effectiveness of these strategies, and our continued implementation of the Math Mission and STEM certification will ensure long-term academic success across all subgroups and grade levels.

Early Evidence of Improvement and Cohort Growth Trends

An analysis of year-over-year math data from School Year 2023–2024 (SY24) to School Year 2024–2025 (SY25) reveals encouraging signs of progress, particularly in the reduction of students performing below proficiency and the increase in those moving into the *approaching* and *at proficiency* ranges.

Across grades 3, 5, 6, and 8, the percentage of students scoring below proficiency decreased significantly, most notably in grade 3, which saw a 34% drop (from 87% to 52.6%). Grade 8 demonstrated similar movement, with the percentage of students below proficiency decreasing from 65.3% to 38.9%, while the proportion scoring *at* or *above* proficiency more than doubled (from 17% to 22.2%). These shifts suggest growing instructional effectiveness in building conceptual understanding and strengthening the overall distribution of achievement.

SY24 Math					
Grade	Below	Approaching	At	Above	%Proficient
3	87%	8.70%	4.30%	0%	4.30%
4	86.40%	9.10%	0%	0%	0%
5	92.00%	8%	0%	0%	0%
6	75.00%	17.90%	7.10%	0%	7.10%
7	64.30%	28.60%	7.10%	0%	7.10%
8	65.30%	17.40%	13%	4.30%	17%

SY25 Math					
Grade	Below	Approaching	At	Above	%Proficient
3	52.63%	31.58%	10.53%	5.26%	15.79%
4	90.91%	9.09%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
5	78.26%	17.39%	4.35%	0.00%	4.35%
6	76.92%	15.38%	3.85%	3.85%	7.69%
7	69.57%	30.43%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
8	38.89%	38.89%	11.11%	11.11%	22.22%

Notably, grade 3 also experienced a nearly threefold increase in proficiency—from 4.3% in SY24 to 15.8% in SY25—demonstrating early success in the transfer of literacy-aligned instructional practices to math. Grade 6 and grade 5 each maintained steady or upward momentum, with modest gains in the percentage of students reaching proficiency.

Longitudinally, cohort data reveal clear upward trends in math achievement as well. The Class of 2032 (current 5th graders) improved from 0% proficiency in SY24 to 4.35% in SY25, and the Class of 2031 (current 6th graders) improved by nearly 8 percentage points. The most significant growth was seen in the Class of 2029 (current 8th graders), which increased proficiency by 15.1%—the largest year-over-year gain across all grade levels.

Math % Proficient					
	SY22	SY23	SY24	SY25	Growth
Class of 2034 (SY25 3rd Graders)	N/A	N/A	N/A	15.79%	N/A
Class of 2033 (SY25 4th Graders)	N/A	N/A	4.30%	0%	-4%
Class of 2032 (SY25 5th Graders)	N/A	14.30%	0%	4.35%	4.35%
Class of 2031 (SY25 6th Graders)	0%	0%	0%	7.69%	7.69%
Class of 2030 (SY25 7th graders)	4.30%	0%	7.10%	0%	-7%
Class of 2029 (SY25 8th graders)	0%	0%	7.10%	22.20%	15.10%
Class of 2028 (SY25 9th Graders)	0%	4.50%	17%	N/A	N/A

These data points illustrate that Steel City's targeted instructional shifts, coaching systems, and intervention structures are beginning to take hold. While overall proficiency rates remain below our long-term goals, the decline in students performing below grade level and the emergence of growth cohorts represent strong early indicators that the strategies implemented are moving student learning in the right direction.

Projected Timeline to Meet and Exceed Standards in Math Indicators

Based on current trajectory and early evidence of improvement, Steel City Academy anticipates meeting ICSB standards for math proficiency and growth within two to three school years (by the end of SY27–SY28), with several critical milestones identified along the way.

Year 1 (2025–2026): Foundation Year for Math Focus and Systems Coherence

- Implementation of the schoolwide math priority fully integrated across K–12.
- Launch of the Math Instructional Leadership Team and grade-band PLCs with monthly data cycles focused on the three instructional shifts: focus, coherence, and rigor.
- Continuation of Gear Time daily intervention blocks and targeted use of Eureka Equip for Tier 2 and Tier 3 students.

- **Expected outcomes:**
    - *Indicator 1.4b (Year-to-Year Proficiency Growth):* 2–4% increase in overall math proficiency across tested grades (Meets Standard range).
    - *Indicator 1.4d (Math vs. Traditional Public Schools):* Performance approaches parity with local district schools within 2% (Approaches to Meets transition).
    - *Indicator 1.4f (Two-Year Student Proficiency):* Early evidence of improved cohort proficiency in grades 5–8 as consistent instruction and data cycles stabilize.

Year 2 (2026–2027): Acceleration and Cohort Growth

- Deepened teacher expertise through STEM Certification process and UnboundEd Standards Institute practices embedded into daily instruction.
- Continued focus on coherence mapping and vertical alignment to ensure seamless progression of math standards across grade levels.
- Expansion of high-dosage tutoring through Indiana Learns aligned directly to grade-level math standards.

- **Expected outcomes:**

    - *Indicator 1.4b:* ≥5% year-over-year growth in proficiency, moving toward "Exceeds the Standard."
    - *Indicator 1.4d:* Schoolwide proficiency 2–5% higher than the traditional school corporation average ("Meets the Standard").
    - *Indicator 1.4f:* 60–70% of students enrolled for two or more years demonstrating proficiency (Approaches to Meets range).

Year 3 (2027–2028): Sustainability and Expansion

- Full **STEM Certification** achieved, strengthening interdisciplinary math and science instruction.
- Continued reduction in students below proficiency as K–2 FastBridge gains translate into upper elementary mastery.
- Institutionalization of the math coaching model through Build the Bench strategies in Math PLCs and Gear Up teacher pipelines to ensure instructional continuity and sustainability.

- **Expected outcomes:**

    - *Indicator 1.4b:* Sustained growth exceeding 5% annually ("Exceeds the Standard").
    - *Indicator 1.4d:* Schoolwide math proficiency 10% higher than comparable public schools ("Exceeds the Standard").
    - *Indicator 1.4f:* Over 70% of two-year-enrolled students achieving proficiency ("Meets the Standard" with trajectory to exceed).

Key Milestones Across the Three-Year Timeline

1. **2025–2026:** Schoolwide coherence and math intervention systems fully operational.
2. **2026–2027:** Demonstrable proficiency growth of ≥5% and parity with local district peers.
3. **2027–2028:** Exceeding local district performance and achieving ≥70% proficiency among two-year-enrolled students.

Beyond 2028: Ongoing sustainability through certified STEM pathways, established math leadership pipelines, and consistent teacher coaching systems.

B. English Language Arts Academic Result Indicators - Did Not Meet Standard or Approaches Standard

- 1.6a. Proficiency on the state assessment in ELA for each subgroup compared with the traditional school corporation
    - Free or Reduced Price Meals (Approaches Standard)
- 1.6.c. The change in proficiency on the state assessment in English Language Arts for each subgroup compared with the previous school year.
    - Black (Does Not Meet Standard)
    - Paid Meals (Approaches Standard)
    - Free or Reduced Price Meals (Does Not Meet Standard)
    - General Education (Approaches Standard)
    - Special Education (Does Not Meet Standard)
    - Non English Language Learners (Does Not Meet Standard)
- 1.4.g. Percentage of students achieving proficiency on the IREAD 3 State Assessment (Approaches Standard)
- 1.4.e. Two year student proficiency in ELA (Does Not Meet Standard)
- 1.4.d. Grade level proficiency on the state assessment in English Language Arts compared with the traditional school corporation
    - Grade 3 (Does Not Meet Standard)
    - Grade 5 (Does Not Meet Standard)
    - Grade 6 (Does Not Meet Standard)
    - Total (Approaches Standard)
- 1.4.a. Grade level proficiency on the state assessment in English Language Arts compared with the previous school year.
    - Grade 3 (Does Not Meet Standard)
    - Grade 5 (Does Not Meet Standard)
    - Grade 6 (Approaches Standard)
    - Grade 7 (Does Not Meet Standard)
    - Grade 8 (Does Not Meet Standard)
    - Total (Does Not Meet Standard)

Root Cause of English Language Arts Data

Over the past three years, Steel City Academy has made substantial gains in English Language Arts proficiency and growth across grade levels and subgroups. However, despite this notable progress, overall proficiency rates have not yet reached the ICSB “Meets Standard” threshold in all tested grades or subgroups. These outcomes reflect both the long-term effects of unfinished learning following COVID-19 disruptions and the school’s strategic prioritization of foundational literacy skill-building over rapid proficiency increases.

Our analysis identifies three primary root causes:

1. COVID-Related Unfinished Learning and Foundational Literacy Gaps
2. Inconsistent Foundational Literacy Instruction in Upper Grades
3. Delayed Implementation of a Comprehensive ELA Instructional Framework and Professional Learning System

Root Cause 1: COVID-Related Unfinished Learning and Foundational Literacy Gaps

The impact of unfinished learning following extended school closures and remote instruction was particularly pronounced in early literacy. Many of our youngest students entered elementary school without the strong phonemic awareness, decoding skills, or early reading fluency required to access grade-level texts. In addition, inconsistent attendance during virtual learning and varying levels of home support during the pandemic created a wide range of literacy readiness among early learners.

As a result, the initial years following COVID-19 required significant instructional time dedicated to reteaching essential foundational skills—phonics, phonemic awareness, and fluency—before students could meaningfully engage with comprehension, vocabulary, and writing at grade level. This strategic decision, while necessary for long-term literacy success, delayed immediate proficiency gains in upper elementary grades as cohorts worked to close foundational gaps.

Root Cause 2: Inconsistent Foundational Literacy Instruction in Upper Grades

Many of our middle and high school students did not receive structured literacy instruction grounded in the science of reading prior to enrollment at Steel City and even if their initial years at Steel City. Without targeted intervention in fluency, decoding, and comprehension strategies, these students struggled to access increasingly complex texts on ILEARN and SAT assessments.

In addition, teachers in grades 6–12 historically relied more heavily on content-based reading and writing tasks rather than direct instruction in reading skills, further widening the literacy divide for students entering those grades below benchmark. Even as students made progress in comprehension and writing craft, they often lacked the automaticity in reading that supports deeper analysis and evidence-based writing at the rigor of the state assessment.

Root Cause 3: Delayed Implementation of a Comprehensive ELA Instructional Framework and Professional Learning System

Until 2022, Steel City Academy did not have a schoolwide, vertically aligned English Language Arts instructional framework implemented with fidelity across grade levels. Curriculum use and instructional approaches varied, and teachers did not yet have access to systematic professional development centered on evidence-based reading and writing instruction.

The establishment of our ELA Framework through participation in the IDOE Literacy Cadre marked a major turning point. This partnership equipped our instructional leaders and teachers with training grounded in the Science of Reading, emphasizing explicit, systematic instruction in phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Prior to this initiative, teachers were often “teaching through” curriculum programs like CKLA, Amplify, and SpringBoard rather than intentionally leveraging them to build and reinforce discrete literacy skills across the strands of reading and writing.

Before the introduction of the Literacy Cadre framework, professional learning in reading instruction was limited and not consistently connected to the developmental progression of literacy acquisition. Consequently, instructional quality and focus varied across classrooms—particularly among newer and out-of-field educators—resulting in uneven implementation of best practices and insufficient scaffolding for diverse learners, including students with disabilities and English Learners.

Actions Taken to Address English Academic Data Root Causes & Early Improvements

Acceptance and Strong Implementation of the Priorities of the IDOE Literacy Cadre

Steel City Academy's acceptance into the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) Literacy Cadre marked a pivotal turning point in our schoolwide approach to English Language Arts instruction. Under the leadership of Principal Pratt—a veteran English educator with more than twenty years of classroom experience—Steel City approached the Cadre not as a compliance initiative but as a catalyst for schoolwide transformation.

In a unique move, Principal Pratt herself applied and was selected to serve as the school's Literacy Cadre Coach, rather than designating a teacher or instructional coach. Her decision was rooted in the belief that sustainable literacy growth begins with the principal's own deep understanding of the Science of Reading and a clear plan for leading the change management necessary to align instruction across all layers of the organization.

Through this partnership, Steel City adopted the IDOE Literacy Cadre priorities and embedded them within every element of instruction—from Tier 1 classroom teaching to Tier 3 intervention. Principal Pratt launched six-week data-driven literacy cycles in grades K–3 (even though the Literacy Cadre was only grades K-2), grounded in the pillars of the Science of Reading. Teachers began each cycle with pre-assessments, collaborated with literacy coaches and interventionists to group students strategically, and tracked mastery throughout. This system created a consistent, research-based framework for planning, teaching, and monitoring progress.

Professional Development and Schoolwide Capacity Building

Recognizing that literacy is the foundation for all learning, Principal Pratt introduced the belief that "We Are All Literacy Teachers." This commitment led to the implementation of bi-monthly, schoolwide professional development on the Science of Reading for every teacher—across grade levels and content areas. These sessions focused on the five key components of reading—phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension—and how to explicitly teach them within each teacher's core curriculum.

Teachers also deepened their understanding of how to intentionally use the Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA), Amplify and SpringBoard curriculum as a Tier 1 anchor, rather than simply "teaching through" it. We partnered with CKLA to provide external professional development to our team. They learned to analyze lesson structures through the lens of the Science of Reading, making explicit connections between the research and daily practice.

To extend this capacity beyond certified teachers, the Managing Director of Diverse Learners led targeted small-group training for paraprofessionals and support staff, equipping them with the skills to reinforce foundational literacy instruction. These sessions focused on phonological awareness routines, blending and segmenting practice, and decoding strategies. This whole-school investment ensured that every adult who interacted with students could support literacy development effectively.

As a result of this collective learning, instructional alignment and teacher confidence in delivering Science of Reading practices increased significantly. Teachers began to demonstrate greater precision in small-group instruction and clearer data-informed decision-making when reteaching or scaffolding literacy skills.

High-Dosage Tutoring and Targeted Intervention Systems

Building on the success of early literacy gains, Steel City expanded its intervention systems to ensure every student received the level of support necessary to achieve proficiency. The school implemented Tier 2 and Tier 3 Orton-Gillingham-based groups for upper elementary students (grades 4–6) to target decoding, fluency, and automaticity—skills often underdeveloped in older readers who lacked prior Science of Reading-aligned instruction.

Additionally, Steel City became an Indiana Learns Tutoring Partner, enabling the school to provide high-dosage, small-group tutoring aligned with the Science of Reading framework. While the Indiana

Learns program supports both math and ELA, the majority of Steel City's tutoring sessions have centered on literacy—reflecting both the school's academic priorities and the depth of teacher expertise in reading and writing instruction.

These tutoring sessions, delivered by Steel City teachers and paraprofessionals who had completed Science of Reading training, created powerful reinforcement opportunities for students needing extra support. This intentional alignment between core instruction, intervention, and tutoring has begun to produce measurable growth in reading fluency and comprehension across subgroups—particularly among students in grades K–3 and those receiving free or reduced-price meals.

Early data show steady improvement in IREAD proficiency and internal reading benchmarks, signaling that the systems now in place are effectively addressing unfinished learning and building strong, sustainable literacy foundations for all students.

Leveraging High-Impact Educators as Model Classrooms

To accelerate student outcomes and strengthen teacher practice, Steel City strategically leveraged its most experienced and high-impact educators—Principal Jazmin Pratt (4th Grade ELA and AP Language), Assistant Principal Joshua Moore (8th Grade ELA), and Managing Director of Diverse Learners Bridgette Kelly (3rd Grade ELA)—to lead by example as model classroom teachers.

Each senior leader intentionally re-entered the classroom to directly impact student learning while simultaneously building teacher capacity through real-time coaching, co-teaching, lesson modeling, and data analysis cycles. This decision represented a significant investment of leadership time and energy but was grounded in a "students first" philosophy—acknowledging that the most powerful way to improve instruction schoolwide is through modeling excellence.

These model classrooms have become living professional learning spaces. Teachers regularly observe literacy lessons led by senior leaders, debrief instructional moves, and apply strategies in their own classrooms with immediate feedback. This approach has strengthened instructional consistency, increased the quality of small-group instruction, and accelerated the transfer of Science of Reading practices across grade levels.

By leading from the front, Principal Pratt, Assistant Principal Moore, and Managing Director Kelly not only drove direct gains in their own classrooms but also cultivated a culture of continuous learning and shared accountability for literacy success across the entire staff.

Early Improvements in English Language Arts Academic Data

Over the past three years, Steel City Academy has experienced transformative growth in English Language Arts achievement across all grade levels. Through the implementation of the Science of Reading, targeted interventions, and leadership modeling, student outcomes have improved significantly — with Steel City now ranking among the top-performing schools in Gary in multiple grade bands and closing the gap with state averages at an unprecedented pace.

Elementary Literacy (IREAD-3 and Early Reading Proficiency)

Early literacy has shown equally impressive momentum. In 2025, 80% of Steel City's 3rd graders passed the IREAD-3 assessment, marking the highest proficiency rate in school history and securing Steel City's standing as the #1 school in Gary for 3rd grade reading proficiency. This represents a 40-point gain since 2022 (40.7% → 80%) and a near-elimination of the state gap, improving from –40.9 percentage points below the state average in 2022 to just –7.3 points in 2025.

	3rd Grade		2nd Grade		
	State Pass Rate	Steel City Pass Rate	Pass	On Track	At Risk
2021	81.20%	68.60%	N/A	N/A	N/A
2022	81.60%	40.70%	N/A	N/A	N/A
2023	81.90%	65.00%	N/A	N/A	N/A
2024	82.50%	70.00%	16.67%	16.67%	66.67%
2025		75.90%	61.11%	16.67%	26.32%

3rd Grade IREAD Results ILEARN in Comparison with State Average

	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
State	81.20%	81.60%	81.90%	82.50%	87.3%
Steel City	68.60%	40.70%	65.00%	70.00%	80%
Difference	-12.6%	-40.9%	-16.9%	-12.50%	- 7.3%

Steel City's 2nd grade early literacy results mirror this success. In 2024, only 33.3% of 2nd graders were on track or passing compared to 59% statewide (a –25.6% gap). By 2025, 77.78% of 2nd graders were on track or passing, now outperforming the state average by +9.78 percentage points.

2nd Grade IREAD Results ILEARN in Comparison with State Average (Pass & On Track Included)

	2023-2024	2024-2025
State	59.00%	68.00%
Steel City	33.34%	77.78%
Difference	-25.56%	+9.78%

This turnaround demonstrates the effectiveness of Steel City's early literacy systems — including the implementation of six-week Science of Reading data cycles, targeted Orton-Gillingham interventions, and intentional alignment between Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 supports.

Cohort and Grade-Level Growth in English Language Arts (ILEARN)

Steel City Academy has also shown consistent growth on the ILEARN assessment, both in proficiency rates and in closing the gap with state performance. Since 2021, Steel City's overall ELA proficiency has increased from 18% to 20.9%, while the gap between Steel City and the state has narrowed from –29.9 percentage points in 2021 to –19.7 points in 2025 — a 10-point improvement in relative standing.

ELA Results ILEARN in Comparison with State Average

	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
State	47.9%	40.5%	40.7%	41.0%	40.6%
Steel City	18%	18.3%	12.7%	13.3%	20.9%
Difference	-29.9%	-22.2%	-28%	-27.7	-19.7%

Cohort-level analysis shows particularly strong gains between 2024 and 2025:

- **Grade 3 proficiency increased from 8.7% to 42.9%**, a **34-point gain** in a single year.
- **Grade 5 proficiency increased from 0% to 21.7%**, closing a multi-year gap and showing clear upward trajectory.

- **Grade 8 proficiency increased from 34.7% to 47.4%**, with 10.5% of students scoring "Above Proficient" — the highest advanced-level percentage in school history.

SY24 ELA					
Grade	Below	Approaching	At	Above	%Proficient
3	87%	4.30%	8.70%	0%	8.70%
4	77.30%	13.60%	9.10%	0%	9.10%
5	84%	16%	0%	0%	0%
6	75%	14.30%	10.70%	0%	10.70%
7	42.90%	35.70%	21.40%	0%	21.40%
8	30%	34.80%	21.70%	13%	34.70%

SY25 ELA					
Grade	Below	Approaching	At	Above	%Proficient
3	35.71%	21.43%	35.71%	7.14%	42.86%
4	77.27%	22.73%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
5	60.87%	17.39%	21.74%	0.00%	21.74%
6	72.00%	16.00%	12.00%	0.00%	12.00%
7	60.00%	25.00%	10.00%	5.00%	15.00%
8	26.32%	26.32%	36.84%	10.53%	47.37%

SY24 ELA					
Grade	Below	Approaching	At	Above	%Proficient
3	87%	4.30%	8.70%	0%	8.70%
4	77.30%	13.60%	9.10%	0%	9.10%
5	84%	16%	0%	0%	0%
6	75%	14.30%	10.70%	0%	10.70%
7	42.90%	35.70%	21.40%	0%	21.40%
8	30%	34.80%	21.70%	13%	34.70%

SY25 ELA					
Grade	Below	Approaching	At	Above	%Proficient
3	35.71%	21.43%	35.71%	7.14%	42.86%
4	77.27%	22.73%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
5	60.87%	17.39%	21.74%	0.00%	21.74%
6	72.00%	16.00%	12.00%	0.00%	12.00%
7	60.00%	25.00%	10.00%	5.00%	15.00%
8	26.32%	26.32%	36.84%	10.53%	47.37%

Steel City is now the **#2 school in Gary for English ILEARN performance overall**, and the **top-performing school in grades 3, 5, and 8 ELA proficiency**.

These gains are not isolated but systemic — a direct result of the school's alignment to the Science of Reading, strengthened teacher coaching, and a culture of accountability for literacy growth across all grade levels.

High School Performance (College Day SAT)

Steel City Academy now ranks as the #1 performing school in Gary on the College Day SAT in English, the state-required assessment for all juniors in Indiana. In 2025, 54.17% of Steel City juniors reached college-ready proficiency levels in Reading and Writing, a dramatic increase from 7.14% in 2023 and 21.43% in 2022.

This marks a 47-percentage-point gain in just two years — the highest growth among any Gary high school. Steel City's 2025 results are now within 0.33% of the Indiana state average (54.5%), effectively closing the statewide proficiency gap and positioning Steel City as one of the top-performing urban charter high schools in the region.

School Day SAT	2022	2023	2024		2025	
	% College Ready	% College Ready	% College Ready	Raw Score	% College Ready	Raw Score
Reading and Writing	21.43%	7.14%	35.79%	438	54.17%	442

School Day SAT | Evidence Based Reading and Writing

	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
State	N/A	50.5%	51.8%	54.5%
Steel City	21.43%	7.14%	35.79%	54.17%
Difference	N/A	-43.36%	-16.01%	-.33%

	2023-2024				2024-2025				
	Score	% Below	% Approaching	% At/Above	Score	% Below	% Approaching	% At/Above	Proficency Increase
Reading/Writing	438	57.90%	5.26%	36.84%	441	24.67%	19.33%	56.00%	19.16%

Steel City students demonstrate 28.5% higher college-ready proficiency than the next highest-performing school in Gary and outperform peers in neighboring districts including East Chicago, Hammond, Hebron, Hobart, Lake Station, Merrillville, Portage, and Whiting.

Location	School	EBRW
Region	Andrean	81.7
Region	Bishop Noll	69.7
Region	Boone Grove	71
Region	Calumet Christian	87.5
Region	Chesterton	69.1
Region	Crown Point	72
Region	East Chicago	31
Region	Griffith	54.8
Region	Hammond Baptist	74.2
Region	Hammond Central	23.8
Region	Hammond Morton	22.5
Region	Hanover Central	69.4
Region	HAST (Hammond)	56.3
Region	Hebron	53.3
Region	Highland	59.4
Region	Hobart	53.8
Region	Illiana Christian	84.8
Region	Kouts	56.4
Region	Lake Central	73.9
Region	Lake Station	31.3
Region	Lowell	56.3
Region	Marquette	77.8
Region	Merrillville	37.4
Region	Morgan	71
Region	Munster	83.1
Region	NWI Online School (Dunela	33.3
Region	Portage	43.4
Region	Portage Christian	63.6
State	State	54.5
Steel City	Steel City Academy	54.2
Region	Valparaiso	70.9
Region	Victory Christian	79.2
Region	Washington Twp.	81.5
Region	Wheeler	60.7
Region	Whiting	37.5

Location	School	EBRW
Gary	21st Century Charter	25.7
Gary	Calumet New Tech	23.6
Gary	Gary Lighthouse	10.2
Gary	Gary Middle College	5.3
Gary	Gary West Side	20.5
Gary	Neighbors New Vistas	20.8
Gary	Steel City Academy	54.2
Gary	Thea Bowman	26.5

This sustained growth reflects the impact of aligned instruction, literacy-focused professional development, and high-impact educators leading from the classroom.

Summary of Early Impact

Steel City's ELA data tells a story of momentum and measurable success:

- 2nd Grade early literacy scores moved from –25.6% below the state average (2024) to +9.78% above (2025).

- 3rd Grade IREAD proficiency increased 40 points (2022–2025), now within 7% of state average.
- ILEARN ELA gap with the state narrowed by 10 points in four years (–29.9% → –19.7%).
- SAT Reading/Writing proficiency increased by 47 points (2023–2025), closing the statewide gap to less than half a point.
- Steel City now leads Gary schools in 3rd grade IREAD, 3rd/5th/8th grade ILEARN, and 11th grade SAT performance.

These improvements validate Steel City Academy's comprehensive literacy vision — one that begins in kindergarten, is reinforced through data-driven cycles, and culminates in college-ready graduates who can read, write, and think critically at or above state standards.

C. 4 Year Graduation Indicator - Approaches Standard

- 1.7.a 4 year graduation rate compared with the state average (Approaches Standard)

Root Cause Analysis of Graduation Rate Data

Steel City Academy's graduation rate has improved significantly since the school's first graduating class, yet it continues to fall below the ICSB standard. This metric reflects both our unwavering commitment to ethical reporting practices and systemic challenges experienced during the early years of school operation and statewide transitions. Our analysis identifies three primary root causes:

1. A deliberate commitment to accurate, integrity-based reporting without the use of graduation waivers or artificial inflation of data.
2. The academic and credit-attainment disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.
3. Early systemic and structural limitations related to small school scheduling, new graduation pathway requirements, and cohort management processes.

Root Cause 1: Integrity-Based Reporting Practices

Steel City Academy has maintained a firm stance on ethical and transparent reporting. We do not issue waivers, remove students from cohorts without verified documentation, or engage in practices that artificially elevate data. Instead, we hold the graduation expectation as the expectation—ensuring that every diploma earned represents full mastery of graduation requirements.

While this integrity reflects our values and mission, it has sometimes resulted in lower reported graduation rates compared to other schools that employ waivers or broad credit recovery programs. Our decision to forgo those shortcuts ensures long-term credibility and accountability but magnifies the impact of every individual student, especially in small cohort sizes, who does not meet the full requirements for graduation.

Impact

- Graduation data accurately reflect authentic student outcomes rather than inflated metrics.
- A single student's non-completion carries significant weight due to small cohort sizes.
- Publicly reported data understate the success of students earning Certificates of Completion, who are not included in the state's graduation formula despite achieving individualized academic and employability milestones.

Contributing Factors

- Ethical reporting aligned with our mission and values.
- State accountability models that do not recognize alternative or modified diploma pathways.

Root Cause 2: Pandemic-Era Disruptions to Credit Attainment and Academic Mastery

The graduating classes of 2021 through 2024 were profoundly affected by COVID-19 disruptions during critical years of their high school trajectory. Extended periods of remote instruction, loss of instructional continuity, and decreased access to in-person interventions led to unfinished learning and credit deficiencies.

As a small school with limited course sections, any failed course often delayed a student's ability to retake required credits due to scheduling constraints. This was compounded by a lack of broad credit recovery programming—a deliberate design choice aligned with our belief in mastery-based learning with a teacher rather than seat-time completion or simply course completion on a computer.

Impact

- Students from early pandemic cohorts experienced credit loss that could not be fully recovered within four years.
- Interrupted learning in foundational courses (e.g., Algebra I, Biology, English 10) delayed students' readiness for subsequent coursework.
- Pandemic-related academic and social-emotional barriers required intensified support that our small team was still developing capacity to provide.

Contributing Factors

- Extended remote learning periods in 2020–2022.
- Small school master schedule limiting credit recovery flexibility.
- A commitment to mastery-based completion in a classroom rather than abbreviated recovery modules through online programs.

Root Cause 3: Early Structural and Systemic Limitations

As a growing single-site charter school, Steel City's early years were marked by limited administrative capacity, evolving data systems, and transitions to new state graduation standards. The shift to Indiana's Graduation Pathways, requiring students to meet three distinct criteria—High School Diploma, Employability Skills, and Postsecondary-Ready Competencies—created implementation challenges during the transition period.

Our initial systems were not fully equipped to track pathway progress in real time, nor did we have a central office structure overseeing cohort mobility. In some instances, students who transferred out of state or disengaged remained inaccurately coded in EdData as active cohort members, lowering the reported graduation rate.

Impact

- Early cohort data included students who should have been removed, artificially deflating rates.
- The transition to new pathway requirements occurred faster than internal systems and staffing capacity could adapt.

Contributing Factors

- Implementation of new state graduation pathway requirements during early years of charter operation.
- Limited administrative oversight and data management staffing.
- Lack of centralized student information and accountability systems prior to 2021.

Actions Taken to Address Graduation Data

Under the instructional leadership of Principal Pratt, Steel City Academy has implemented a series of intentional, systemic improvements to strengthen graduation outcomes and ensure that every student can successfully complete Indiana's three required graduation pathway "buckets." These changes address both instructional and operational root causes, reflecting our commitment to maintaining academic integrity while expanding opportunity and access.

Bucket 1: High School Diploma

Steel City has strategically revised its master schedule to increase flexibility and access to high-quality, in-person credit-bearing coursework. Recognizing the limitations of being a small high school with a compact staff and facility, we expanded summer school offerings to include both core and elective courses led by Steel City teachers. This approach maintains fidelity to our academic model—avoiding fully online credit recovery—while creating equitable access for students needing to retake or accelerate courses.

Summer offerings now include essential courses such as Algebra I, English 10, Biology, and U.S. History, along with electives like Physical Education and Contemporary Literature. These additions ensure students can remain on track to graduate, recover credits efficiently, and deepen learning through in-person instruction rather than virtual substitution.

Bucket 2: Employability Skills

Steel City strengthened its systems for tracking and cultivating employability and service experiences. A new Key Club was launched to connect students with meaningful community service and leadership opportunities, particularly for those not yet employed. The National Honor Society was expanded, increasing student participation and emphasizing civic engagement through structured volunteer hours and service projects.

These efforts align employability development with our broader college and career readiness framework, ensuring every student graduates not only academically prepared but also equipped with the habits of professionalism, teamwork, and community-mindedness.

Bucket 3: Postsecondary-Ready Competencies

To expand postsecondary options, Steel City has deepened partnerships with higher education and career training institutions. Our collaboration with Indiana University Northwest (IUN) now allows more students to earn dual credit, providing an authentic college experience while still in high school. Simultaneously, our partnership with the Gary Area Career Center (GACC) has been expanded, enabling students—beginning as early as their sophomore year—to earn career certifications and explore technical pathways aligned to high-demand fields.

We have also strengthened student preparation for postsecondary-readiness assessments. This includes structured support for the ASVAB, a focus on achieving the 1010 SAT benchmark, and expanded access to summer SAT preparation courses. A renewed commitment to ensuring all students are enrolled in both a math and English course every year reinforces readiness and mastery across all content areas.

Operational and Data Management Improvements

Beyond instruction, our Operations and Compliance Team has transformed graduation tracking and cohort management practices. Staff have completed IDOE School Accountability training and implemented clear Standard Operating Procedures to ensure data accuracy and compliance. Key actions include:

1. **Improved documentation protocols**—requiring verified records requests and enrollment confirmations for all withdrawals.
2. **Accurate cohort certification**—ensuring the October 1st certification for ninth-grade cohorts is precise and verified.
3. **Ongoing data audits**—conducting monthly reviews of EdData and graduation accountability reports to identify and correct any errors in cohort assignment.
4. **Voluntary annual graduation audits**—submitted proactively to IDOE to confirm that students are properly classified or removed when appropriate.
   These steps have created a level of oversight, accuracy, and transparency that did not exist in the school's early years.

Early Improvements to Meet Standard in Graduation Data Indicators

The impact of these instructional and operational changes is already evident. Between 2020 and 2024, Steel City's four-year graduation rate increased by over 24 percentage points—rising from 54.05% in 2021 to 78.13% in 2024.

When compared to the local school corporation average, Steel City has closed the gap entirely, improving from –6.40% in 2021 to +15.13% in 2024. While the rate remains below the state average, the steady year-over-year growth and narrowing of the gap demonstrate the effectiveness of our targeted strategies and our capacity to sustain continuous improvement.

High School Accountability Metrics 1.7.a. & 1.7.b.

Category	2020			2021			2022			2023			2024		
	%	Diff	Rate	%	Diff	Rate	%	Diff	Rate	%	Diff	Rate	%	Diff	Rate
1.7.a 4 year graduation rate compared with the State average	80.00%	(9.66%)	●	54.05%	(34.06%)	●	56.14%	(32.76%)	●	66.67%	(23.72%)	●	78.13%	(13.40%)	●
1.7.b 4 year graduation rate compared with school corporation average	80.00%	17.02%	●	54.05%	(6.40%)	●	56.14%	(15.94%)	●	66.67%	(0.79%)	●	78.13%	15.13%	●

Projected Timeline to Meet Standard

Steel City Academy's graduation rate trajectory demonstrates steady, year-over-year growth, reflecting the impact of our strengthened systems, instructional coherence, and improved data management practices. Based on current trends and leading indicators in credit attainment, course completion, and pathway verification, we project that Steel City will meet or exceed the ICSB standard for both graduation rate indicators (1.7.a and 1.7.b) by the Class of 2026.

This projection aligns with our continuous improvement cycle and the implementation timeline of key academic, operational, and student-support initiatives that have already begun to yield results.

Current Status (Class of 2024):

- Steel City's 4-year graduation rate: **78.13%**
- Indiana State Average: **91.5%**
- Gap: **–13.4 percentage points**

Projected Timeline:

- **Class of 2025:** Increase to approximately 81–83%, closing the gap by an additional 5–7 percentage points through strengthened summer school recovery, expanded dual-credit access, improved retention for seniors on track to graduate and stronger Reporting Standard Operating Procedure
- **Class of 2026:** Reach 90% or higher, meeting or exceeding the ICSB standard and approaching parity with the state average.

Critical Milestones:

1. Full implementation of annual graduation audits each January and July to verify all student progress across all three buckets.
2. Expansion of summer in-person course offerings and continued alignment of master schedule flexibility to reduce credit barriers.
3. Continued integration of postsecondary-ready supports—including ASVAB, dual credit, and SAT prep—to ensure more students meet Bucket 3 competencies.
4. Ongoing data verification cycles at the end of each semester to ensure real-time adjustments for any student at risk of non-completion.

These measures position Steel City to sustain double-digit percentage gains over the next two graduating classes, closing the state comparison gap by 2026.

Section II: School Success and Improvement

A. Sustaining and Building on School Culture and Academic Success

As Steel City Academy enters its next charter term, we are focused on sustaining the stability, culture, and academic growth that have defined our success while continuing to strengthen systems for long-term sustainability. Our plans center on four key areas:

1. Strengthening and localizing board governance,
2. Sustaining and developing our proven leadership team,
3. Building and retaining exceptional educators through intentional pipelines, and
4. Continuing to accelerate academic achievement through data-driven literacy and math initiatives.

Each of these pillars is supported by clear structures, implementation timelines, and accountable individuals to ensure measurable progress over the next five years.

Governing Board: Building Long-Term Sustainability

Responsible: Governance Team, Board Chair and Executive Director

Timeline: Ongoing, with annual review each July

Steel City Academy's Board of Directors has established a strong foundation of governance through the development of clear board roles, responsibilities, and expectations. This clarity has strengthened

accountability, improved efficiency, and provided a clear profile of the type of board member who can best serve the mission and community of Steel City.

To sustain long-term success, the Governance Working Group has prioritized board recruitment and diversification, with an intentional focus on increasing local representation to ensure long-term commitment and community ownership. By pivoting toward a more localized governance model, Steel City is cultivating board members who are deeply invested in Gary's future and who bring relevant expertise in education, finance, law, and community engagement.

Our governance structure supports sustainability through:

- **Monthly working group meetings** (Finance, Academic, Governance) that allow for continuous oversight and proactive planning. These working groups are the ones responsible for oversight of meeting our strategic plan goals outlined above - particularly regarding graduation rate, English and Math results.
- **Bimonthly full board meetings**, which emphasize strategic discussion over compliance updates.
- **Annual board retreats** focused on long-term planning, mission alignment, and data-informed goal setting.

Through these practices, Steel City's board has transitioned from a founding governance body to a strategic, community-anchored governing board equipped to guide the school through its next decade.

Leadership Team: Sustaining Stability and Building Succession

Responsible: Executive Director and Principal
Timeline: Ongoing, with annual leadership development milestones

Since our founding in 2015, Steel City Academy's leadership team has been remarkably stable. Three founding team members continue to serve in senior roles, and the four current senior leaders—Executive Director, Principal, Managing Director of Diverse Learners, and Assistant Principal—have worked together for nine years.

That continuity is intentional. Our vision, culture, and instructional model do not reset each year—they deepen. Leaders at Steel City are not distant administrators; they are present, instructional, and student-centered. They teach, coach, and greet students by name, ensuring decisions are grounded in classroom realities, not conference room theory.

To ensure sustainability, Steel City has implemented a comprehensive succession and leadership development system anchored by the Teacher Leader Fellow Program—our internal leadership pipeline for rising instructional and operational leaders. Steel City Senior Leaders have identified potential successors on our team and are working tirelessly to provide them opportunities to obtain the certifications, learning and experience to be ready. Identified rising leaders on our succession planning talent map get leadership coaching and development.

Teacher Leader Fellow Program: Building the Bench

Responsible: Executive Director, Principal and Managing Director
Timeline: Cohort-based, two-year cycle (next cohort begins Summer 2026)

The Teacher Leader Fellow Program is Steel City's premier professional fellowship for high-performing educators seeking to expand their impact beyond the classroom. Designed as a two-year, cohort-based program, the fellowship equips teachers with the knowledge, skills, and coaching necessary to take on future leadership roles at Steel City or in the broader education ecosystem.

Fellows select one of four focus areas aligned with Steel City's strategic priorities:

1. **Operations** – optimizing systems to enhance efficiency and family experience; **Culture** – strengthening relationships, restorative practices, and student engagement;

2. **Instruction** – driving academic achievement and instructional excellence;
   College & Career – expanding postsecondary pathways for students.

Year One emphasizes project design and implementation—each Fellow leads a high-impact initiative addressing a schoolwide problem of practice. Year Two focuses on adult leadership and team management, with Fellows receiving targeted coaching on leading through layers and building staff capacity.

Graduates of the program advance into roles such as grade-level chairs, instructional coaches, directors, or assistant principals, ensuring a strong leadership bench for future succession. This system exemplifies our strategic goal to "Build the Bench"—developing future leaders from within to maintain organizational excellence and continuity.

Teaching Staff: Growing Our Own Through the Legacy Fellow Program

Responsible: Executive Director and Principal
Timeline: Ongoing, with recruitment cycles aligned to college graduation calendars (each May–June)

Steel City Academy has become a place where teachers come to teach and to grow. Our educators choose Steel City because it is a school where strong culture, consistency, and clear expectations allow them to focus on what matters most—teaching and learning. Unlike many schools across the country facing significant behavioral and safety challenges, Steel City's intentional culture systems and restorative practices have created a learning environment grounded in respect, joy, and mutual accountability. Teachers are not managing daily disruptions or crisis-level behavior; they are planning lessons, analyzing data, and helping students reach their fullest potential.

This environment is the result of years of investment in systems that uphold high expectations paired with strong relationships—from morning greetings and mediation circles to consistent routines and shared language across classrooms. Our teachers know that their time and energy are valued, their safety and voice are prioritized, and their professional growth is supported. This culture has been central to our teacher retention and recruitment success, positioning Steel City as a destination for educators who want to make an impact in Gary.

To ensure long-term sustainability, Steel City pairs this culture of belonging with intentional development pipelines through the Legacy Fellow Program, our homegrown teacher pathway designed to bring former students back as educators.

The Legacy Fellow Program cultivates a pathway from student to certified teacher, providing hands-on experience, mentorship, and financial and academic support to ensure long-term success in the classroom. Fellows are recruited from Steel City's alumni network after earning their bachelor's degrees and paired with mentor teachers who provide daily modeling and coaching. Fellows engage in weekly real-time coaching sessions, co-teaching experiences, and participate in all staff professional development to become part of the school's professional learning culture from day one.

Throughout the fellowship, participants receive support in enrolling in accredited teacher preparation programs and a financial stipend to offset certification and living expenses. The fellowship is anchored in the Danielson Framework for Teaching, ensuring alignment with Steel City's expectations for equitable, high-quality instruction.

By the conclusion of the program, Legacy Fellows emerge as fully certified, mission-aligned teachers ready to lead classrooms in Gary with the skills, confidence, and community connection to transform student outcomes. The program not only expands Steel City's pipeline of diverse, mission-driven educators but also fulfills our long-term vision of cultivating homegrown talent in a school where teachers truly love their work.

Academic Achievement: Sustaining Growth in Literacy and Math

Responsible: Principal, Assistant Principal, Managing Director and Director of Instruction
Timeline: 2024–2027

Academic sustainability is rooted in the same systems that have driven our recent gains—intentional alignment to the Science of Reading, targeted math intervention, and relentless focus on teacher development.

- **Literacy:** Steel City will continue to strengthen its implementation of the IDOE Literacy Cadre framework, ensuring consistency from early elementary through high school. Ongoing professional development, coaching cycles, and high-dosage tutoring will sustain momentum toward full proficiency in all ELA indicators.
- **Mathematics:** Through our newly launched math initiative, the school will expand high-dosage math tutoring, provide additional professional learning for non-math educators teaching math sections, and increase the use of data-driven small-group instruction and intervention cycles.
- **Accountability:** Annual targets for ILEARN, IREAD, and SAT performance are set by grade and subgroup, with data reviewed quarterly by the Academic Working Group and full board.

Steel City will continue to uphold high expectations paired with deep professional support, ensuring that every teacher has the tools and coaching needed to deliver rigorous, equitable instruction.

Steel City Academy's next charter term is not about reinvention—it's about continuation, refinement, and sustainability. Our governance structure is strong and local; our leadership team is stable and deeply experienced; our teacher pipelines are intentional and homegrown; and our academic systems are data-driven and research-based.

Together, these elements ensure that Steel City Academy will continue to deliver on its mission: to ignite a community of learners and leaders who believe in their power to change the world, starting right here in Gary, Indiana.

B. Sustaining and Strengthening Financial Health

As Steel City Academy enters its next charter term, we are focused on sustaining the financial stability and fiscal discipline that have defined our growth over the past five years. What was once a system of red indicators in every financial metric has transformed into a model of fiscal strength and operational excellence—each indicator now green, reflecting our ability to plan strategically, act responsibly, and deliver on our commitments.

Our financial sustainability plan centers on three key priorities:

- **Maintaining Steady Enrollment**
- **Relentlessly Pursuing Competitive Grants and Local Revenue**
- **Executing Tight Budget-to-Actual Systems for Real-Time Responsiveness**

Each of these priorities is supported by strong systems, clear accountabilities, and data-driven decision-making to ensure Steel City remains financially healthy, agile, and mission-focused over the next five years.

Enrollment: Sustaining Stability and Efficiency

Responsible: Executive Director, Principal, Assistant Principal
Timeline: Ongoing, with annual enrollment and budget alignment each February

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Steel City's enrollment surged as the school restructured its building to create "Success Pods" and expand virtual learning options. As in-person learning resumed—and as student academic and social-emotional needs grew alongside a national teacher shortage—Steel City made the intentional decision to *decrease enrollment* to better serve our students and stabilize our culture.

This decision prioritized smaller class sizes, restored our cafeteria for communal meals and student experiences, and strengthened the overall learning environment. Through this strategic right-sizing, we identified an ideal enrollment range of 280–310 students—a level that maximizes academic quality and operational efficiency within our current facility.

This approach required difficult but deliberate choices, including staff consolidation, optimization of transportation routes, and a focus on high-impact instruction rather than costly or unsustainable initiatives. The result has been a safe, joyful school community where students thrive and teachers can teach. Waitlists remain strong in middle and select elementary grades, while high school enrollment—limited by facility constraints—will be a key focus area as we prepare for our long-term campus relocation.

Grants and Local Revenue: Diversifying and Expanding Funding Sources
Responsible: Executive Director, Revenue Coordinator, Finance Coordinator
Timeline: Ongoing, with quarterly grant reviews and annual fundraising benchmarks

To sustain Steel City's innovative programming and student supports, the school has aggressively pursued state and federal competitive grants, including the Paraprofessional Pipeline Grant, IDOE Literacy Cadre, Indiana Learns, and the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act. These funds have expanded our capacity to invest in staff development, targeted interventions, and student well-being.

However, Steel City also recognizes the volatility and uncertainty that can accompany state and federal funding sources. Shifts in policy priorities, competitive cycles, and appropriations can create financial unpredictability for schools like ours—particularly those operating leanly and with intentional restraint. In response, we have built deliberate systems to weather these fluctuations through proactive revenue generation that remains within our control.

To that end, Steel City is focused on diversifying and expanding sustainable funding streams. For the first time in school history, we have launched a development campaign to build a base of local

philanthropic support and to lessen our reliance on variable government funding. This effort not only strengthens our financial resilience but also deepens community investment in our mission.

Our fundraising strategy includes cultivating recurring individual and corporate giving, pursuing foundation partnerships, and aligning philanthropic efforts to strategic priorities such as academic excellence, teacher development, and our permanent home. This work will culminate in the public launch of the Steel City Promise, our first-ever capital campaign—an investment in long-term stability, expanded student opportunity, and the future of our school in Gary.

Financial Systems and Stewardship: Building for Long-Term Health

Responsible: Executive Director, Finance Working Group
Timeline: Monthly monitoring and reporting; annual fiscal review each July

Steel City's financial turnaround has been anchored in the implementation of robust budget-to-actual systems, transparent reporting, and strong governance oversight. These practices enable real-time financial analysis and swift, responsible adjustments to ensure the organization remains in a positive cash position.

Monthly budget reviews with department leads and the Finance Working Group allow for proactive adjustments, while quarterly financial updates to the full board ensure alignment between spending, outcomes, and strategic priorities. Through these disciplined systems, Steel City has consistently met all audit and compliance requirements and maintained healthy cash reserves.

As we look ahead, our financial stewardship will continue to be guided by prudence, transparency, and an unwavering commitment to directing every dollar toward our mission—to provide an excellent, equitable education for every student we serve.

Steel City Academy's next charter term is not about expansion for expansion's sake—it is about *sustained excellence and smart growth*. With disciplined budgeting, intentional enrollment planning, diversified funding, and rigorous oversight, Steel City will continue to operate from a position of financial strength—ensuring the stability and longevity of our mission in Gary for generations to come.

C. External Factors Impacting Sustainability

Market and Community Challenges: Navigating a Complex Landscape

Responsible: Executive Director Kirley and Board Governance & Marketing Working Groups
Timeline: 2025–2027, with biannual marketing strategy reviews

Steel City Academy operates in a city facing significant demographic and economic challenges. Gary's declining population and highly saturated school market present unique enrollment pressures for all schools in the region. To date, Steel City has invested minimal dollars in traditional marketing, choosing instead to focus resources on *substance over flash*—delivering a radically different educational experience defined by safety, belonging, and high-quality in-person teaching.

Our belief remains that if we continue to provide a top notch, relationship-driven learning environment, families will choose Steel City because of the lived experience we offer. However, as the school landscape continues to evolve, we recognize the importance of telling our story more intentionally. Over the next charter term, Steel City will develop a strategic marketing and communications plan to elevate our visibility, celebrate our impact, and ensure that families across Gary understand the unique value of a Steel City education.

Beyond market forces, we also acknowledge the growing societal challenges that directly affect enrollment stability and student continuity. The increasing rates of housing insecurity and an unhoused population in Gary have led to higher student transiency, creating fluctuations in enrollment and disruptions in learning progression. To address this, Steel City is deepening partnerships with local

social service agencies, enhancing family outreach systems, and strengthening our in-house supports for students and families navigating housing instability.

D. Additional Evidence Supporting Renewal

At Steel City Academy, our commitment to Gary extends far beyond the classroom. We exist to prepare our graduates with the knowledge, purpose, and transformative experiences to choose from boundless opportunities through college, career, and military pathways—while redefining what is possible for the students and families of Gary, Indiana.

Our mission and vision are not simply statements on paper; they are lived daily in our work, our partnerships, and our students' impact across the city. Steel City Academy has become a critical part of Gary's collective effort to rebuild and reimagine its future, proving that a public charter school can be both academically rigorous and deeply rooted in community.

When you drive through Gary, the evidence of Steel City's presence is visible and lasting:

- At Faith Farms Urban Farm, our students built and maintain hoop houses and chicken coops, learning sustainability, entrepreneurship, and community service in action.

- The stunning "We Are Beautiful" murals at the historic Union Station, designed and painted by Steel City students, now stand as symbols of pride and resilience for the city.

- The urban poetry installations displayed on abandoned buildings remind passersby that *beauty lives in possibility*—a message born from the hearts of our young artists and writers.

When you attend a community event—from back-to-school fairs and neighborhood cleanups to Northwest Indiana Food Bank drives—you will find Steel City students and staff standing shoulder to shoulder with fellow community members. Our school has become a hub of service, leadership, and belonging, demonstrating that excellence in education can and must be intertwined with civic responsibility.

Steel City is not just a school; it is a community anchor. Our model—a small, single-site, K–12 school—allows us to know every student, every family member, and every staff member by name. We have created a place where relationships come first, where students are deeply seen and known, and where families feel a profound sense of connection and trust.

We also view our role in Gary's ecosystem as part of a long-term solution, not a short-term intervention. Steel City intentionally recruits and develops its own graduates to return as educators, through our Legacy Fellow Program. Many of our alumni have come back home to teach, coach, and mentor the next generation—continuing the cycle of community investment and leadership.

Our partnerships extend across Gary—from collaborative work with Gary Community Schools Corporation's Career Center, to initiatives with local nonprofits to provide mental health services for our staff, small businesses, and faith-based organizations. These partnerships are rooted in shared purpose: to create opportunity, hope, and high expectations for every young person in our city.

Together, these collective efforts offer evidence beyond test scores—they demonstrate Steel City's measurable and immeasurable impact:

- Academic excellence grounded in belonging and high expectations.
- Community engagement that transforms neighborhoods and builds pride.
- Local leadership pipelines that invest in Gary's future workforce and educators.
- A proven, replicable model of what is possible when a school becomes a movement.

In a city that has faced decades of disinvestment, Steel City Academy stands as a testament to what can happen when belief meets action. Our story is not just about sustaining a school—it is about redefining what education can mean for a city.

For Gary, and for the hundreds of students and families we serve, Steel City Academy is proof of possibility—and the promise of what's still to come.

Section III: Proposed Changes

Proposed Facility Transition: Relocation to the Historic Lincoln School

Steel City Academy is proposing a future relocation to the former Lincoln School in Gary, Indiana—a move that will allow the school to steadily increase enrollment while maintaining the quality and integrity of its academic and cultural programming.

In May 2024, after years of relentless pursuit and partnership-building, Steel City Academy acquired the Lincoln School property from Gary Community School Corporation. This acquisition represents not only a significant milestone for our organization but also a major investment in the long-term revitalization of Gary's Midtown neighborhood.

Since acquisition, Steel City has completed full environmental abatement of the property and secured both an architectural partner and a general contractor to lead the project. Plans and construction drawings are nearing completion, and the design process has centered on preserving the historic character of the building while modernizing the space to meet the needs of a high-quality, 21st-century K–12 education.

We are currently in the process of assembling the most fiscally responsible capital stack to bring this vision to life. This includes a thoughtful combination of potential Common School Loans, philanthropic contributions, and other public and private financing mechanisms that will allow us to move forward sustainably.

Because Steel City now owns its future home outright, we have the luxury of time—the ability to proceed with care and intention rather than urgency. We are not rushing to relocate until the full financial package ensures the long-term health of the organization.

While a definitive move-in date has not yet been set, we anticipate the relocation will occur within the next charter term. Our five-year budget, enrollment projections, and narrative assume continued operation in our current facility for the near term. However, we have also developed incremental enrollment and budget projections that outline the financial and operational implications once we transition to the Lincoln School campus. These materials can be provided upon request.

This move represents far more than a change in address—it is a long-awaited step toward Steel City's permanent home. The Lincoln School campus will allow us to:

- Expand our student capacity responsibly while maintaining small class sizes and personalized learning;
- Provide dedicated spaces for STEM, the arts, and athletics that our current facility cannot accommodate;

- Strengthen our role as a community anchor within Gary's Midtown neighborhood; and
- Ensure long-term financial sustainability through facility ownership rather than lease dependency.

Steel City Academy's relocation will honor our founding vision while securing the future of our mission—to ignite a community of learners and leaders who believe in their power to change the world, starting right here in Gary, Indiana.

School Enrollment Projections

(must align with Renewal Application Enrollment Plan)

School Name: **Steel City Academy**
Location: **Gary Community School Corp**
Renewal Year: **2026 - 27 SY**

Is the school an Adult High School (please see instructions): Select from drop-down list →

Enrollment	Current Year 2025 - 26 SY	Year 1 2026 - 27 SY	Year 2 2027 - 28 SY	Year 3 2028 - 29 SY	Year 4 2029 - 30 SY	Year 5 2030 - 31 SY
Kindergarten	19	20	20	20	20	20
Grade 1	18	20	20	20	20	20
Grade 2	22	22	22	22	22	22
Grade 3	24	22	22	22	22	22
Grade 4	20	24	24	24	24	24
Grade 5	23	24	24	24	24	24
Grade 6	23	24	25	25	25	25
Grade 7	25	24	25	25	25	25
Grade 8	24	24	25	25	25	25
Grade 9	20	24	25	25	25	25
Grade 10	23	24	25	25	25	25
Grade 11	22	24	25	25	25	25
Grade 12	22	24	25	25	25	25
Total K-12 Enrollment:	285	300	307	307	307	307
Adult Learners (1)						
Total Adult Enrollment:						
Estimated % of Students:						
Special Education	18%	18%	18%	18%	18%	18%
English Learners	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Free/Reduced Priced Lunch						
Virtual Students (2)						
K-12 Distribution (3)	$2,672,735.42	$2,813,405.70	$2,879,051.83	$2,879,051.83	$ 2,879,051.83	$ 2,879,051.83
Adult Distribution (4)	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -

Notes & Instructions

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.

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. ICSB is prohibited from authorizing an adult high school unless the general assembly has made a specific appropriation for the high school pursuant to Indiana Code 20-24-7-13.5. If your proposal is for an adult high school, complete Row 32 only.

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.

3) The "basic" tuition support grant for K-12 schools is equal to the following formula:

(Foundation Amount X ADM) + ((Complexity Multiplier X Complexity Index) X ADM)

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 (2025) budget- Foundation = $6,967 for the 2025-26 SY and $7,071 for the 2026-27 SY (and beyond) and Complexity Multiplier = $4,001 for the 2025-26 SY and $4,015 for the 2026-27 SY (and beyond). 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 October 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 moderate disabilities ($2,913 for the 2025-26 SY). The grant amount for severe disabilities is $11,592 for the 2025-26 SY).

4) The Adult Learner Grant amount for adult high schools is $6,750. The Adult Distribution is calculated by multiplying Total Enrollment by the Adult Grant.

5-Year Projected Staffing Plan

School Name: Steel City Academy
Renewal Year 2026 - 27 SY

The information provided herein does not, and is not intended to, constitute legal advice. Schools should consult an attorney and/or accountant for any questions about employment and employment tax matters before completing this worksheet.

- Complete all relevant Grey Shaded areas -> Name of Position, Number of Positions, Average Salary, Health Insurance, Retirement Contribution, and Other Benefits.
- Projected salary and benefits should align with Year 0 and 5-Year budgets.
- Please see footnotes below for additional information before completing the worksheet.

	Current Year			Year 1		
	Number	Average Salary (1)	Total Expense	Number	Average Salary	Total Expense
INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF						
Position (specify)		$ -	$ -		$ -	$ -
Teachers	16.0	$ 55,000.00	$ 880,000.00	16.0	$ 56,375.00	$ 902,000.00
Paraprofessional	5.0	$ 36,000.00	$ 180,000.00	5.0	$ 36,900.00	$ 184,500.00
Diverse Learners Teacher	1.0	$ 52,000.00	$ 52,000.00	1.0	$ 53,300.00	$ 53,300.00
Summer School Staff	1.0	$ 20,000.00	$ 20,000.00	1.0	$ 20,500.00	$ 20,500.00
		$ -	$ -		$ -	$ -
		$ -	$ -		$ -	$ -
		$ -	$ -		$ -	$ -
		$ -	$ -		$ -	$ -
		$ -	$ -		$ -	$ -
		$ -	$ -		$ -	$ -
		$ -	$ -		$ -	$ -
		$ -	$ -		$ -	$ -
		$ -	$ -		$ -	$ -
		$ -	$ -		$ -	$ -
Total Instructional Staff:	**23.0**		**$ 1,132,000.00**	**23.0**		**$ 1,160,300.00**
ADMIN & SUPPORT						
Position (specify)		$ -	$ -		$ -	$ -
Principal	1.0	$ 140,000.00	$ 140,000.00	1.0	$ 143,500.00	$ 143,500.00
Executive Director	1.0	$ 175,000.00	$ 175,000.00	1.0	$ 179,375.00	$ 179,375.00
Managing Director of Diverse Learners	1.0	$ 115,000.00	$ 115,000.00	1.0	$ 117,875.00	$ 117,875.00
Assistant Principal	1.0	$ 115,000.00	$ 115,000.00	1.0	$ 117,875.00	$ 117,875.00
Counselor	2.0	$ 58,000.00	$ 116,000.00	2.0	$ 59,450.00	$ 118,900.00
College & Career Coordinator	1.0	$ 58,000.00	$ 58,000.00	1.0	$ 59,450.00	$ 59,450.00
Nurse	0.5	$ 40,000.00	$ 20,000.00	0.5	$ 41,000.00	$ 20,500.00
Office Assistants	2.0	$ 50,000.00	$ 100,000.00	2.0	$ 51,250.00	$ 102,500.00
Culture Coordinators	2.0	$ 50,000.00	$ 100,000.00	2.0	$ 51,250.00	$ 102,500.00
School Resource Officer	1.0	$ 35,000.00	$ 35,000.00	1.0	$ 35,875.00	$ 35,875.00
School Operations Coordinator	1.0	$ 60,000.00	$ 60,000.00	1.0	$ 61,500.00	$ 61,500.00
Food Service Assistant	1.0	$ 40,000.00	$ 40,000.00	1.0	$ 41,000.00	$ 41,000.00
Finance/Revenue & Reporting Coordinator	2.0	$ 65,000.00	$ 130,000.00	2.0	$ 66,625.00	$ 133,250.00
		$ -	$ -		$ -	$ -
Total Admin & Support Staff:	**16.5**		**$ 1,204,000.00**	**16.5**		**$ 1,234,100.00**
		Rate/Per Employee Expense	**Total Expense**		**Rate/Per Employee Expense**	**Total Expense**
BENEFITS						
Health Insurance (2)		$ 5,795.00	$ 228,902.50		$ 6,084.75	$ 240,347.63
Retirement Contributions (3)		$ 2,222.00	$ 87,769.00		$ 2,333.10	$ 92,157.45
Social Security		6.2%	$ 144,832.00		6.2%	$ 148,452.80
Medicare		1.45%	$ 33,872.00		1.45%	$ 34,718.80
Unemployment		2.5%	$ 58,400.00		2.5%	$ 59,860.00
Other Compensation (4)			$ 50,000.00			$ 55,000.00

	Year 2			Year 3		
	Number	Average Salary	Total Expense	Number	Average Salary	Total Expense
INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF						
Position (specify)		$ -	$ -		$ -	$ -
Teachers	16.0	$ 57,784.38	$ 924,550.00	16.0	$ 59,228.98	$ 947,663.75
Paraprofessional	5.0	$ 37,822.50	$ 189,112.50	5.0	$ 38,768.06	$ 193,840.31
Diverse Learners Teacher	1.0	$ 54,632.50	$ 54,632.50	1.0	$ 55,998.31	$ 55,998.31
Summer School Staff	1.0	$ 21,012.50	$ 21,012.50	1.0	$ 21,537.81	$ 21,537.81
		$ -	$ -		$ -	$ -
		$ -	$ -		$ -	$ -
		$ -	$ -		$ -	$ -
		$ -	$ -		$ -	$ -
		$ -	$ -		$ -	$ -
		$ -	$ -		$ -	$ -
		$ -	$ -		$ -	$ -
		$ -	$ -		$ -	$ -
		$ -	$ -		$ -	$ -
		$ -	$ -		$ -	$ -
Total Instructional Staff:	**23.0**		**$ 1,189,307.50**	**23.0**		**$ 1,219,040.19**
ADMIN & SUPPORT						
Position (specify)		$ -	$ -		$ -	$ -
Principal	1.0	$ 147,087.50	$ 147,087.50	1.0	$ 150,764.69	$ 150,764.69
Executive Director	1.0	$ 183,859.38	$ 183,859.38	1.0	$ 188,455.86	$ 188,455.86
Managing Director of Diverse Learners	1.0	$ 120,821.88	$ 120,821.88	1.0	$ 123,842.42	$ 123,842.42
Assistant Principal	1.0	$ 120,821.88	$ 120,821.88	1.0	$ 123,842.42	$ 123,842.42
Counselor	2.0	$ 60,936.25	$ 121,872.50	2.0	$ 62,459.66	$ 124,919.31
College & Career Coordinator	1.0	$ 60,936.25	$ 60,936.25	1.0	$ 62,459.66	$ 62,459.66
Nurse	0.5	$ 42,025.00	$ 21,012.50	0.5	$ 43,075.63	$ 21,537.81
Office Assistants	2.0	$ 52,531.25	$ 105,062.50	2.0	$ 53,844.53	$ 107,689.06
Culture Coordinators	2.0	$ 52,531.25	$ 105,062.50	2.0	$ 53,844.53	$ 107,689.06
School Resource Officer	1.0	$ 36,771.88	$ 36,771.88	1.0	$ 37,691.17	$ 37,691.17
School Operations Coordinator	1.0	$ 63,037.50	$ 63,037.50	1.0	$ 64,613.44	$ 64,613.44
Food Service Assistant	1.0	$ 42,025.00	$ 42,025.00	1.0	$ 43,075.63	$ 43,075.63
Finance/Revenue & Reporting Coordinator	2.0	$ 68,290.63	$ 136,581.25	2.0	$ 69,997.89	$ 139,995.78
		$ -	$ -		$ -	$ -
Total Admin & Support Staff:	**16.5**		**$ 1,264,952.50**	**16.5**		**$ 1,296,576.31**
		Rate/Per Employee Expense	**Total Expense**		**Rate/Per Employee Expense**	**Total Expense**
BENEFITS						
Health Insurance (2)		$ 6,236.87	$ 246,356.32		$ 6,392.79	$ 252,515.22
Retirement Contributions (3)		$ 2,391.43	$ 94,461.39		$ 2,451.21	$ 96,822.92
Social Security		6.2%	$ 152,164.12		6.2%	$ 155,968.22
Medicare		1.45%	$ 35,586.77		1.45%	$ 36,476.44
Unemployment		2.5%	$ 61,356.50		2.5%	$ 62,890.41
Other Compensation (4)			$ 60,000.00			$ 65,000.00

	Year 4			Year 5		
	Number	Average Salary	Total Expense	Number	Average Salary	Total Expense
INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF						
Position (specify)		$ -	$ -		$ -	$ -
Teachers	16.0	$ 60,709.71	$ 971,355.34	16.0	$ 62,227.45	$ 995,639.23
Paraprofessional	5.0	$ 39,737.26	$ 198,686.32	5.0	$ 40,730.70	$ 203,653.48
Diverse Learners Teacher	1.0	$ 57,398.27	$ 57,398.27	1.0	$ 58,833.23	$ 58,833.23
Summer School Staff	1.0	$ 22,076.26	$ 22,076.26	1.0	$ 22,628.16	$ 22,628.16
		$ -	$ -		$ -	$ -
		$ -	$ -		$ -	$ -
		$ -	$ -		$ -	$ -
		$ -	$ -		$ -	$ -
		$ -	$ -		$ -	$ -
		$ -	$ -		$ -	$ -
		$ -	$ -		$ -	$ -
		$ -	$ -		$ -	$ -
		$ -	$ -		$ -	$ -
		$ -	$ -		$ -	$ -
Total Instructional Staff:	**23.0**		**$ 1,249,516.19**	**23.0**		**$ 1,280,754.10**
ADMIN & SUPPORT						
Position (specify)		$ -	$ -		$ -	$ -
Principal	1.0	$ 154,533.80	$ 154,533.80	1.0	$ 158,397.15	$ 158,397.15
Executive Director	1.0	$ 193,167.26	$ 193,167.26	1.0	$ 197,996.44	$ 197,996.44
Managing Director of Diverse Learners	1.0	$ 126,938.48	$ 126,938.48	1.0	$ 130,111.94	$ 130,111.94
Assistant Principal	1.0	$ 126,938.48	$ 126,938.48	1.0	$ 130,111.94	$ 130,111.94
Counselor	2.0	$ 64,021.15	$ 128,042.30	2.0	$ 65,621.68	$ 131,243.35
College & Career Coordinator	1.0	$ 64,021.15	$ 64,021.15	1.0	$ 65,621.68	$ 65,621.68
Nurse	0.5	$ 44,152.52	$ 22,076.26	0.5	$ 45,256.33	$ 22,628.16
Office Assistants	2.0	$ 55,190.64	$ 110,381.29	2.0	$ 56,570.41	$ 113,140.82
Culture Coordinators	2.0	$ 55,190.64	$ 110,381.29	2.0	$ 56,570.41	$ 113,140.82
School Resource Officer	1.0	$ 38,633.45	$ 38,633.45	1.0	$ 39,599.29	$ 39,599.29
School Operations Coordinator	1.0	$ 66,228.77	$ 66,228.77	1.0	$ 67,884.49	$ 67,884.49
Food Service Assistant	1.0	$ 44,152.52	$ 44,152.52	1.0	$ 45,256.33	$ 45,256.33
Finance/Revenue & Reporting Coordinator	2.0	$ 71,747.84	$ 143,495.68	2.0	$ 73,541.53	$ 147,083.07
		$ -	$ -		$ -	$ -
Total Admin & Support Staff:	**16.5**		**$ 1,328,990.72**	**16.5**		**$ 1,362,215.49**
		Rate/Per Employee Expense	**Total Expense**		**Rate/Per Employee Expense**	**Total Expense**
BENEFITS						
Health Insurance (2)		$ 6,552.61	$ 258,828.10		$ 6,880.24	$ 271,769.51
Retirement Contributions (3)		$ 2,512.49	$ 99,243.49		$ 2,638.12	$ 104,205.67
Social Security		6.2%	$ 159,867.43		6.2%	$ 163,864.11
Medicare		1.45%	$ 37,388.35		1.45%	$ 38,323.06
Unemployment		2.5%	$ 64,462.67		2.5%	$ 66,074.24
Other Compensation (4)			$ 70,000.00			$ 75,000.00

SUMMARY	Current Year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Total Staff	**39.5**	**39.5**	**39.5**	**39.5**	**39.5**	**39.5**
Total Salaries:	**$ 2,336,000.00**	**$ 2,394,400.00**	**$ 2,454,260.00**	**$ 2,515,616.50**	**$ 2,578,506.91**	**$ 2,642,969.59**
Total Benefits:	**$ 603,775.50**	**$ 630,536.68**	**$ 649,925.09**	**$ 669,673.22**	**$ 689,790.05**	**$ 719,236.59**
Total Salaries + Benefits:	**$ 2,939,775.50**	**$ 3,024,936.68**	**$ 3,104,185.09**	**$ 3,185,289.72**	**$ 3,268,296.96**	**$ 3,362,206.18**
Student/teacher ratio	**12:1**	**13:1**	**13:1**	**13:1**	**13:1**	**13:1**
Student/staff ratio	**17:1**	**18:1**	**19:1**	**19:1**	**19:1**	**19:1**

Footnotes:

A note about classifying workers:
Generally, an individual who performs services for you is your "employee" if you have the right to control what work will be done and how it will be done. An individual who performs services for you is an "independent contractor" if the you have the right to control or direct only the result of the work, but not what will be done and how it will be done. This is an important distinction because an employee's wages are subject to employment tax withholding while an independent contractor's earnings are subject to self-employment tax. However, there are many factors used by the IRS to determine whether an individual is an employee or independent contractor. See, https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/independent-contractor-self-employed-or-employee. Please note that the IRS has issued a number of rulings and advisory opinions holding, based on the specific facts, that an individual rendering services as a substitute teacher should be considered to be an employee and not an independent contractor. Misclassification of an employee as an independent contractor may result in additional payroll taxes due, as well as possible interest and penalties. **Please consult your attorney before classifying an employee. Payments made to "independent contractors" should be listed as "Other Compensation" on Row 99, and explained in the budget narrative. Do not include payments made to independent contractors on Rows 15-47.**

(1) Amounts paid to "employees" regardless of whether they are full-time, part-time, or limited-time should be listed in the **Average Salary** column (Rows 15-47) for each year. All pay provided to an employee for services performed should be included, including salaries, vacation allowances, bonuses, stipends, commissions, and taxable fringe benefits. For more information, see https://www.irs.gov/publications/p15.

(2) **Health Insurance** includes Group Life Insurance, Group Health Insurance, Group Accident Insurance, Other Authorized Group Insurance, and Workers Compensation Insurance.

(3) **Retirement Contributions** includes Severance/Early Retirement Pay, Public Employees Retirement Fund, Teachers Retirement Fund, Public Employees Retirement Fund (Optional Contribution), Teacher Retirement Fund (Optional Contribution).

(4) **Other Compensation** - Includes any other benefits not otherwise classified above, including payments made to independent contractors. This cell should reflect the sum total of all Other Compensation for the year.

5-Year Projected Annual Operating Budget (Fiscal Year July 1-June 30)

School Name: **Steel City Academy**
Renewal Year **2026 - 27 SY**

Special Instructions for Schools Contracting with a Management Company:

Please include a note in the assumptions column and budget narrative if any of of the listed amounts include additional service, consulting, facility, or licensing fees paid to a management company or affiliate of a management company that are not included in Line 168 (CMO/EMO fee). For example, you should note any additional fees for instructional or support supplies and resources; license fees for materials, software, or educational programming; or fees related to the management, sale, or lease of real estate. Please also state whether your facility is leased or purchased from a management company or affiliate of a management company.

If a line item is completed that includes the words "(please describe)" a specific description of the item must be provided in the appropriate box in Column N.
Failure to provide a description as requested will result in rejection of the submission.

REVENUES	Current Year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Additional Information
State Revenue - See Footnotes							Other State Grants (Row 28)
Basic Tuition Support / Adult Learners Grant - From Tab 2	$ 2,672,735.42	$ 2,813,405.70	$ 2,879,051.83	$ 2,879,051.83	$ 2,879,051.83	$ 2,879,051.83	Summer School reimbursement, Early Literacy Achievement Grant, Secured School Safety Grant,
Special Education Grant - From Tab 2	$ 150,001.20	$ 157,896.00	$ 161,580.24	$ 161,580.24	$ 161,580.24	$ 161,580.24	
Honors Diploma/Academic Performance Grant	$ 1,560.00	$ 1,716.00	$ 1,887.60	$ 2,076.36	$ 2,284.00	$ 2,512.40	
Career and Technical Education	$ 22,000.00	$ 23,100.00	$ 24,255.00	$ 25,467.75	$ 26,741.14	$ 28,078.19	
Non-English Speaking Program	$ 400.00	$ 450.00	$ 500.00	$ 550.00	$ 600.00	$ 650.00	
Charter and Innovation Network School Grant ($1,400 per student)	$ 399,000.00	$ 420,000.00	$ 429,800.00	$ 429,800.00	$ 429,800.00	$ 429,800.00	
Formative (Interim) Assessment Grant	$ 2,500.00	$ 3,000.00	$ 3,000.00	$ 3,000.00	$ 3,000.00	$ 3,000.00	
State Matching Funds for School Lunch Program	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	
Curricular Material Reimbursement Program ($150 per student)	$ 42,750.00	$ 45,000.00	$ 46,050.00	$ 46,050.00	$ 46,050.00	$ 46,050.00	
Remediation Testing Grant	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	
Teacher Appreciation Grant	$ 42,750.00	$ 45,000.00	$ 46,050.00	$ 46,050.00	$ 46,050.00	$ 46,050.00	
Other State Grants (please describe) (1)	$ 100,000.00	$ 110,000.00	$ 121,000.00	$ 133,100.00	$ 146,410.00	$ 161,051.00	
Total State Revenue:	**$ 3,433,696.62**	**$ 3,619,567.70**	**$ 3,713,174.67**	**$ 3,726,726.18**	**$ 3,741,567.21**	**$ 3,757,823.66**	
Federal Revenue - See Footnotes							Other Federal Revenue (Row 40)
Public Charter School Program Grant	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	Fresh Fruits & Vegetable, High Ability, Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, ERATE, Other Competitive Revenue (Next Gen SIG Grant), Medicaid Reimbursements
Charter Facilities Assistance Program Grant (2011)	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	
IDEA- Part B Grant (Special Education)	$ 70,000.00	$ 73,500.00	$ 77,175.00	$ 81,033.75	$ 85,085.44	$ 89,339.71	
Title I	$ 600,000.00	$ 630,000.00	$ 661,500.00	$ 661,500.00	$ 661,500.00	$ 661,500.00	
Title II	$ 35,000.00	$ 35,000.00	$ 35,000.00	$ 35,000.00	$ 35,000.00	$ 35,000.00	
Federal Lunch Program	$ 185,000.00	$ 190,000.00	$ 190,000.00	$ 190,000.00	$ 190,000.00	$ 190,000.00	
Federal Breakfast Reimbursement	$ 110,000.00	$ 115,000.00	$ 115,000.00	$ 115,000.00	$ 115,000.00	$ 115,000.00	
Other Federal Revenue (please describe)	$ 225,000.00	$ 235,000.00	$ 245,000.00	$ 245,000.00	$ 245,000.00	$ 245,000.00	
Total Federal Revenue:	**$ 1,225,000.00**	**$ 1,278,500.00**	**$ 1,323,675.00**	**$ 1,327,533.75**	**$ 1,331,585.44**	**$ 1,335,839.71**	
Other Revenue							Other Revenue (Row 54)
Contributions and Donations from Private Sources	$ 30,000.00	$ 35,000.00	$ 40,000.00	$ 45,000.00	$ 50,000.00	$ 55,000.00	Indiana Learns
Student & Adult Fees	$ 25,000.00	$ 30,000.00	$ 32,000.00	$ 34,000.00	$ 36,000.00	$ 38,000.00	
Other Fees	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	
Interest Income	$ 45,000.00	$ 45,000.00	$ 45,000.00	$ 45,000.00	$ 45,000.00	$ 45,000.00	
Charter School Capital Grants Fund	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	
Common School Fund	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	
Property Tax Sharing (2)	$ 125,000.00	$ 175,000.00	$ 200,000.00	$ 200,000.00	$ 200,000.00	$ 200,000.00	
Operating/Safety Referendum Sharing (2)	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	
Indiana Bond Bank	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	
Other Revenue (please describe)	$ 65,000.00	$ 66,625.00	$ 68,290.63	$ 69,997.89	$ 71,747.84	$ 73,541.53	
Total Other Revenue:	**$ 290,000.00**	**$ 351,625.00**	**$ 385,290.63**	**$ 393,997.89**	**$ 402,747.84**	**$ 411,541.53**	
TOTAL REVENUE:	**$ 4,948,696.62**	**$ 5,249,692.70**	**$ 5,422,140.30**	**$ 5,448,257.82**	**$ 5,475,900.48**	**$ 5,505,204.91**	
EXPENSES							
Administrative Staff - See Footnote (3)							
Executive Administration: Office of Superintendent	$ 175,000.00	$ 179,375.00	$ 183,859.00	$ 188,455.86	$ 193,167.26	$ 197,996.44	
School Administration: Office of the Principal	$ 140,000.00	$ 143,500.00	$ 147,087.50	$ 150,765.00	$ 154,533.00	$ 158,397.00	
Other School Administration	$ 230,000.00	$ 235,750.00	$ 241,643.75	$ 247,684.84	$ 253,876.96	$ 260,223.89	
Business Manager/Director of Finance	$ 130,000.00	$ 133,250.00	$ 136,581.25	$ 139,995.78	$ 143,495.68	$ 147,083.07	
Total Administrative Staff:	**$ 675,000.00**	**$ 691,875.00**	**$ 709,171.50**	**$ 726,901.49**	**$ 745,072.90**	**$ 763,700.40**	
Instructional Staff							
Teachers - Regular	$ 880,000.00	$ 902,000.00	$ 924,550.00	$ 947,663.75	$ 971,355.34	$ 995,639.23	
Teachers - Special Education	$ 52,000.00	$ 53,300.00	$ 54,632.50	$ 55,998.31	$ 57,398.27	$ 58,833.23	

Substitutes, Assistants, Paraprofessionals, Aides	$ 180,000.00	$ 184,500.00	$ 189,112.50	$ 193,840.31	$ 198,686.32	$ 203,653.48	
Summer School Staff	$ 20,000.00	$ 20,500.00	$ 21,012.50	$ 21,537.81	$ 22,076.26	$ 22,628.16	
Total Instructional Staff:	**$ 1,132,000.00**	**$ 1,160,300.00**	**$ 1,189,307.50**	**$ 1,219,040.19**	**$ 1,249,516.19**	**$ 1,280,754.10**	
Non-Instructional/Support Staff - See Footnotes							Other Support Staff (Row 82)
Social Workers, Guidence Counselors, Therapists	$ 274,000.00	$ 280,850.00	$ 287,871.25	$ 295,068.03	$ 302,444.73	$ 310,005.85	
Instructional Support Staff (4)		$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	
Other Support Staff (please describe) (5)	$ 100,000.00	$ 102,500.00	$ 105,062.50	$ 107,689.06	$ 110,381.29	$ 113,140.82	
Nurse	$ 20,000.00	$ 20,500.00	$ 21,012.50	$ 21,537.81	$ 22,076.26	$ 22,628.16	
Librarian	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	
Information Technology	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	
Maintenance of Buildings, Grounds, Equipment (including Custodial Staff)	$ 100,000.00	$ 102,500.00	$ 105,062.50	$ 107,689.06	$ 110,381.29	$ 113,140.82	
Security Personnel	$ 35,000.00	$ 35,875.00	$ 36,771.88	$ 37,691.17	$ 38,633.45	$ 39,599.29	
Athletic Coaches	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	
Total Non-Instructional/Support Staff:	**$ 529,000.00**	**$ 542,225.00**	**$ 555,780.63**	**$ 569,675.14**	**$ 583,917.02**	**$ 598,514.94**	
Subtotal Wages and Salaries:	**$ 2,336,000.00**	**$ 2,394,400.00**	**$ 2,454,260.00**	**$ 2,515,616.50**	**$ 2,578,506.91**	**$ 2,642,969.59**	
Payroll Taxes and Benefits - From Tab 3							Other Compensation (Row 98)
Social Security/Medicare/Unemployment	$ 237,104.00	$ 243,031.60	$ 249,107.39	$ 255,335.07	$ 261,718.45	$ 268,261.41	
Health Insurance	$ 228,902.50	$ 240,347.63	$ 246,356.32	$ 252,515.22	$ 258,828.10	$ 271,769.51	
Retirement Contributions	$ 87,769.00	$ 92,157.45	$ 94,461.39	$ 96,822.92	$ 99,243.49	$ 104,205.67	
Other Compensation (please describe)	$ 50,000.00	$ 55,000.00	$ 60,000.00	$ 65,000.00	$ 70,000.00	$ 75,000.00	**Extra curricular and tutoring stipends**
Total Payroll Taxes and Benefits:	**$ 603,775.50**	**$ 630,536.68**	**$ 649,925.09**	**$ 669,673.22**	**$ 689,790.05**	**$ 719,236.59**	
Total Personnel Expenses:	**$ 2,939,775.50**	**$ 3,024,936.68**	**$ 3,104,185.09**	**$ 3,185,289.72**	**$ 3,268,296.96**	**$ 3,362,206.18**	
Instructional Supplies and Resources - See Footnotes							Other Instructional Supplies and Resources (Row 108)
Curricular Materials	$ 30,000.00	$ 30,750.00	$ 31,518.75	$ 32,306.72	$ 33,114.39	$ 33,942.25	
Library/Media Services (Other than Staff)	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	
Technology Supporting Instruction (computers, tablets, etc.)	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	
Student Assessment	$ 10,000.00	$ 10,250.00	$ 10,506.25	$ 10,768.91	$ 11,038.13	$ 11,314.08	
Instructional Software	$ 15,000.00	$ 15,375.00	$ 15,759.38	$ 16,153.36	$ 16,557.19	$ 16,971.12	**Paper, additional teacher BOY supplies to get classrooms set up**
Professional Development	$ 35,000.00	$ 35,875.00	$ 36,771.88	$ 37,691.17	$ 38,633.45	$ 39,599.29	
Enrichment Programs (athletics or extra-curricular activities)	$ 15,000.00	$ 15,375.00	$ 15,759.38	$ 16,153.36	$ 16,557.19	$ 16,971.12	
Other Instructional Supplies (please describe)	$ 30,000.00	$ 30,750.00	$ 31,518.75	$ 32,306.72	$ 33,114.39	$ 33,942.25	
Total Instructional Supplies and Resources:	**$ 135,000.00**	**$ 138,375.00**	**$ 141,834.38**	**$ 145,380.23**	**$ 149,014.74**	**$ 152,740.11**	
Administrative Resources							Other Administrative Expenses (Row 118)
Administrative Technology - Computers & Software (not SiS)	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	
Other Administrative Expenses (please describe)	$ 2,000.00	$ 2,050.00	$ 2,101.25	$ 2,153.78	$ 2,207.63	$ 2,262.82	**Admin office supplies**
Total Administrative Resources:	**$ 2,000.00**	**$ 2,050.00**	**$ 2,101.25**	**$ 2,153.78**	**$ 2,207.63**	**$ 2,262.82**	
Governing Board Expenses							Other Governing Board Expenses (Row 124)
Legal Services	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	
Other Governing Board Expenses (please describe)	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	
Total Governing Board Expenses:	**$ -**	**$ -**	**$ -**	**$ -**	**$ -**	**$ -**	
Purchased or Other Services (do not include staff expenses)							Other Services (Row 142)
Audit Services	$ 30,000.00	$ 30,750.00	$ 31,518.75	$ 32,306.72	$ 33,114.39	$ 33,942.25	
Payroll Services	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	
Financial Accounting	$ 7,000.00	$ 7,175.00	$ 7,354.38	$ 7,538.23	$ 7,726.69	$ 7,919.86	
Printing, Publishing, Duplicating Services	$ 7,500.00	$ 7,687.50	$ 7,879.69	$ 8,076.68	$ 8,278.60	$ 8,485.56	
Telecommunication & IT Services	$ 50,000.00	$ 51,250.00	$ 52,531.25	$ 53,844.53	$ 55,190.64	$ 56,570.41	
Insurance (non-facility)	$ 33,000.00	$ 33,825.00	$ 34,670.63	$ 35,537.39	$ 36,425.83	$ 37,336.47	
Travel	$ 3,000.00	$ 3,075.00	$ 3,151.88	$ 3,230.67	$ 3,311.44	$ 3,394.22	
Mail Services	$ 9,500.00	$ 9,737.50	$ 9,980.94	$ 10,230.46	$ 10,486.22	$ 10,748.38	
Special Education Administration	$ 90,000.00	$ 92,250.00	$ 94,556.25	$ 96,920.16	$ 99,343.16	$ 101,826.74	**Contracted custodial services**
Student Information Services or Systems	$ 8,500.00	$ 8,712.50	$ 8,930.31	$ 9,153.57	$ 9,382.41	$ 9,616.97	
Food Services	$ 290,000.00	$ 297,250.00	$ 304,681.25	$ 312,298.28	$ 320,105.74	$ 328,108.38	
Transportation Services	$ 425,000.00	$ 435,625.00	$ 446,515.63	$ 457,678.52	$ 469,120.48	$ 480,848.49	
Marketing Expenses	$ 10,000.00	$ 10,250.00	$ 10,506.25	$ 10,768.91	$ 11,038.13	$ 11,314.08	
Other Services (please describe)	$ 95,000.00	$ 97,375.00	$ 99,809.38	$ 102,304.61	$ 104,862.22	$ 107,483.78	
Total Professional Purchased or Other Services:	**$ 1,058,500.00**	**$ 1,084,962.50**	**$ 1,112,086.56**	**$ 1,139,888.73**	**$ 1,168,385.94**	**$ 1,197,595.59**	
Facilities Expenses (do not include staff expenses, e.g. custodian)							Lease, Mortgage, & Other Facilities (Rows 147, 161)
Facility Lease/Mortgage Payments (please describe)	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	
Capital Improvements	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	

Other Principal Payments	$ 95,000.00	$ 90,000.00	$ 85,000.00	$ 80,000.00	$ 75,000.00	$ 70,000.00	
Operating Leases	$ 40,000.00	$ 40,000.00	$ 40,000.00	$ 40,000.00	$ 40,000.00	$ 40,000.00	
Interest Expense (as accrued)	$ 22,000.00	$ 22,000.00	$ 22,000.00	$ 22,000.00	$ 22,000.00	$ 22,000.00	
Depreciation Expense	$ 85,000.00	$ 85,000.00	$ 85,000.00	$ 85,000.00	$ 85,000.00	$ 85,000.00	
Insurance (Facility)	$ 10,000.00	$ 10,250.00	$ 10,506.25	$ 10,768.91	$ 11,038.13	$ 11,314.08	
Purchase of Furniture, Fixtures, & Equipment	$ 5,000.00	$ 5,125.00	$ 5,253.13	$ 5,384.45	$ 5,519.06	$ 5,657.04	
Electric & Gas	$ 65,000.00	$ 66,625.00	$ 68,290.63	$ 69,997.89	$ 71,747.84	$ 73,541.53	
Water & Sewage	$ 6,000.00	$ 6,150.00	$ 6,303.75	$ 6,461.34	$ 6,622.88	$ 6,788.45	
Repair and Maintenance Services (include supply costs)	$ 200,000.00	$ 205,000.00	$ 210,125.00	$ 215,378.13	$ 220,762.58	$ 226,281.64	
Custodial Services (include supply costs)	$ 21,000.00	$ 21,525.00	$ 22,063.13	$ 22,614.70	$ 23,180.07	$ 23,759.57	
Waste Disposal	$ 55,000.00	$ 56,375.00	$ 57,784.38	$ 59,228.98	$ 60,709.71	$ 62,227.45	
Security Services	$ 7,500.00	$ 7,687.50	$ 7,879.69	$ 8,076.68	$ 8,278.60	$ 8,485.56	
Other Facility Expenses (please describe)		$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	
Total Facilities Expenses:	**$ 611,500.00**	**$ 615,737.50**	**$ 620,205.94**	**$ 624,911.09**	**$ 629,858.86**	**$ 635,055.33**	
Other Expenses - See Footnotes							Other Expenses (Row 170)
Indiana Charter School Board Administrative Fee (6)	$ 20,000.00	$ 20,045.52	$ 21,100.54	$ 21,592.89	$ 21,592.89	$ 21,592.89	
Management Fee (7)	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	
Bank Fees	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	
Escrow	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	Staff relations
Other Expenses (please describe)	$ 25,000.00	$ 25,625.00	$ 26,265.63	$ 26,922.27	$ 27,595.32	$ 28,285.21	
Total Other Expenses:	**$ 45,000.00**	**$ 45,670.52**	**$ 47,366.17**	**$ 48,515.15**	**$ 49,188.21**	**$ 49,878.09**	
TOTAL EXPENSES:	**$ 4,791,775.50**	**$ 4,911,732.19**	**$ 5,027,779.38**	**$ 5,146,138.70**	**$ 5,266,952.34**	**$ 5,399,738.13**	
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS:	**$ 156,921.12**	**$ 337,960.51**	**$ 394,360.91**	**$ 302,119.12**	**$ 208,948.14**	**$ 105,466.78**	

Footnotes:

(1) 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.

(2) Marion, Lake, St. Joseph, and Vanderburgh counties only.

(3) 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.

(4) Includes Staffing for Instruction and Curriculum Development, Instructional Staff Training, etc.

(5) Secretary; Receptionist; Attendance Clerk; Office Manager, Cafeteria Worker, and other full or part-time employees not specifically described.

(6) Three quarters of one percent (0.75%) of the basic tuition support or adult learner grant amount received by the school.

(7) 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.

Steel City 5- Year Budget Narrative

Overview of Financial Position in the Five-Year Budget

This section provides a high-level summary of Steel City Academy's five-year financial plan and describes how the school's budget aligns with its long-term strategic priorities and business plan.

Steel City Academy enters the next charter term from a place of financial stability and purpose. Our budget is more than a set of numbers—it is a moral document that reflects what and who we value most.

This plan assumes that Steel City Academy will remain in its current facility through the 2029–2030 school year, maintaining consistent enrollment and staffing levels until the relocation to the historic Lincoln School occurs. As noted, we have supplemental materials available—if requested—that illustrate how the budget will adjust to reflect the move, including increased enrollment and the associated rise in facility-related expenses.

The five-year projection balances sustainability with flexibility, positioning the school to continue providing a world-class, relationship-driven education while preparing for its next phase of growth.

Revenue Assumptions and Methodology

Steel City's revenue model remains conservative and grounded in predictable public funding sources.

- **State Tuition Support:** Based on the Indiana Department of Education's FY2025 per-pupil funding formula and the school's stable enrollment projection.
- **Federal Grants (Title I, II, III, and IV):** Estimated from the three-year historical average of allocations, reflecting steady participation and demographic trends.
- **IDEA Part B:** Calculated using current-year allocations for students with disabilities, assuming 15 percent of enrollment continues to qualify.
- **Other State Revenue:** Includes textbook reimbursement, Summer School Reimbrusement, and the ongoing School Safety Grant.
- **Competitive Grants and Contributions:** The baseline assumes limited external funding, though Steel City is intentionally pivoting toward expanded local fundraising and partnership development over the next charter term.

This approach ensures that daily operations are fully supported by recurring revenue, while new fundraising efforts will accelerate growth and strengthen long-term sustainability.

Expense Assumptions

Steel City's expenditures demonstrate its priorities—sustaining excellent instruction, supporting staff, and maintaining safe, accessible facilities.

Our budget is a moral document that shows clearly where we invest: in people. The majority of expenditures go directly to salaries, benefits, and professional learning for the educators who drive our results. We also maintain a meaningful allocation for external professional development, with a special focus on strengthening math instruction and coaching over the next five years.

As a public charter school, we believe deeply in equitable access. Through operational efficiencies and vendor negotiations, Steel City has maintained 100 percent transportation access for students while steadily reducing costs from prior years—a reflection of our commitment to both fiscal responsibility and fairness.

Baseline expense assumptions:

- **Salaries:** Increase 2.5 percent annually to retain top talent.
- **Benefits:** Health insurance rises 5 percent per year; other benefits 2.5 percent.
- **Instructional Materials and Technology:** Grow 2.5 percent annually to preserve one-to-one device access and curriculum quality.
- **Facilities and Utilities:** Reflect current lease and maintenance costs with modest inflationary increases.
- **No new debt service** is assumed; any relocation expenses will be budgeted when timing is confirmed.

Key Financial Indicators

Category	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Total Revenue	$5,249,693	$5,422,140	$5,448,258	$5,475,900	$5,505,205
Total Expenses	$4,911,732	$5,027,779	$5,146,139	$5,266,952	$5,399,738
Operating Surplus	$337,961	$394,361	$302,119	$208,948	$105,467
Ending Cash Balance (est.)	$1.4 M	$1.6 M	$1.7 M	$1.8 M	$1.9 M
Days Cash on Hand (est.)	30	35	40	43	45 +

These indicators demonstrate responsible revenue growth, tight cost management, and increasing reserves. The gradual rise in cash balance and days cash on hand reflects continued improvement in the school's financial health and readiness for facility transition.

Year-by-Year Financial Story

Year 1 (FY 25–26): "Stable and Strategic"
The charter term opens with a balanced budget and positive cash flow. Personnel costs represent about 70 percent of total expenditures—consistent with industry standards—and reserves equal roughly one month of operations. Focus areas include refining internal controls and planning the next phase of fundraising.

Year 2 (FY 26–27): "Strengthening Infrastructure"
Incremental salary and benefit adjustments are offset by disciplined expense management. The finance team advances process improvements in procurement and grant oversight. The first phase of the local fundraising and partnership initiative begins.

Year 3 (FY 27–28): "Investing in People and Systems"
Projected growth in revenue supports continued investment in teacher compensation and the addition of part-time finance support. The school reaches a 45-day cash reserve target—an important benchmark for long-term stability.

Year 4 (FY 28–29): "Preparing for Transition"
Budget flexibility allows preliminary planning for relocation without impacting instruction. Contingency funds and professional services lines can be repurposed for pre-development work as needed.

Year 5 (FY 29–30): "Sustained Stability and Readiness for Growth"
By the end of the term, Steel City maintains a strong fund balance and full program quality while preparing for the move to Lincoln School. The five-year trend shows steady surpluses, increasing reserves, and continued compliance with ICSB's "Meets Standard" financial indicators.

Alignment with the Five-Year Business Plan

Strategic Priority	Financial Alignment
Sustain high-quality instruction	Protects core teaching positions and co-teaching model; maintains less than a 20:1 student-teacher ratio.
Strengthen staff recruitment and retention	Provides 2.5 percent annual salary growth, competitive benefits, and ongoing professional development funding.
Prepare for relocation to Lincoln School	Builds reserves and contingency capacity for transition costs without disrupting operations.
Diversify and grow revenue	Launches philanthropic and community partnership strategy in FY 26.
Maintain fiscal health and transparency	Balanced budgets, increasing reserves, and compliance with ICSB financial standards.

Contingency and Risk Management

Steel City actively monitors fiscal risk and plans ahead for uncertainty.

- **Scenario Modeling:** Annual budget revisions will test varying revenue and expense assumptions.

- **Expense Flexibility:** Contracted services and deferred purchases provide adjustment options without affecting classrooms.

- **Insurance Cost Control:** The school continues to evaluate consortium participation to offset premium growth.

- **Reserve Targets:** The goal is to maintain a minimum 45–60 days cash on hand by Year 5.

Long-Term Sustainability

Five years ago, Steel City faced all red financial indicators. Today, every measure of financial and organizational health is rated “green.” That transformation came from discipline, transparency, and a steadfast focus on mission.

This new five-year plan carries the same philosophy forward. It balances cautious assumptions with purposeful investment, keeps resources centered on people and students, and builds the reserves needed for our future home at Lincoln School.

At Steel City Academy, our budget is indeed a moral document—one that honors the educators, families, and students who make our mission real. It is both a financial plan and a promise: to steward resources wisely, to operate with integrity, and to continue delivering on the Steel City promise for years to come.

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.

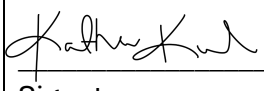
10. Recipients will indemnify and hold harmless ICSB, the State of Indiana, all school corporations providing funds to the charter school (if applicable), and their officers, directors, agents and employees, and any successors and assigns from any and all liability, cause of action, or other injury or 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.

Katherine (Katie) Kirley

Name



Signature

10/18/2025

Date