

Alabama Charter School Application for an Opening in Fall 2026 or Fall 2027

Ignite Academy for Advanced Careers (MAEF)

Submitted to: *Alabama Public Charter School Commission*

Submitted by: *Jeremiah Newell*

Submitted at: *03/13/2025 11:15 PM*

Application Elements

Elements Reviewed: 0 / 31

1. GENERAL

Status: Not Reviewed

Form Result

Please provide the following information to support the processing of this application. By signing and submitting this application you are giving permission for Commission staff to review the application and contact you for further information and clarification.

School Information

Proposed School Name	Ignite Academy of Advanced Careers
School Type	☒ Middle/High School
Grade Levels Served at	☒ 6th
Capacity	☒ 7th
	☒ 9th
	☒ 8th
	☒ 10th
	☒ 11th
	☒ 12th
School District Name	Mobile County Public School System
Neighborhood / Community	Mobile
Physical Address	3929 Airport Blvd, Building 3 Floor 2, Mobile, AL, 36609
Phone Number	+1(251) 391-1272
Web Site	www.maef.net
If a Letter of Intent (LOI) was submitted, please attach a copy	APCSCLetterofIntentMAEF.pdf 218.2 KB • Added 4 days ago

Contact Person Information

Provide the name of the person who will serve as **the primary contact** for this Application. **The primary contact** should serve as the contact for follow-up, interviews, and notices regarding this Application.

Contact Name	Jeremiah Newell
Title / Relation to School	CEO
Mailing Address	3929 Airport Blvd, Building 3 Floor 2, Mobile, AL, 36609
Primary Phone Number	+1(251) 391-1272
Email Address	jnewell@maef.net
Preferred Method of Contact	☒ Phone call

Operational Information

Anticipated Opening Year	☒ Fall 2027
Operator Type	☒ New Operator
Is the entity behind the school out of state?	No
Is the school part of a network, such as a CMO, EMO?	No
	-
School Calendar Type	☒ Standard Instructional Days
Number of instructional days in a school year	180

I certify that I have the authority to submit this application and that all information contained herein is complete and accurate, realizing that any misrepresentation could result in disqualification from the application process or revocation after award. I understand that incomplete applications will not be considered. The person named as the contact person for the application is so authorized to serve as the primary contact for this application on behalf of the applicant.

Switch

I Agree

Jeremiah Newell

CEO

03/13/2025 (UTC)

Switch

On

Element Review

Reviews is not provided

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Reviewer Instructions

Rate the Executive Summary below

Status: Not Reviewed

Form Result

1) Mission Statement. The mission statement is a brief description of the fundamental purpose of the school and should include any organizing theme or concept if applicable. The statement is the expressed public purpose of the school defining its culture, goals and values.

Mission Statement

Ignite Academy is a future-focused career and leadership academy dedicated to preparing the next generation of South Alabama's leaders for success in high-wage, high-demand industries such as advanced manufacturing and healthcare. Rooted in a culture of innovation, career-connected learning, and strong industry partnerships, our rigorous curriculum immerses students in real-world problem-solving, equipping them with the technical expertise, leadership skills, and professional credentials needed to excel in both college and career. By bridging education and industry, Ignite Academy creates clear pathways to economic mobility, ensuring every student graduates as an adaptable, future-ready leader prepared to drive progress in their communities and industries. Mission Tagline: Preparing the next generation of leaders in South Alabama to thrive in high wage, high-demand industries.

2) School Vision. Identify the community being served and provide a brief statement on how the proposed school would operate within that community. Include long-term goals for how the school would enhance and provide a service to the community. Define benchmarks for what a successful endeavor entails. Align with the stated goals of the Alabama School Choice and Student Opportunity Act. *Ala. Code § 16-6F-3 (2023)*.

School Vision

Our vision is clear: To build a bridge to economic opportunity for all.

Mobile County is full of potential, yet too many students graduate without clear pathways to economic mobility. While high-wage jobs in healthcare, logistics, and advanced manufacturing are in demand, too few graduates have the skills, credentials, or industry experience to access them. This gap has left employers struggling to fill positions and families without clear opportunities for upward mobility.

Ignite Academy was created to change this by ensuring every student, regardless of background, graduates prepared to step directly into college, technical training, or a high-wage career. Ignite Academy is a 6-12 charter school designed to equip students with the academic foundation, career-connected learning, and professional experiences needed to thrive in high wage, high-demand industries.

How Ignite Serves Mobile

- **Middle School (6-8):** Mobile lacks early career exposure for students, leading to disengagement and limited postsecondary planning. Ignite integrates STEM, industry aligned real-world projects, and leadership development, ensuring students develop problem-solving skills and career awareness early.
- **High School (9-12):** Too many graduates lack industry experience, making them uncompetitive for Mobile's best jobs. Ignite Academy embeds dual enrollment, industry certifications, and apprenticeships so students graduate workforce-ready.
- **Industry & Post Secondary Partnerships:** Employers struggle to find skilled local hires, leading to outsourcing talent from other regions. Ignite will build at least 10 partnerships with local employers and colleges, creating direct pipelines to high-wage jobs and reducing the talent gap.

Benchmarks for Success

We are A Talent Pipeline for the Future. We will measure our progress along the following dimensions:

Academic Achievement

- **Year 1:** Meet or exceed the state average growth in literacy and math.

- Year 3: Outperform Mobile County's average proficiency in math and literacy.
- Year 5: 90% graduation rate, with students earning a diploma and at least one career credential.

Career Exploration and Workforce Readiness

- Year 1: 100% of middle schoolers engage in career exploration and hands-on STEM learning.
- Year 3-5: 75% of high schoolers participate in a paid internship, apprenticeship, or work experience.

Long-Term Measure: Within five years of graduation, 80% of alumni will report employment in a high-wage, high-demand career field, demonstrating the effectiveness of early career exposure and work-based learning experiences.

Postsecondary and Industry Credentials

- Year 1: Ignite secures at least 10 major employer and postsecondary partnerships.
- Year 3: 80% of high schoolers enroll in dual enrollment or industry certification pathways.
- Year 5: 80% of graduates earn an industry-recognized credential and/or early college credit.

College and Career Outcomes

- Year 3: 90% of high schoolers remain on track for on-time graduation.
- Year 5: 80% of graduates secure high-wage, high-demand jobs or enroll in postsecondary, technical, or workforce training programs within 12 months.

Long-Term Measure: Within five years of graduation, 80% of Ignite alumni will earn at least the median wage for full-time workers in Alabama (currently estimated at \$40,000), adjusted for inflation, demonstrating sustained economic mobility in high-demand careers and the effectiveness of the career pathways model.

Alignment with Alabama's School Choice Goals

Ignite Charter School directly supports the Alabama School Choice and Student Opportunity Act (Ala. Code § 16-6F-3) by:

- Expanding high-quality education options for students across Mobile County.
- Preparing students for 21st-century careers through real-world, skills-based learning.
- Strengthening the local economy by keeping talent in Mobile and aligning education with workforce needs.

Ignite Academy isn't just a school—it's a transformation engine for Mobile's future. By setting high academic and career expectations and ensuring students receive the support, skills, and experiences necessary to thrive, we will elevate achievement across the county, close opportunity gaps, and build a pipeline of homegrown talent ready to lead.

3) Educational Need and Anticipated Student Population. Describe the anticipated student population, students' anticipated educational needs, and non-academic challenges the school is likely to encounter. Describe the rationale for selecting the location and student body. Identify any enrollment priorities on which the program is based consistent with applicable restrictions on enrollment eligibility and selection. As an attachment, provide evidence of the educational need in the community.

Educational Need and
Anticipated Student
Population

Why Mobile? Why Now?

Mobile is at a critical crossroads—it is experiencing historic economic growth, yet its workforce pipeline remains underdeveloped. The region's fastest-growing industries, advanced manufacturing and healthcare, have fueled \$2.56 billion in economic expansion between 2020 and 2023 (The Business View, 2023). With over 35,000 job openings annually through 2030, employers are struggling to find qualified candidates (Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce, 2023). Despite these opportunities, thousands of young people in Mobile remain disconnected from pathways to economic mobility:

- 14,608 youth (ages 16-24) are neither in school nor employed, increasing their risk of long-term unemployment and poverty (Alabama Commission on Higher Education, 2022).
- Only 41% of Mobile County students are proficient in reading, and just 21% meet grade-level expectations in math, leaving many unprepared for postsecondary training or workforce entry (Niche, 2023).
- Career and Technical Education (CTE) access remains limited, with few opportunities for hands-on, industry-aligned learning experiences in advanced manufacturing, healthcare, logistics, and related high-growth sectors.
- Young talent continues to leave Mobile, seeking better career and education opportunities elsewhere, further weakening the local talent pipeline.

Without a strong, scalable solution that connects education to economic opportunity, Mobile risks widening equity gaps and limiting its long-term workforce competitiveness. Research shows that too many workforce programs channel individuals into low-wage jobs with little opportunity for advancement (Workshift, 2023). To respond to this challenge, Mobile area economic development and workforce training partners have come together to develop a comprehensive workforce and education pipeline that includes elementary school career exploration, middle school hands-on applied learning, specialized training for high school students, and postsecondary training for specific industry partners. As a crucial component of that comprehensive plan, economic development and workforce training partners have decided that a new innovation education solution that addresses the gaps prevalent among middle school

students and high school students is established. To that end, Ignite Academy will ensure that students enter career pathways with clear wage growth, postsecondary advancement, and long-term economic mobility—particularly in the critical fields of advanced manufacturing and healthcare.

Ignite Academy: Meeting the Educational & Workforce Needs

Ignite Academy is designed to directly address these gaps by serving 875 students in grades 6-12 and ensuring they graduate prepared for high-wage, high-demand careers in advanced manufacturing, healthcare, and other critical industries. The school will focus on students who:

- Need accelerated skill-building in literacy, math, and STEM to be competitive for career pathways.
- Lack early exposure to technical and professional skills, particularly in advanced manufacturing, healthcare, and logistics, limiting their ability to successfully transition into the workforce.
- Face systemic barriers such as transportation limitations, financial insecurity, and limited access to postsecondary pathways.

Ignite's Enrollment Priorities

In alignment with applicable enrollment regulations and Mobile's workforce needs. The Ignite model is designed to serve students who:

- Require personalized academic support to close skill gaps and prepare for high-wage careers.
- Would benefit from a career-integrated curriculum that blends rigorous academics with real-world learning experiences in fields such as advanced manufacturing, healthcare, and logistics.
- Seek dual enrollment opportunities to earn college credits and industry-recognized certifications while still in high school, particularly in high-demand sectors.

By connecting students to economic opportunity and ensuring they graduate both college- and career-ready, Ignite Academy will expand access to upward mobility, strengthen Mobile's local talent pipeline, and create a model for education-to-workforce transformation in Alabama.

File Upload

2-3 Evidence of Educational Need-DONE.pdf

220.63 KB • Added 5 days ago

4) Education Plan/School Design. Provide an overview of the education program of the proposed school, including major instructional methods and assessment strategies and non-negotiables of the school model. Describe the evidence that suggests the school model will be successful in improving academic achievement for the targeted student population. Summarize what the proposed school would do more effectively than the schools that are now serving the targeted population and how the school would measure its progress.

Education Plan/School
Design

Ignite Academy is designed to bridge the gap between education and high-demand careers in advanced manufacturing, maritime, and healthcare for students in grades 6-12. By integrating rigorous academics, career-connected learning, and personalized support, Ignite ensures that every scholar graduates with the knowledge, skills, and experiences needed to thrive in college, technical training, or the workforce. Starting in grade 6, scholars will learn about high-wage, high-demand careers in the areas of Architecture & Construction, Manufacturing, Maritime, Logistics, and Health Science. This early exposure will build scholars' knowledge of future career opportunities and bring relevance to their daily academic learning. By grade 10, scholars will select a pathway to more deeply build their technical skills and earn in-demand certifications for a successful entry to the workforce.

Ignite Academy CTE Pathways & Aligned Occupations

	Architecture & Construction	Manufacturing	Maritime	Transportation, Distribution, Logistics	Health Science
High-Demand Occupations	Electricians Helpers, Installation, Maintenance, & Repair Workers Civil Engineering Technologists & Technicians Surveying & Mapping Technicians	CAD Designer Mechanical Designer Electromechanical & Electrical Assemblers Electronics Engineering Technician Industrial Maintenance Mech. Repair Tech First Line Supervisors of	CAD Designer Mechanical Designer Naval Architects Controls Engineers Shipfitters Welders	Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians Avionics Technicians Logisticians Transportation, Storage, and Distribution Managers Freight, Stock, &	Cardiovascular Technologists & Technicians Licensed Practical Nurses Medical Assistants Medical Record Specialists Pharmacy Technicians

	Construction Laborers	Production and Operating Workers	Machinists	Materials Movers, Hand	Registered Nurses
	Plumbers, Pipefitters, & Steamfitters	Miscellaneous Assemblers & Fabricators	Pipefitters		Medical Doctors
		Engineering (Mechanical, Electrical, Chemical)	Logisticians		
Industry Partners	Alabama Associated General Contractors (AGC)	AAA USA	Austal USA	AAA USA	Franklin Primary Health
	Atlas Industrial Outsourcing	Atlas Outsourcing	Ingalls Shipbuilding	Airbus	
	Atlas Industrial Outsourcing	AM/NS Calvert		Amazon Fulfillment Center	Infirmary Health
	Austal USA	Austal USA	Birdon	APM Terminals	Springhill Medical Center
	Hargrove Engineers & Constructors	Clark Personnel	Masterboat	Continental Aerospace	USA Health
	Ingalls Shipbuilding	Hargrove Engineers & Constructors	The Cooper Group	MAAS Aviation	
	MCG Work Solutions	Ingalls Shipbuilding	Silver Ships	Mobile Airport Authority	
	Performances Contractors	Outokumpu	U.S. Navy Maritime Industrial Base		
		MCG Work Solutions		Walmart Distribution Center	
		SSAB			
		Birdon			
		Thompson Tractor			
		U.S. Navy Maritime			

Industrial Base

At the heart of Ignite’s model are four core principles that shape the student experience:

- Learning by Doing from Day One – Students explore careers early through hands-on learning, industry-aligned projects, and real-world challenges.
- Competency-Based, Not Seat Time-Based – Scholars progress by demonstrating mastery, ensuring they graduate fully prepared for their next step.
- Personalized Support & Mentorship – Every student has a dedicated advisor and career mentor, along with a structured personalized growth plan.
- Designed for Economic Mobility – Dual enrollment, industry certifications, and paid work-based learning provide direct pathways to high-wage careers.

Ignite intentionally structures the middle-to-high school continuum to ensure scholars build a strong academic foundation in middle school and transition seamlessly into career training, internships, and dual enrollment in high school. These principles come to life through four signature learning experiences, ensuring students receive a well-rounded, high-impact education that prepares them for lifelong success.

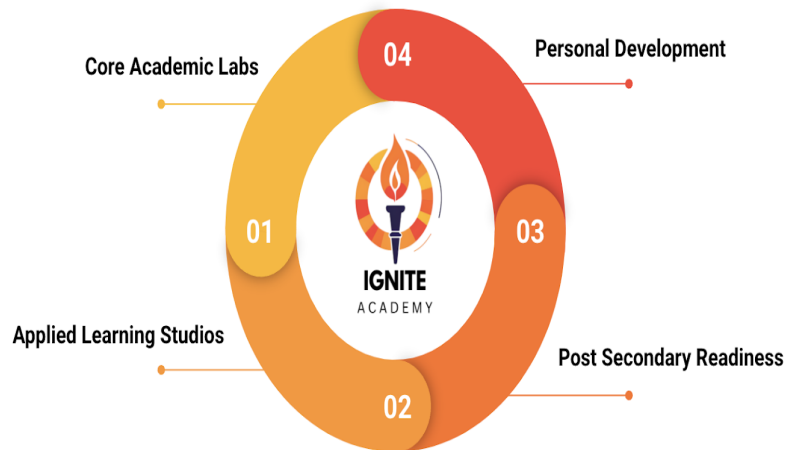
Sample - Day in the Life at Ignite Academy

I step off the bus, grab breakfast, and check in with my Home Team Advisor, setting my goals for the day. In Math Lab, I work on scaling blueprints—just like engineers do. In ELA Lab, I practice writing clear instructions, imagining myself as a technician guiding a team. Science Lab is hands-on today—we’re testing materials for medical tools.

After lunch, I head to my Applied Studios, where I measure precision parts with digital calipers while my classmates in Health Services practice taking vitals. On Fridays, I step out of the classroom and into the real world—interning at a local manufacturer, shadowing a healthcare professional, or presenting my project to an industry mentor. I close my week with a Circle where I share about my fear of public speaking and get support from my classmates, then I reflect on how I advanced my Post-secondary Plan and set goals for next week.

At Ignite, I'm not just learning—I'm preparing for my future.

The Signature Experiences



Executive Summary of Signature Experiences

Core Academic Labs

- Standards-Based Instruction (Literacy, Numeracy, Social Studies, STEM)
- Personalized Learning (Targeted Intervention & Acceleration)
- Assessment & Mastery
 - Formative & Summative Assessments
 - Competency-Based Progression
- College Credit Opportunities in Core Academic Classes (High School Only)
 - Dual Enrollment & Early College Credit

Applied Learning Studios (CTE Aligned)

Middle School:

- Project-Based Learning with Industry-Aligned Content (Using the DEEDs Framework)
- Work-Based Learning (Career Exploration, STEM Labs, Internships)

- Capstone Projects (Solving Real-World Industry Challenges)

High School:

- Advanced CTE Pathways Coursework in Advanced Manufacturing & Healthcare
- Work Based Learning in Advanced Manufacturing & Healthcare (Apprenticeships, Internships)
- College Credit Opportunities in CTE Pathways (Dual Enrollment & Early College Credit)
- Industry Certifications (OSHA-10, CNA, MSSC, etc.)
- Capstone Projects (Solving Real-World Industry Challenges)

Assessment & Mastery (All)

- Competency-Based Progression

Post Secondary Readiness

Personal Development & Support

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole group Post Secondary Advisory: Skill development: Resume Writing, Communication, Teamwork, Financial Aid | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentorship + Circle: Peer Supportive Relationships, Whole Group Advisory (SEL, Leadership skill development) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1:1 Postsecondary Coaching & Career Planning (Admissions, Financial Aid, Career Exploration) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-1 Coaching • Wellness & Support Services: Assistance Personal Barriers + Mandated Counseling |

Assessment & Mastery (All):

Competency-Based Progression

Assessment & Mastery (All):
Competency-Based Progression

1. Core Academic Labs: Mastering the Essentials with Personalized Support

At the foundation of Ignite's model are Core Academic Labs, where scholars develop strong academic skills through direct instruction, targeted interventions, and personalized learning strategies.

- In Academic Learning Labs, students engage in explicit, standards-aligned instruction in literacy, numeracy, social studies, and STEM, ensuring they build the critical thinking and subject mastery needed for success.
- In Personalized Learning Labs, scholars work in small groups, receive one-on-one coaching, and use adaptive technology to strengthen foundational skills. Middle schoolers focus on building literacy and numeracy skills, while high schoolers engage in dual enrollment, required coursework, and targeted tutoring to prepare for postsecondary opportunities.

Scholars' progress is measured through formative and summative assessments, competency-based tracking, and portfolio demonstrations of mastery. Every three weeks, students reflect on their growth, set academic goals, and receive targeted support.

Research from the National Center for Education Evaluation and the Learning Policy Institute highlights that explicit instruction, combined with personalized interventions, significantly improves student achievement and long-term knowledge retention.

2. Applied Learning Studios: Learning by Doing in Real-World Contexts

Ignite Academy ensures that learning goes beyond the classroom through Applied Learning Studios, where scholars engage in hands-on, industry-aligned projects that connect academic content to real-world careers.

- Middle schoolers participate in project-based learning, STEM challenges, and career exploration activities that help them see the connection between their coursework and real-world applications. They tackle community-based challenges, using academic skills to solve industry-related problems.
- High schoolers engage in advanced CTE pathways coursework in healthcare and advanced manufacturing,

providing them with direct experience in internships, apprenticeships, and career-specific training.

- Scholars graduate with industry-recognized credentials (OSHA-10, CNA, MSSC, etc.), ensuring they are competitive in the workforce upon graduation.

Progress is measured through hands-on projects, performance-based assessments, and industry certifications, rather than traditional exams. Scholars prove their knowledge by building, solving, and creating tangible work that aligns with industry standards.

Research from Jobs for the Future and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation demonstrates that career-connected, project-based learning leads to higher engagement, deeper understanding, and improved career preparedness. Ignite's approach ensures that students not only acquire knowledge but also apply it in meaningful ways, making them highly competitive in high-demand careers.

3. Postsecondary Readiness: Pathways to College & High Demand, High-Wage Careers

At Ignite, preparing students for life after high school is a core priority. Through a structured Postsecondary & Career Readiness program, scholars develop the skills and credentials needed to transition seamlessly into college, technical training, or direct workforce entry.

- Middle schoolers begin developing essential career skills through exposure to different pathways and structured career exploration activities.
- High schoolers take part in College & Career Readiness Labs, where they gain hands-on experience in college admissions, financial aid, resume writing, and career planning.

In combination with dual enrollment, industry-aligned coursework, and work-based learning (apprenticeships / internships) we can ensure scholars leave with both academic qualifications and professional experience.

Success is measured by scholars having a clear postsecondary plan, a professional portfolio, and hands-on experience in their chosen career field—placing them ahead of their peers in both college and the workforce.

4. Personal Development & Support: Building Leadership, Confidence & Resilience

At Ignite, success extends beyond academics. Through mentorship, coaching, and personal development, scholars build self-awareness, leadership skills, and a sense of purpose.

- Mentorship & Circle fosters peer support, goal-setting, and structured reflection through weekly advisory and leadership sessions, modeled after Valor Collegiate's Circle Practice. Scholars develop SEL competencies, leadership skills, and professional mindsets through structured discussions and shared accountability (CASEL, 2020; Nieto, 2010).
- 1:1 Coaching provides personalized academic, career, and personal development guidance, ensuring scholars receive individualized support to navigate challenges and build confidence (Deci & Ryan, 1985).
- Wellness & Support Services address personal barriers through financial, emotional, and academic assistance, including multi-tiered counseling (MTSS), mandated mental health services, and crisis intervention resources (Aspen Institute, 2019).

Success is measured through:

- Competency-based self-assessments tracking resilience, adaptability, and collaboration.
- Structured advisory check-ins and mentorship evaluations providing targeted support that tracks progress on personal goals.

Research from Aspen Institute (2019) and CASEL (2020) confirms that structured SEL, mentorship, and career exploration lead to higher engagement, stronger leadership skills, and long-term success. Through coaching, peer mentorship, and wellness support, Ignite Academy prepares scholars to thrive in any environment.

Students thrive when learning is both rigorous and relevant—when they see a clear connection between their education and real-world opportunities. Research confirms that integrating explicit instruction, personalized support, and career-connected learning leads to higher engagement, deeper skill retention, and better postsecondary outcomes (National Center for Education Evaluation, Learning Policy Institute, Jobs for the Future).

Ignite builds on this evidence by shifting away from seat time-based advancement to competency-based mastery. Scholars progress by proving what they know and can do, supported by one-on-one coaching, small-group learning, and targeted

interventions. Beyond traditional academics, students apply their knowledge through real-world projects, internships, and industry-aligned coursework, ensuring they graduate not just with a diploma—but with the skills, experience, and credentials to secure high-wage careers and postsecondary success.

5) Community Engagement. Describe the relationships within the community that you have established to generate community support for the proposed school. Briefly describe and provide evidence of these activities and summarize their results. Examples of community engagement evidence are documents such as community meeting sign in sheets, agendas, and survey results.

Community Engagement The Mobile Area Education Foundation (MAEF) has a long-standing commitment to The Mobile Area Education Foundation (MAEF) has a long-standing commitment to bridging the gap between schools and the community, facilitating over 1,200 school-community partnerships in the 2024-2025 school year alone. Building on this model, Ignite Academy was developed through deep collaboration with industry leaders, workforce training partners, community colleges, and local government to ensure students graduate prepared for high-wage, high-demand careers in advanced manufacturing, healthcare, and maritime industries.

As part of a broader regional effort to strengthen education-to-employment pathways, Ignite is a key component of a co-located workforce training hub in partnership with Bishop State's Maritime Training Center. This initiative ensures that students move seamlessly from middle school into high school career pathways, dual enrollment, and workforce training, creating a direct pipeline from education to economic opportunity.

Key Engagement Efforts

Attached are letters of support in the following areas:

- Industry Collaboration: Austal, Ingalls Shipbuilding, AM/NS Calvert, Airbus, and the Port of Mobile to ensure Ignite's pathways align with workforce needs.
- Higher Education Partnerships: Bishop State and the University of South Alabama to provide dual enrollment, industry certifications, and postsecondary pathways.
- Government & Workforce Alignment: City of Mobile, Mobile County Public Schools, and the Mobile Chamber of Commerce to align Ignite with regional workforce strategies.

Finally there has been more general community engagement: listening sessions, stakeholder meetings, and parent focus groups to ensure the school meets student and family needs. The results of these efforts are clear: a broad coalition of stakeholders is actively involved in shaping Ignite Academy, ensuring it meets the needs of both students and the local economy.

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2-5 Evidence of Community Engagement-DONE.pdf

1.94 MB • Added 5 days ago

LOS_Ignite.pdf

965.42 KB • Added 4 days ago

6) Leadership and Governance. In an attachment list the members of the school's proposed leadership team and governing board, including their roles with the school and their current job title and employer.

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2-6 Leadership and Governance-DONE.pdf

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7) Leadership Narrative. Provide a brief summary of how the leadership and board's collective experience and expertise is well suited to support the operation of a high-quality charter school

Leadership Narrative

The leadership team at Ignite combines expertise in education, finance, workforce development, and community partnerships to ensure the school's success. Their collective experience directly supports Ignite's instructional model, operational needs, and long-term sustainability.

Dr. Jeremiah Newell's success in founding and leading ACCEL Academy, Alabama's first charter school, provides firsthand knowledge of charter operations, compliance, and student-centered learning models. At Ignite, he will oversee the development of competency-based mastery tracking, ensuring students progress by demonstrating skills rather than seat time. His relationships with state and local policymakers, school district leaders, and industry partners will also strengthen Ignite's position as a workforce-aligned charter school, securing funding, partnerships, and long-term sustainability.

Christy Taylor's financial expertise, particularly in corporate finance and managing large budgets in advanced manufacturing, is essential for ensuring Ignite's financial health and sustainability. Her experience navigating complex funding models, government contracting, and public-private partnerships will be instrumental in managing state and federal grants, industry funding, and operational budgets. She will also oversee effective resource allocation to support Ignite's dual enrollment, workforce training, and career certification programs.

Amy Owens's background in competency-based education and instructional leadership will guide Ignite's approach to explicit instruction and mastery-based learning. Having worked with national charter networks like Rocketship Education, she will oversee the implementation of academic studios and personalized learning labs to effectively integrate small-group instruction, targeted intervention, and career-aligned skills development. She will also oversee curriculum alignment to industry and postsecondary expectations, ensuring students graduate prepared for their next steps.

Monique Baugh's leadership in community partnerships and student support services is critical to Ignite's full-service school model. Her experience directing multi-million-dollar community school initiatives will help Ignite build mentorship programs, career pipelines, and wraparound services to remove barriers to student success. She will also oversee family and community engagement efforts, ensuring Ignite is deeply connected to the Mobile area.

Shernita Taylor's expertise in workforce development and human resources aligns directly with Ignite's mission to prepare students for high-wage, high-demand careers. She will oversee the establishment of industry-aligned workforce training programs, internships, and apprenticeships, ensuring students graduate

with recognized credentials and professional experience. Her role in building relationships with employers and industry leaders will be key to developing career pathways that align with local and regional job market demands.

8) Revenue Sources. A brief description of the school's anticipated revenue sources. Distinguish between the pre-opening and after opening periods. This includes, but is not limited to, state funding, federal funding, grant and other large or small philanthropic funding.

Revenue Sources

Ignite Charter School will sustain operations through a diversified mix of secured and pending funding sources, including state and federal funding, workforce development grants, industry partnerships, and philanthropic contributions. Given its career-connected focus in advanced manufacturing, healthcare, and maritime industries, Ignite requires additional funding beyond per-pupil allocations to support specialized equipment, dual enrollment, workforce training, and industry partnerships.

Pre-Opening (Planning Year) Revenue Sources

- Through MAEF, Ignite is pursuing multiple funding sources to cover facilities and startup costs, with additional applications pending.
- **Secured funding:**
 - \$150,000 JL Bedsole Foundation (Awarded)
- **Pending funding applications:**
 - \$900,000 Charter School Growth Fund (Pending)
 - \$500,000 New Schools Venture Fund (Pending)
- **Future funding applications:**
 - \$1,500,000 U.S. Department of Education Charter Schools Program
 - \$500,000 New Schools Venture Fund
 - \$1,000,000 Blueforge Alliance
- **Facilities Funding:**
 - \$5,000,000 - Mobile County Industrial Development Board (Requested)
 - \$50,000,000-\$75,000,000 U.S. Navy Maritime Industrial Base (Future Application)
 - \$10,000,000-\$30,000,000 State of Alabama (Requested)
- **Contingency Plan:**
 - If any planned funding is not secured, Ignite will activate its lease agreement alternatives and additional fundraising mechanisms to close the gap.

- **Pending & Anticipated Funding**

- Charter School Program (CSP) Grant (if awarded) – Ignite has applied for \$900,000 to support facilities, staffing, curriculum, and technology infrastructure.
- Philanthropy & Workforce Foundations – Ignite is in active discussions to secure \$1.5M in multi-year funding for career-connected learning and student workforce development.
- Construction Financing (if needed) – Ignite has identified potential mission-aligned lenders, including BlueHub Capital, LISC, and Charter School Growth Fund.

Post-Opening (Operational Revenue Sources)

Once operational, Ignite will sustain programming through a combination of public funding, federal and workforce development grants, and industry partnerships:

State & Federal Funding

- Per-Pupil Revenue – \$12,500 per student, totaling \$10.7M annually based on projected enrollment of 875 students.
- Title I & IDEA Grants – Estimated at \$830,000 to support academic interventions and special education services.
- Perkins CTE Grants – Projected \$250,000 to fund career pathways, dual enrollment, and workforce training.
- Workforce Development Grants – \$500,000;

Industry & Employer Partnerships

- Technology & Equipment Donations – \$500,000+ pursuing in-kind contributions from Austal, Airbus, Ingalls, and AM/NS Calvert to equip high-tech labs.

Philanthropic & Foundation Support

- Goal: An additional \$7M over five years to support expanded programming career-connected learning and workforce development initiatives.

Sustaining Long-Term Financial Health

To ensure funding stability, Ignite will:

- Secure multi-year agreements with industry and philanthropic partners.
- Manage ongoing grants and apply for new funding sources annually.
- Diversify revenue streams to include public, private, and workforce-aligned funding.
- Maintain an annual fundraising goal of \$500K+ from industry sponsorships and philanthropy.

By leveraging secured funding and expanding revenue streams, Ignite ensures long-term financial sustainability while delivering high-quality, career-connected education.

9) Enrollment Summary. Give the grades served and enrollment projections for both the first year of operation and when at full capacity

File Upload

IgniteAttachment - Enrollment Summary
Spreadsheet(2).xls

9.25 KB • Added 4 days ago

Element Review

Reviews is not provided

3. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM DESIGN AND CAPACITY

The Educational Program Design and Capacity section is a critical component of the application, demonstrating the school's readiness to provide a high-quality educational experience. This section emphasizes research-based instructional methods, assessment strategies, curriculum alignment with state standards, and the implementation of culturally responsive teaching practices. It aims to establish a strong foundation for academic excellence, equity, and the comprehensive development of all students. Applicants must present a well-rounded educational framework that meets the needs of the anticipated student population while adhering to state requirements.

1. Program Overview

Reviewer Instructions

Please rate the application using the provided rubric.

Status: Not Reviewed

Form Result

Summarize the unifying theoretical educational framework of the school model, ensuring it is evidence-based and aligns with best practices.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Compelling evidence of a unifying educational framework that will directly and consistently address the needs of the anticipated population and that clearly demonstrates the likelihood of all students meeting or exceeding the state standard.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

a) Provide compelling evidence of a theoretical educational framework that includes current best practices for high quality primary instructional methods, assessment strategies, and other elements of the school model. There must be evidence that it is research based, so it must be cited.

Education Framework
Narrative

Students excel when learning is relevant, applied, and connected to their future. Yet, most schools separate academics from real-world problem-solving, leaving scholars disengaged and underprepared for college and career. Research shows that students engaged in career-connected learning, internships, and industry-aligned pathways are more likely to graduate, persist in postsecondary education, and secure higher-wage jobs (National Research Center for Career and Technical Education, 2019). However, many schools still operate on rigid, time-based systems where students progress based on seat time rather than mastery (Aurora Institute, 2023).

Ignite Academy is redefining readiness. As a 6th-12th grade public charter school on an HBCU campus, we ensure scholars master academic content, technical skills, and professional mindsets at their own pace. Our competency-based model integrates real-world learning, interdisciplinary projects, and career-connected experiences to provide scholars with tangible proof of their abilities—college credits, industry certifications, and hands-on experience solving real challenges in their communities and industries.

Why Competency-Based Education & Why Building 21?

To ensure that scholars graduate not just prepared but truly capable, Ignite Academy defines success through clear, measurable outcomes:

- Scholars will graduate with industry-recognized credentials and college credits, equipping them with high-value skills that translate directly into career and postsecondary opportunities.
- Scholars will demonstrate mastery of academic, technical, and professional skills, ensuring they can apply their learning in real-world contexts rather than simply recalling information for tests.
- Scholars will develop critical thinking, adaptability, and leadership, competencies essential for thriving in high-demand industries and entrepreneurial ventures.

To reach these outcomes, Ignite Academy uses Competency-Based Education (CBE), which allows scholars to advance upon demonstrated mastery rather than seat time. Research confirms that CBE leads to increased engagement, higher retention, and stronger workforce readiness by ensuring that learning is personalized, applied, and meaningful (American Institutes for Research, 2016). Unlike traditional grading systems, which often misrepresent student proficiency (Marzano, 2000) and reinforce inequities (Guskey, 2013), CBE provides a transparent, skills-

based assessment model that allows for real-time tracking of progress (Aurora Institute, 2023).

To implement this vision, Ignite Academy is leveraging Building 21, a research-backed CBE model designed to prepare scholars for college, careers, and leadership (Next Generation Learning Challenges, 2021). Building 21's framework provides:

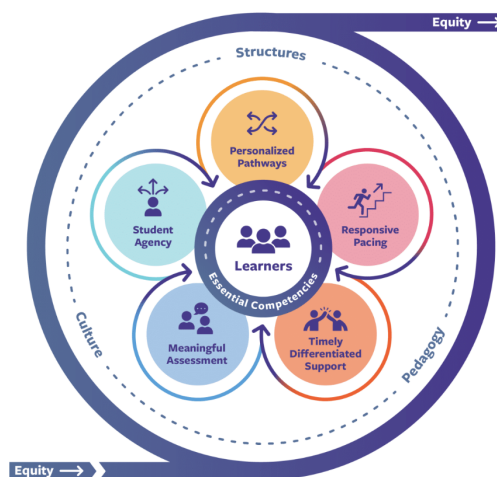
- A mastery tracking system, giving scholars, educators, and families a clear, real-time view of progress toward skill mastery and graduation readiness (Reigeluth, 2018).
- Flexible credit attainment pathways, allowing scholars to earn credit through applied learning, internships, apprenticeships, and industry-aligned projects (Jobs for the Future, 2020).
- A holistic approach to student success, integrating academic rigor, technical expertise, social-emotional learning, and leadership development.

By implementing Building 21's CBE model, Ignite Academy ensures that scholars graduate with a proven record of achievement, the credentials to unlock high-opportunity pathways, and the confidence to lead and innovate in their chosen fields.

So, what kind of experiences will ensure scholars achieve these outcomes, and how can their authentic performance be measured using CBE?

Competency-Based Education

This graphic shows how the elements of CBE in the Aurora Institute definition relate to each other. Creating a coherent and equitable CBE system requires an inclusive process and a learning orientation in which all participants – educators, students, families, community partners, and policymakers – provide leadership and build capacity to transform school culture, structures, and pedagogy.



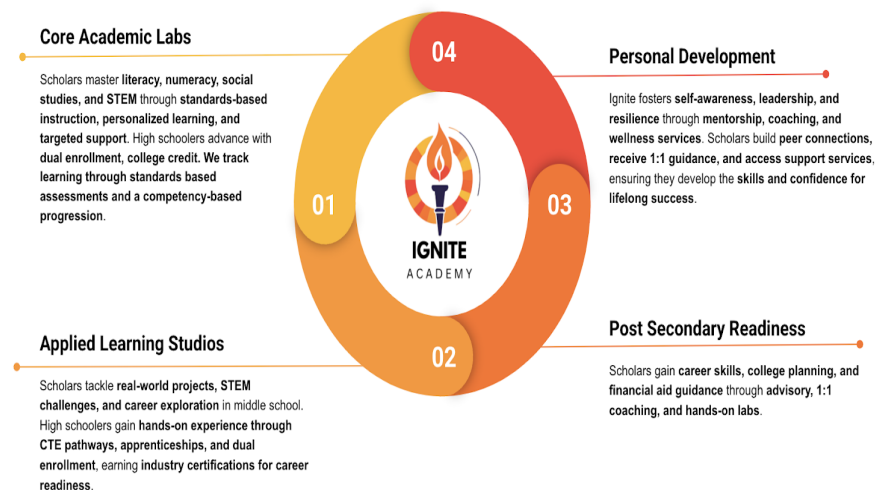
Ignite Academy's signature experiences were directly influenced by Aurora's Competency-Based Education Framework, ensuring that learning is personalized, mastery-based, and career-

connected. Our four key components align with best practices in CBE:

- Core Academic Labs provide responsive pacing and timely support, allowing scholars to master skills at their own speed rather than being bound by a rigid schedule.
- Applied Learning aligns with meaningful assessment, ensuring scholars demonstrate mastery through real-world projects and industry experiences rather than traditional tests.
- Postsecondary Readiness reflects personalized pathways, equipping scholars with college credits, industry certifications, and hands-on experience that prepare them for competitive careers.
- Personal Development fosters student agency, empowering scholars to develop leadership, adaptability, and self-efficacy as they prepare for life beyond high school.

The integration of Competency-Based Education (CBE) and Aurora's framework within Ignite Academy is not just theoretical—it is grounded in research-backed best practices that drive meaningful learning experiences and measurable outcomes. Each of our four signature components—Academic Labs, Applied Learning, Postsecondary Readiness, and Personal Development—is rooted in established educational theories and methodologies that support high-quality instruction, assessment, and student development.

The Signature Experiences



In the following section, we will examine the theoretical foundation behind each signature experience, drawing on current best practices in instructional methods, competency-

based assessment strategies, and personalized learning approaches. These research-based frameworks demonstrate how Ignite Academy's model is designed to maximize student engagement, deepen mastery, and ensure long-term success in both postsecondary education and the workforce.

Academic Labs: A Research-Based Approach to Mastery Learning

Academic Labs provide whole group explicit instruction, responsive pacing and targeted instruction, ensuring scholars master essential skills before progressing. Grounded in Mastery Learning theory (Bloom, 1984) and Formative Assessment research (Black & Wiliam, 1998), this model emphasizes structured, iterative practice with immediate feedback, significantly improving outcomes for all learners– especially those behind grade level.

Elements of Instructional Time & Assessment Strategy

1. Whole-Group Instruction Utilizing High-Quality Curricula:

- Math: Imagine Learning Illustrative Mathematics (6-12), a standards-aligned curriculum that fosters conceptual understanding and problem-solving (EdReports, 2019).
- ELA: HMH Into Literature (6-12), supporting literacy development, personalized reading pathways, and writing mastery (EdReports, 2021).
- Science: OpenSciEd (6-12), a phenomenon-based learning model promoting inquiry, critical thinking, and hands-on exploration (EdReports, 2023).
- Science: OpenSciEd (6-12), a phenomenon-based learning model promoting inquiry, critical thinking, and hands-on exploration (EdReports, 2023).
- History & Social Studies: HMH Social Studies and DBQ Project, providing document-based, inquiry-driven instruction that strengthens historical analysis and critical thinking.
- Assessment Strategy: Standards based formative assessments, summative assessments and performance-based assessments, ensuring scholars demonstrate mastery through applied learning experiences, such as mathematical modeling, scientific investigations, text-based argumentation, and historical inquiry projects. These assessments align with competency-based grading (Marzano,

2000) to track progress based on skill mastery rather than solely traditional grading structures.

2. Intervention & Personalized Support:

- Math 180 & Read 180, evidence-based intervention programs that provide intensive support for scholars needing additional literacy and numeracy reinforcement (Evidence for ESSA, 2022).
- High-Dosage Tutoring (NBER, 2020), ensuring small-group, skill-focused interventions that close learning gaps.
- Self-Paced Adaptive Technologies, leveraging digital tools that support skill advancement and mastery-based progression.
- Frequent Formative Digital Assessments, providing real-time feedback and adaptive instruction to personalize learning pathways.

Applied Learning: Real-World Assessment & Skill Development

Applied Learning at Ignite Academy ensures scholars demonstrate mastery through real-world projects, industry experiences, and interdisciplinary problem-solving, rather than traditional tests. Grounded in Project-Based Learning (PBLWorks, 2020), Experiential Learning (Kolb, 1984), and Authentic Assessment (Wiggins, 1998), this approach enhances content retention, critical thinking, and higher-order skills. Schools using career-integrated PBL models, such as High Tech High and the New Tech Network, have seen higher graduation and college persistence rates (Berger, Rugen & Woodfin, 2014).
Elements of Instructional Time & Assessment Strategy

- Industry-Integrated Projects aligned with career pathways ensure applied learning in authentic contexts.
- Apprenticeships & Hands-On Learning provide scholars with direct exposure to professional environments.
- Rubric-Based Performance Assessments evaluate scholars through case studies, digital portfolios, and capstone projects aligned with Deeper Learning models (Hewlett Foundation, 2013).
- Work-Based Learning & Dual Credit allow scholars to demonstrate mastery through professional internships and early college coursework.

Postsecondary Readiness: College & Career Pathways

Postsecondary Readiness at Ignite Academy ensures scholars graduate equipped for college, careers, and high-demand industries. This model is informed by Conley's Four Keys to College and Career Readiness (Conley, 2010) and the Pathways to Prosperity framework (Symonds, Schwartz & Ferguson, 2011), which highlight academic preparation, employability skills, and early exposure to postsecondary opportunities.

Elements of Instructional Time & Assessment Strategy

- Advisory & Mentorship Models provide structured guidance for postsecondary planning, financial aid, communication, ensuring scholars make informed career and college decisions and success in workbased learning activities.
- Work-Based Learning Experiences, including internships, career coaching, and industry mentorships, are aligned with Harvard Graduate School of Education's research on early career exposure, which has been shown to improve long-term employment outcomes.
- CTE Dual Enrollment allows scholars to earn college credits and workforce credentials, increasing college persistence and career readiness (Karp et al., 2007).
- Credential-Based Assessments & Industry Certifications, modeled after P-Tech and Tennessee's Career Academy programs, ensure that students completing industry certifications are more likely to secure high-wage jobs (Rosen et al., 2021).

Personal Development: Building Leadership, Adaptability & Self-Efficacy

Personal Development at Ignite Academy fosters student agency, resilience, and self-directed learning, ensuring scholars develop the confidence to navigate college, careers, and life successfully. Grounded in Social-Emotional Learning (CASEL, 2020), Growth Mindset Theory (Dweck, 2006), and Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), this model strengthens motivation, perseverance, and identity formation—all key drivers of long-term success.

Research from David Yeager (2019) and Camille Farrington (2013) confirms that students who develop strong academic mindsets and a sense of belonging are more likely to succeed. Studies from the Aspen Institute (2019) further show that SEL competencies lead to higher academic and professional outcomes, reinforcing the importance of mentorship and leadership training.

Elements of Instructional Time & Assessment Strategy

At Ignite, success extends beyond academics. Through a structured mentorship and personal development program, scholars develop self-awareness, leadership skills, and a sense of purpose to prepare them for college, careers, and life.

- **Mentorship & Circle** – Scholars engage in peer-supportive relationships and whole-group advisory sessions designed to build leadership skills, emotional intelligence, and social-emotional competencies. Modeled after Valor Collegiate's Circle Practice, Community Circles provide a structured space for goal-setting, self-reflection, and shared accountability (Nieto, 2010). Whole-group advisory integrates SEL instruction, leadership development, and communication skills (CASEL, 2020), reinforcing collaboration and self-efficacy.
- **1:1 Coaching** – Scholars receive individualized coaching tailored to their academic, career, and personal growth goals. Advisors provide structured career planning, skill development, and goal-setting, reinforcing self-determination and long-term success strategies (Deci & Ryan, 1985).
- **Wellness & Support Services** – Scholars have access to personalized assistance for academic, financial, and social-emotional barriers, ensuring equitable access to the resources needed for success. This includes:
 - **Mandated Counseling & Tiered Support Services** – A multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) ensures that scholars receive the right level of intervention, from universal SEL instruction to intensive individual counseling.
 - **Crisis Support & Mental Health Services** – School-based mental health professionals provide on-demand support, referrals, and crisis intervention.

Assessment & Mastery: Competency-Based Progression

- **Self-Assessment & Reflection** – Scholars track growth through self-efficacy surveys and leadership portfolios (goal setting), measuring progress in collaboration, adaptability, and personal resilience (Farrington, 2013; Yeager, 2019).
- **Competency-Based Progression** – Scholars demonstrate leadership and professional skills through public speaking, advocacy projects, and structured mentorship reflections,

ensuring that personal development is assessed with the same rigor as academic learning.

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b) Provide compelling evidence of success for this theoretical framework with the anticipated student population. Comprehensively summarize the essential design elements of the school model and provide at least three (no more than five) specific and measurable goals for the anticipated student population.

Ignite Academy is designed to serve young people who need hands-on, trajectory changing experiences to thrive. We ensure they graduate with the academic knowledge, technical skills, and career experiences necessary to access high-wage, high-demand careers. Research consistently demonstrates that competency-based education (CBE), career-connected learning, and personalized mentorship are high-impact strategies for increasing student engagement, academic achievement, and economic mobility.

We know Ignite Academy's model will be successful because research and real-world school outcomes confirm that each of our four signature experiences—Core Academic Labs, Applied Learning, Postsecondary Readiness, and Personal Development—are proven to improve student success.

Compelling Evidence of Success Aligned to Ignite Academy's Signature Experiences

Academic Labs: Mastery Learning & Personalized Instruction

What the Research Says: Academic interventions that incorporate mastery learning, formative assessments, and personalized supports lead to higher student achievement and reduced learning gaps (Bloom, 1984; Black & Wiliam, 1998). Studies show that:

- Mastery-based instruction increases academic proficiency by 20% when paired with high-quality, structured interventions (Bloom, 1984).
- Self-paced adaptive learning and high-dosage tutoring have been shown to significantly increase math and literacy achievement for historically underserved students (NBER, 2020).

Proven Results from Similar Models:

- Carnegie Learning's AI-driven cognitive tutoring systems have increased student proficiency in math by 12-20%, demonstrating the impact of targeted, adaptive instruction (Pane et al., 2014).
- Schools that integrate frequent formative assessments and personalized remediation see higher academic gains, particularly for students who enter below grade level (Marzano, 2000).

Applied Learning: Real-World Assessment & Skill Development

What the Research Says: Studies confirm that career-connected learning, project-based instruction, and authentic assessments increase student engagement, content retention, and postsecondary success (PBLWorks, 2020; Kolb, 1984).

- Project-Based Learning (PBL) improves student engagement by 27% and strengthens critical thinking and collaboration skills (PBLWorks, 2020).
- Authentic, real-world assessments ensure that students apply skills in ways that translate directly to workforce expectations (Wiggins, 1998).

Proven Results from Similar Models:

- High Tech High and the New Tech Network, both career-integrated PBL models, have seen higher graduation and college persistence rates by embedding industry-aligned projects and apprenticeships (Berger, Rugen & Woodfin, 2014).
- Schools that integrate real world learning also see top academic scores like LEAD in New York City who is achieving 100% literacy, 98% math, and 82% science proficiency (LEAD, 2025)
- Big Picture Learning (BPL), a national leader in real-world learning, reports that 74% of graduates enroll in postsecondary education and 85% secure full-time employment within two years—demonstrating the impact of internships, mentorships, and personalized learning plans (Big Picture Learning, 2022).
- EL Education schools outperform national averages in student growth and engagement by embedding interdisciplinary, applied learning experiences (EL Education, 2023).
- Schools integrating work-based learning and capstone projects report that students are more likely to complete internships and enter high-demand career fields (Hewlett Foundation, 2013).

Postsecondary Readiness: College & Career Pathways

What the Research Says: Dual enrollment, credential-based pathways, and structured career exploration are key drivers of postsecondary success and economic mobility (Conley, 2010; Symonds, Schwartz & Ferguson, 2011).

- Students who take college courses in high school are 18% more likely to persist in postsecondary education (Karp et al., 2007).
- Credential-based assessments and industry-recognized certifications increase employment rates and long-term earnings (Rosen et al., 2021).

Proven Results from Similar Models:

- P-Tech Schools and Tennessee's Career Academy model show that integrating early college credit and workforce training leads to higher postsecondary attainment and greater career opportunities (JFF.org, 2021).
- The Harvard Graduate School of Education found that structured work-based learning and career mentorship programs increase employment rates and long-term earnings potential (HGSE, 2020).

Personal Development: Building Leadership, Adaptability & Self-Efficacy

What the Research Says: Social-emotional learning (SEL), leadership training, and structured mentorship are key factors in student engagement, self-efficacy, and long-term success (CASEL, 2020; Yeager, 2019).

- Students with strong SEL skills are 42% more likely to graduate high school and demonstrate higher postsecondary persistence rates (Aspen Institute, 2019).
- Mentorship increases students' retention and career success rates by providing structured advisory support and role models (JFF.org, 2022).

Proven Results from Similar Models:

- Valor Collegiate's Circle Practice model, which integrates peer-supported mentorship, has led to higher levels of student engagement and resilience and they are the top 1% in the State.
- Mentorship programs have been shown to increase belonging, retention, and career opportunities for students

from underrepresented backgrounds (JFF.org, 2023).

Tracking Ignite Academy's Success: Measurable Goals

- **Academic Achievement:** By Year 5, 90% of scholars will graduate, earning a high school diploma and at least one industry-recognized credential.
- **Career Exploration & Workforce Readiness:** By Year 5, 75% of high school scholars will complete a paid internship, apprenticeship, or work experience, ensuring real-world career preparation.
- **Postsecondary & Industry Credentials:** By Year 5, 80% of graduates will earn an industry-recognized credential and/or early college credit, equipping them with the skills for high-wage, high-demand careers.
- **College & Career Outcomes:** Within five years of graduation, 80% of Ignite alumni will earn at least the median wage for full-time workers in Alabama, demonstrating sustained economic mobility through career-connected learning.

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Academic Labs: Mastery Learning & Personalized Instruction

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c) Describe the population specific instructional aspects of the framework and provide evidence of the expected impact on the anticipated student population.

In Mobile County, only 36% of high school students participate in career and technical education (CTE) before graduation (Alabama Department of Education, 2023), limiting access to career pathways. Black and Latino students face significant academic disparities, with only 22% demonstrating proficiency in Algebra I compared to 48% of White students (Alabama State Report Card, 2022). Many students also lack strong academic advising and career mentorship, reducing their likelihood of persisting through high school and postsecondary education (Harvard Graduate School of Education, 2021).

Ignite Academy is designed to address gaps in career exposure, academic achievement, and structured mentorship that limit opportunities for students in Mobile County. By integrating competency-based learning, career-connected pathways, and personalized mentorship, Ignite ensures scholars graduate prepared for high-wage, high-demand careers.

Career Exploration & Early Industry Pathways

- Middle schoolers participate in hands-on STEM projects, industry guest speakers, and real-world learning experiences to develop career awareness.
- By 8th grade, students select an industry pathway (Advanced Manufacturing or Health Services) and begin aligned coursework.
- High schoolers engage in dual enrollment, paid apprenticeships, and work-based learning, ensuring they graduate with real-world experience and industry credentials.

Expected Impact:

- Increased CTE enrollment and completion rates among historically underserved students.
- Stronger career readiness and improved workforce placement.

Competency-Based Learning & Targeted Support

- Students track their academic progress through digital portfolios, self-assessments, and performance-based projects, ensuring they demonstrate real mastery of skills.
- Scholars who need extra support receive targeted interventions, including small-group instruction, high-dosage tutoring, and adaptive learning technology.

Expected Impact:

- Higher academic achievement, particularly in math and literacy.
- Increased postsecondary enrollment and improved skill mastery.

Personalized Mentorship & Student Support

- Every scholar is paired with a dedicated advisor who provides academic support, goal-setting, and personal development coaching.
- Career mentors help students navigate industry pathways, networking, and postsecondary planning.
- Weekly Circles and Advisory Meetings focus on social-emotional learning, leadership development, and self-advocacy, ensuring scholars build confidence and professional skills.

Expected Impact:

- Higher postsecondary enrollment and persistence.
- Stronger leadership, self-efficacy, and career readiness.

Ultimately we expect to see:

- Higher academic achievement and postsecondary enrollment
- Stronger career readiness and workforce placement rates.
- Greater long-term economic mobility for underrepresented students compared to similar populations across the county and/or state.

Element Review

Reviews is not provided

2. Curriculum and Instructional Design

Reviewer Instructions

Please rate this section using the provided rubric.

Status: Not Reviewed

Form Result

Propose an implementation of the educational framework as a curriculum that both reflects the needs of the anticipated population and ensures that all students will meet or exceed the state standard.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Compelling evidence of a curriculum implementation of the unifying educational framework that will directly and consistently address the needs of the anticipated population and that clearly demonstrates the likelihood of all students meeting or exceeding the state standard.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

a) Describe the proven methods employed to transform the unifying educational framework into a school curriculum. Describe how the mission, vision and framework inform the planning of the curriculum.

Curriculum

Implementation Narrative

How Ignite Transforms Its Educational Framework into a Curriculum

Ignite Academy's curriculum development was guided by a structured, research-based process to ensure that all learning experiences align with the school's mission, vision, and unifying educational framework. Our goal is to create a competency-based, career-connected, and student-centered curriculum that ensures academic mastery, applied learning, and workforce readiness.

To achieve this, Ignite Academy employs 3 key methods to translate our framework into a cohesive, high-impact curriculum:

1. Backward Design & Industry Alignment

How We Used It:

We identified the specific academic, technical, and professional competencies scholars need for success in Advanced Manufacturing and Health Services. This process was informed by:

- Labor market data, ensuring that courses and credentials align with regional and national workforce demands.
- Employer and postsecondary partner interviews, identifying key technical, academic, and professional skills required for success.
- Student and family feedback, highlighting gaps in career awareness, hands-on experiences, and postsecondary readiness.

How It Informed Curriculum Programming:

- For Advanced Manufacturing, students must master applied mathematics, spatial reasoning, precision measurement, and technical reading skills. To support this, we integrated:
 - Manufacturing-aligned coursework, including technical math and engineering design challenges.
 - Project-based assessments using real manufacturing scenarios, such as blueprint reading and CAD modeling.
 - Internships and pre-apprenticeships with local manufacturers to ensure hands-on skill development.

- For Health Services, students must develop medical terminology, human anatomy, patient communication, and clinical problem-solving skills. This led to:
 - Early coursework in anatomy, physiology, and medical ethics, starting in 9th grade.
 - Simulated clinical scenarios where students practice diagnosing and presenting treatment plans.
 - Hospital-based internships and dual enrollment in allied health programs, ensuring exposure to real healthcare environments.
- For all pathways, industry and student interviews revealed that many students struggle with workplace communication, confidence, and postsecondary navigation. To address this, we embedded:
 - Career exploration in middle school, with mentorship and hands-on projects.
 - Financial literacy and professional skills training, integrated into advisory sessions.
 - Structured postsecondary advising and goal-setting in advisory and mentorship.
 - Personalized coaching and goal-setting through weekly Community Circles, ensuring students develop self-awareness and leadership skills.

2. Aligning to Competency-Based Learning (CBE) & Standards-Based Mastery Progression

How We Used It:

To ensure that all students develop deep knowledge and skills, we implemented a competency-based progression model, where students advance upon demonstrated mastery rather than seat time.

How It Informed Curriculum Programming:

- Core Academic Labs use self-paced digital portfolios and performance-based projects to measure mastery.
- Formative assessments and targeted interventions provide real-time feedback, allowing students to progress at their own pace (Learning Policy Institute, 2019).
- Adaptive technology in math, literacy, and science supports acceleration and remediation, ensuring personalized

learning pathways.

3. Identifying High-Quality, Authentic Project-Based & Work-Based Learning

How We Will Use It:

To ensure that Project-Based Learning (PBL) and Work-Based Learning (WBL) experiences are rigorous and industry-aligned, we are developing a structured process that includes:

- The Buck Institute for Education's Gold Standard PBL Framework, ensuring projects meet rigor, relevance, and engagement benchmarks (PBLWorks, 2020).
- Employer and postsecondary advisory panels to validate that projects build real-world technical and professional competencies.
- Labor market analysis and job task alignment to ensure that projects reflect current workforce needs in Advanced Manufacturing and Health Services.

How It Will Inform Curriculum Programming:

- Applied Learning projects will be designed using Gold Standard PBL criteria, ensuring scholars engage in authentic problem-solving.
- Capstone projects and apprenticeships will be co-developed with industry partners, ensuring scholars gain workplace-relevant skills.
- Leadership projects in advisory and mentoring programs will develop critical thinking, collaboration, and professional competencies.

4. Systems, Roles, and Operations That Bring It All Together

To support a competency-based, career-connected model, we structured school operations, adult roles, and scheduling systems that allow students to advance upon mastery, engage in applied learning, and receive structured mentorship.

How It Informed School Systems & Operations:

- Flexible Scheduling for Mastery & Work-Based Learning
 - Block scheduling dedicates extended time for competency-based academic labs, career pathway courses, and hands-on projects.
 - Designated work-based learning days allow high schoolers to participate in apprenticeships and dual

enrollment without missing academic instruction.

- Interdisciplinary Teaching Teams to Connect Academics and Career Pathways
 - CTE instructors co-plan with math and ELA teachers to ensure academic coursework supports career competencies.
 - Teachers serve as facilitators and project coaches, guiding students through self-paced learning and applied problem-solving.
- Competency-Based Tracking for Real-Time Student Progress Monitoring
 - Digital mastery tracking systems replace traditional grading, allowing students to demonstrate skills across academics, career pathways, and professional competencies.
 - Students maintain digital portfolios showcasing mastery of industry-recognized skills through project work and performance assessments.
- Advisory & Mentorship Integrated into the School Day
 - Each student is paired with an academic advisor and career mentor who tracks progress and provides goal-setting, leadership coaching, and career navigation support.
 - Weekly Community Circles build self-awareness, confidence, and professional skills critical for career success.
- CTE and Postsecondary Partnerships to Ensure Seamless Pathways
 - Formal agreements with employers, colleges, and credentialing bodies ensure that coursework leads directly to credentials, apprenticeships, and transferable college credit.
 - Internships and dual enrollment courses are aligned with industry expectations, giving students an advantage in both postsecondary education and the workforce.

How the Mission, Vision & Framework Inform Curriculum Planning

- **Mission Alignment:** The curriculum ensures scholars graduate with industry-aligned skills, workforce experiences, and SEL competencies needed for long-term success.
- **Vision Alignment:** Instruction prioritizes mastery, career relevance, and student-driven pathways, ensuring applied, flexible, and goal-driven learning experiences.
- **Educational Framework as the Foundation:** The four signature experiences—Core Academic Labs, Applied Learning, Postsecondary Readiness, and Personal Development—serve as the foundation for curriculum planning, ensuring all instruction is rigorous, career-connected, and student-centered.

b) Describe the basic learning environment (e.g., classroom-based, independent study), including class size and structure. Demonstrate alignment to the school's mission and vision.

Mission in Action

Ignite’s mission and vision are best illustrated through Jordan, a Mobile student facing the same challenge as many graduates—limited access to clear career pathways despite local industries struggling to fill high-wage jobs. In a traditional school, Jordan might finish high school without the skills, experience, or connections needed to secure a strong future.

At Ignite, his path looks different. Through Core Learning Labs, he builds academic mastery with direct ties to real-world applications—using algebra in precision manufacturing and applying science in healthcare simulations. By high school, he’s earning industry certifications, college credit, and completing work-based learning with local employers. On Fridays, instead of sitting in class, he’s on-site in an internship, building professional networks and career-ready skills.

Because of Ignite, Jordan won’t have to leave Mobile to find opportunity—he’ll graduate with the credentials, experience, and job offers to succeed right here, strengthening the workforce and fulfilling Ignite’s vision of building a bridge to economic opportunity for all.

The Break Down of the Signature Experiences

Ignite’s learning environment is flexible, career-connected, and competency-based, blending classroom instruction, hands-on training, mentorship, and real-world experiences. Scholars move through a structured yet adaptable schedule that combines explicit instruction, interdisciplinary projects, industry mentorship, and career exploration.

- Middle Schoolers build strong academic foundations while exploring careers in advanced manufacturing and healthcare.
- High Schoolers engage in dual enrollment, internships, certifications, and technical skill development in partnership with industry professionals.
- Learning is measured through performance-based assessments, portfolios, and real-world demonstrations of mastery rather than traditional grades.

The Signature Experiences

Core Academic Labs

- Standards-Based Instruction (Literacy, Numeracy, Social Studies, STEM)
- Personalized Learning (Targeted Intervention & Acceleration)
- Assessment & Mastery
 - Formative & Summative Assessments
 - Competency-Based Progression
- College Credit Opportunities in Core Academic Classes (High School Only)
 - Dual Enrollment & Early College Credit

Applied Learning Studios (CTE Aligned)

Middle School:

- Project-Based Learning with Industry-Aligned Content (Using the DEEDS framework)
- Work-Based Learning (Career Exploration, STEM Labs, Internships)
- Capstone Projects (Solving Real-World Industry Challenges)

High School:

- Advanced CTE Pathways Coursework in Advanced Manufacturing & Healthcare
- Workbased Learning in Advanced Manufacturing & Healthcare (Apprenticeships, Internships)
- College Credit Opportunities in CTE Pathways (Dual Enrollment & Early College Credit)
- Industry Certifications (OSHA-10, CNA, MSSC, etc.)
- Capstone Projects (Solving Real-World Industry Challenges)

Assessment & Mastery (All)

- Competency-Based Progression

Post Secondary Readiness	Personal Development & Support
• Whole group Post Secondary Advisory: Skill development: Resume Writing, Communication, Teamwork, Financial Aid • 1:1 Postsecondary Coaching & Career Planning (Admissions, Financial Aid, Career Exploration)	• Mentorship + Circle: Peer Supportive Relationships, Whole Group Advisory (SEL, Leadership skill development) • 1-1 Coaching • Wellness & Support Services: Assistance Personal Barriers + Mandated Counseling
Assessment & Mastery (All): Competency-Based Progression	Assessment & Mastery (All): Competency-Based Progression

Structure of the Learning Environment

SIGNATURE EXPERIENCE	PURPOSE & INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACH	CURRICULUM	CLAS S SIZ E	DURA TION	ASSESSM ENT APPROAC H
Academic Labs (Core Content)	Provide standards-aligned, teacher-led instruction in Math, ELA, Science, and Social Studies, building foundational conceptual understanding and problem-solving skills	- Math: Imagine Learning Illustrative Mathematics (6-12) - ELA: HMH Into Literature (6-12) - Science: OpenSciEd (6-12) - History & Social Studies: HMH Social	~25 scholars per class	60–90 minutes per session	- In-Class Formative Checks (quizzes, exit tickets) - Summative standards based Unit Assessments (written

	Cycles of direct instruction, small group collaboration, and reteach/remediation, using competency-based rubrics.	Studies, DBQ Project - Science Integration: OpenSciEd -Dual Enrollment academic courses			tests, performance tasks) - Graded on competency-based rubrics; reteach/remediation if not mastered
Personalized Learning Labs	Deliver targeted interventions or accelerated learning in Math and ELA through adaptive technology, small-group tutoring, and frequent data reviews. Immediate reteach for misconceptions or missed standards. Multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) framework to monitor progress and tailor next steps.	- Math Intervention: Math 180 - Reading Intervention: Read 180 - Additional adaptive tools (e.g., i-Ready) for tailored skill-building	Individually	45–60 minutes per session	- Online Dashboards track real-time progress - Every 3 Weeks: Data huddles to revise goals and adjust interventions - Digital based assessments
Applied Learning Studio (Middle)	Connect core academics to career exploration in Advanced Manufacturing & Healthcare via	- Aspects of Science/CTE Integration: OpenSciEd phenomena-based approach tied	15–20 scholars per	60–90 minutes per session	- Performance-Based Assessments: Prototypes, final

e School)	project-based learning (PBL) Hands-on, collaborative studio model. Authentic tasks with feedback from local professionals to strengthen applied learning outcomes.	to local industry scenarios - Cross-Curricular with HMH Social Studies/DBQ (for research and inquiry)	studio		presentations in the studio throughout a unit. - Rubric-Scored Projects (collaboration, inquiry skills) - Mentors from local industry provide feedback that informs project grades
Applied Learning Studio s (High School)	Advanced technical competencies in Manufacturing & Healthcare through lab-based experiences, internships, and industry-sponsored challenges	- CTE Pathways: Industry-aligned modules from partners (e.g., NCCER, OSHA-10) - OpenSciEd Integration: Biomedical engineering or applied science projects	15– 20 scholar s per lab (Internship s vary)	60– 90-minute labs Internships: half-day or weekly semester-long rotations	- In labs (skill demos, safety checks, simulations) + workplace settings (mentor evaluations) - Competency rubrics, portfolio artifacts (e.g., CNC machining logs, patient care

				checklists)
				- Industry Credentials (e.g., CNA, OSHA-10) embedde d in final assessme nts
				- Where: Advisory- based milestone s (complete d resume, FAFSA, scholarshi p essays)
Post Seco ndary Readin ess	Guide career planning, resume building, financial aid literacy, and postsecondary exploration in small-group settings Ongoing mentorship that evolves as students refine career paths.	- College & Career Readiness: Modules with HMH resources - Financial Literacy: integrated lessons, industry guest speakers	12– 15 sch olar s per advi sor	45 minut es per sessio n Multip le times per week
				- How: Rubric checklists for career- readiness tasks, recorded in personal portfolios

CCM: Community, Circles, & Mentorship (Personal Development)	Cultivate social-emotional learning (SEL), restorative practices, and leadership in small-circle formats that encourage dialogue, empathy, and cultural responsiveness	- Restorative Justice / circle practice (valor)	10–15 scholars per circle	45 minutes per session	- Where: in school, Circle reflections, peer feedback sessions - How: SEL rubrics measure communication, conflict resolution, leadership - Advisors note growth in SEL skill trackers
	Uses structured circle practices that let students practice empathy, reflection, and shared problem-solving.				
1:1 Counseling & Coaching	Provide individualized academic, emotional, and career support, using elements of Internal Family Systems and solution-focused techniques Proactive, relationship-based counseling that looks at the "whole child."	- No specific "curriculum," but uses solution-focused counseling - Connects to each student's academic and career plans	1 scholar, 1 counselor/coach	30–45 minutes Scheduled every 3 weeks or as needed	- Where: Private counseling space - How: Personalized goal-setting forms, progress notes, SEL skill trackers in each scholar's file
Competency-Based	Ensure demonstration of skills through	• Building 21	Embedded	Summative tasks	- Where:

Master performance y & tasks, portfolios, Assess and industry ment certifications rather than traditional grading	- Rubric-Based mastery framework for each subject - Portfolio Requirements: digital + physical artifacts of growth	sch at end • ool- of Academic wid units/ Labs: e projec quizzes, ts writing tasks Ongoi ng • PBL format Studios: ive prototype check s, s simulation s • Advisory: resumes, career plans - How: Competen cy rubrics for each performan ce task; opportunit ies for remediatio n or extension - Industry Certificati ons serve as summativ e evidence of mastery (e.g., OSHA-10, CNA)
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c) Provide an overview of the planned curriculum. Attach a sample course scope and sequence for one subject for each division (elementary, middle, high school) the school would serve. In addition, identify course outcomes and demonstrate alignment with applicable state standards.

Overview of Planned Curriculum

Ignite Academy provides a fully integrated academic and career-preparatory curriculum that ensures students graduate ready for both college and high-demand careers. The curriculum is aligned to the Alabama Course of Study (ACOS) standards and incorporates competency-based education (CBE) principles through Building 21. This ensures students master core academic knowledge, technical skills, and career-based learning experiences through a structured scope and sequence. Each division (middle and high school) follows a progressive learning pathway, where students:

- Middle School (Grades 6–8): Build strong foundational skills in literacy, numeracy, and scientific inquiry, while engaging in early career exploration in health sciences and advanced manufacturing.
- High School (Grades 9–12): Advance into specialized career pathways, earning dual enrollment credits, industry-recognized certifications, and real-world experience through internships and applied learning.

Each course is explicitly mapped to ACOS standards, ensuring full compliance with Alabama's graduation requirements.

1. Core Academic Curriculum (Aligned to Alabama Standards)

All Ignite students take Alabama ACOS-aligned coursework in English, math, science, and social studies, ensuring mastery of state competencies while developing higher-order thinking and real-world application skills.

Subject	Curriculum Used	Key Features & ACOS Alignment
Mathematics	Imagine Learning Illustrative Mathematics (6–12)	Focuses on conceptual problem-solving, aligned to ACOS mathematical reasoning and modeling standards.

English Language Arts (ELA)	HMH Into Literature (6–12)	Balanced literacy approach, integrating Socratic seminars, evidence-based writing, and reading comprehension, directly mapped to ACOS ELA strands.
Science	OpenSciEd (6–12)	Uses phenomenon-based learning, aligned to ACOS standards in Life, Physical, and Earth/Space sciences.
Social Studies	HMH Social Studies + DBQ Project	Encourages critical thinking and primary source analysis, aligned to Alabama's history, government, and economics standards.

Personalized Learning: To ensure every scholar thrives, Ignite's curriculum includes tiered interventions, acceleration options, and flexible learning pathways that support standards based achievement and progress on the competency framework.

Support Type	Description
Acceleration	Honors/AP courses, dual enrollment at local colleges.
Remediation	Small-group or 1:1 support, Imagine Learning interventions for math & literacy.
ELL & SPED Support	Co-teaching models, scaffolds, extended test time, competency-based progression.

Example Course Outcomes:

- Middle School Science (OpenSciEd): By 8th grade, students construct scientific models, analyze real-world environmental data, and design evidence-based solutions to complex problems.
- High School ELA (HMH Into Literature): By 12th grade, students demonstrate mastery of rhetorical analysis, write research-based argumentative essays, and effectively present findings in academic and professional contexts.

Attachment Reference: See attached OpenSciEd Scope & Sequence for middle and high school science content and skill progression. See [Building 21 CBE Scope & Sequence](#) for competency-based tracking across grades.

2. Applied Learning Curriculum (CTE: Health & Advanced Manufacturing)

Ignite Academy integrates Alabama’s Advanced Manufacturing and Health Science Course of Study, ensuring that students develop industry-specific skills while reinforcing core academic knowledge.

Career Pathway	Integration with Core Subjects	ACOS + Industry Credential Alignment
Advanced Manufacturing	Math courses apply real-world calculations for manufacturing design. Science labs incorporate engineering principles.	Aligned to Alabama Advanced Manufacturing Course of Study and NCCER credentials.
Health Sciences	Science courses integrate medical case studies and biomedical investigations. English includes technical writing and patient communication.	Aligned to Alabama Health Science Course of Study and OSHA-10 & CNA certifications.

Example Course Outcomes:

- Middle School (Intro to Health & Manufacturing): By 8th grade, students demonstrate safe lab techniques, interpret technical blueprints, and analyze healthcare data.
- High School (Advanced CTE Pathways): By 12th grade, students earn OSHA-10 certification, complete a simulated healthcare diagnosis, or design an automated prototype for an industry-based project.

Reference: See [Advanced Manufacturing](#) and [Health Services](#) to better understand the learning progressions.

3. Postsecondary Readiness (College & Career Pathways)

Ignite ensures all students graduate with a clear postsecondary plan, college credits, and industry-aligned experiences. The

model integrates:

Work-Based Learning (Internships & Apprenticeships)

- Industry partnerships place students in paid internships, co-ops, and job-shadowing.
- P-Tech & Career Academy Model ensures postsecondary persistence & job placement.

Credential-Based Assessments

- Students earn OSHA-10, CNA, NCCER certifications, increasing employment rates & earnings.

Example Course Outcomes:

- By 8th grade: Students complete a career interest inventory & personalized learning plan.
- By 12th grade: Students earn at least 1 industry credential OR 6+ dual enrollment credits.
- Within 5 years of graduation: 80% of alumni will earn at least the median wage in Alabama.

4. Personal Development

Ignite's Personal Development curriculum ensures that students develop leadership skills, adaptability, and self-efficacy through: Mentorship & Advisory

- Valor Collegiate's Circle Practice Model – Builds student agency, emotional intelligence, and goal-setting habits.
- Structured advisory sessions focusing on self-awareness, resilience, and postsecondary planning.

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)

- Aligned to CASEL SEL competencies (Self-Awareness, Relationship Skills, Decision-Making).
- Integrated into all courses, reinforcing growth mindset & leadership development.

Example Course Outcomes:

- By 8th grade: Students develop self-advocacy skills, present a capstone leadership project, and demonstrate conflict resolution strategies.

- By 12th grade: Students lead group discussions, deliver professional presentations, and apply SEL competencies in internships & real-world settings.

Reference: See [Valor Collegiate Compass Model](#)

Sample Course Scope

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d) If the curriculum is fully developed, summarize curricular choices, such as textbook selection, by subject, and the rationale for each. Describe the evidence that these curricula will be appropriate and effective for the targeted students.

Ignite has selected four fully developed, research-backed curricula—Illustrative Mathematics (6–12), HMH Into Literature (6–12), HMH Social Studies + DBQ, and OpenSciEd (6–8)—to anchor core instruction. Each is EdReports-approved for robust alignment to standards, depth of rigor, and usability, ensuring all learners engage with challenging yet accessible content.

- Math (Illustrative Mathematics): Fosters deep conceptual understanding and problem-solving, ideal for students needing both procedural fluency and real-world application.
- ELA (HMH Into Literature): Offers rigorous reading and writing tasks, varied literary and informational texts, and built-in scaffolds—equipping diverse students with college-level analysis skills.
- Social Studies (HMH + DBQ Project): Integrates inquiry-based historical investigations and document-based questioning, cultivating critical thinking and evidence-based writing.
- Science (OpenSciEd 6–8): Uses phenomenon-based learning to build content mastery and scientific reasoning. For upper grades, Ignite will supplement emerging OpenSciEd high school units with existing state-approved resources, ensuring continuous alignment to Alabama Course of Study.
- Personal Development (Valor Collegiate’s Circle Practice): Embeds structured, relationship-centered mentorship, reinforcing social-emotional learning, self-efficacy, and leadership skills through peer-led advisory discussions and goal-setting reflections.

Because these curricula have demonstrated success with diverse student populations—and align with both ACOS standards and Ignite’s competency-based approach—teachers can confidently differentiate for advanced, on-level, and remedial learners. Formative data cycles will measure impact and guide real-time intervention, making these choices highly effective for our student body.

e) If the curriculum is not already developed, describe a timeline for how the curriculum will be developed between approval of the application and the opening of the school, including who will be responsible and when key stages will be completed.

While we have made curricular selections, there are still more details that need to be ironed out especially as we work towards coherence in the model:

- High School Science (OpenSciEd 9–12): Pilot units and supplementary resources and determine alignment to career pathways.
- Applied Learning Studios (DEEDS Framework): Industry partner collaborations for real-world, interdisciplinary projects, especially in the middle school.
- Post-Secondary Readiness: Identifying a curriculum and formalizing advisory modules (e.g., career inventories, college application processes, scholarship searches).
- Personal Development & SEL: Finalizing the Valor Circle-based approach

Phased Timeline: In the 18 months prior to launch

1. Phase 1 (Months 0–2): Alignment & Planning

- Responsibility: Principal, Curriculum Director, School Counselor
- Deliverables:
 - Decide which OpenSciEd high school pilot units to adopt.
 - Draft overall framework for DEEDS in Applied Studios.
 - Map out post-secondary readiness goals (e.g., ACT prep, dual-enrollment options, advisory lessons).
 - Select or adapt the Valor Circle SEL structure plus an evidence-based curriculum for personal development.

2. Phase 2 (Months 2–4): Collaborative Development

- Responsibility: Department Leads, Counselors, SEL Coordinator
- Deliverables:
 - Co-develop high school science pacing with partial or pilot OpenSciEd units.

- Work with industry partners to shape first Applied Studio challenges (DEEDS steps).
- Finalize post-secondary readiness modules, including career path exploration and college application checklists.
- Integrate Valor's Circle routines into weekly advisory/personal development sessions.

3. Phase 3 (Months 4–6): PD & Field Testing

- Responsibility: PD Coordinator, Teacher Teams, Industry Mentors
- Deliverables:
 - Train teachers on new HS science resources, including pilot labs.
 - Conduct initial DEEDS pilot with a small group—gather feedback for improvement.
 - Run sample advisory sessions focusing on post-secondary skill-building (mock scholarship searches, college essay drafts).
 - Introduce Valor's Circle and specialized SEL lessons in a trial format, refining for cultural responsiveness and fidelity.

4. Phase 4 (Months 6–Opening): Final Revisions & Launch Prep

- Responsibility: Leadership Team, Advisory Committee
- Deliverables:
 - Finalize all high school science units (including any supplementary materials).
 - Complete first wave of Applied Learning Studio project outlines with partner feedback.
 - Publish an annual Post-Secondary Readiness calendar (test dates, college visits, job shadowing, FAFSA workshops).
 - Finalize SEL scope/sequence, ensuring Valor's Circle routines and ensure strategies learned are embedded in weekly or biweekly advisories.

Outcome: By opening day, Ignite will have fully integrated the post-secondary readiness curriculum, personal development framework (Valor Circle + specialized SEL), and updated academic resources (OpenSciEd HS pilots, DEEDS-based studios). This staged process ensures each component is authentic, culturally affirming, and aligned with both the Alabama Course of Study and industry best practices.

f) Describe the primary teaching methods and instructional strategies that the school will expect teachers to use and why they are well-suited for the anticipated student population. Describe the methods and systems teachers will have for providing differentiated instruction to meet the needs of all students.

- **Direct & Explicit Instruction**

Ignite’s teachers begin each class block by modeling essential skills and concepts, providing clear explanations and worked examples that ground students in foundational knowledge. Rather than rushing ahead, instructors pause to check for understanding, pose probing questions, and invite student reflection. This method ensures that all learners grasp the core material before transitioning to more complex or applied tasks. Students benefit from think-alouds and guided practice, during which teachers articulate their reasoning step by step—thereby demystifying problem-solving strategies in subjects like algebra, literary analysis, or scientific inquiry. This approach, informed by research on explicit teaching, is especially supportive for those who thrive on well-structured lessons and immediate feedback.

- **Personalized Learning & Data-Driven Grouping**

Each block begins and ends with quick diagnostic checks, allowing teachers to review performance data in real time and pivot instruction as needed. Students requiring additional review or practice receive small-group mini-lessons, while those prepared for deeper exploration might engage in more complex extensions. Adaptive platforms—capable of scaling content up or down based on individual performance—further tailor instruction during independent or station rotations. Students who demonstrate repeated mastery can accelerate, tackling advanced tasks or helping peers, whereas those needing more scaffolding receive timely intervention. This dynamic, data-driven cycle ensures that every learner stays on track within the block’s allotted time.

- **Project-Based & Real-World Application**

After building a solid academic foundation, teachers pivot to collaborative, real-world investigations aligned with industry needs and career pathways. In these extended blocks, students may tackle advanced manufacturing challenges or analyze patient care scenarios that require both rigorous content knowledge and problem-solving ingenuity. Throughout these projects, teachers serve as facilitators—circulating among groups to offer targeted prompts, ask higher-order questions, and encourage reflection on the learning process. By intertwining core subjects (such as math for blueprint measurements or English for technical writing), instructors help students see the relevance of classroom content and foster engagement

through authentic tasks that replicate professional environments.

- **Differentiation within the Block**

To address varying skill levels and learning styles, teachers employ flexible grouping structures—forming purposeful clusters that shift from one segment of the block to another. Some groups might focus on re-teaching core concepts through targeted demonstrations, while others dive into rich projects or collaborative case studies. Textual materials are provided in multiple reading levels, and educators layer supports (such as visual aids, guided notes, or sentence frames) for students who benefit from additional scaffolds. Conversely, those seeking more challenge have access to higher-level problem sets or research opportunities. By weaving this differentiation throughout the block, Ignite ensures that all students, whether they need remedial assistance or advanced enrichment, continuously move toward mastery at a pace that respects their individual readiness.

Element Review

Reviews is not provided

3. Student Performance Standards

Reviewer Instructions

Please rate this section using the provided rubric.

Status: Not Reviewed

Form Result

Provide the anticipated student performance standards and demonstrate how those standards align or exceed the Alabama State standards.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Compelling evidence of how the proposed school's student performance standards will directly and consistently meet or exceed Alabama standards.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

a) Describe the school-wide student performance standards. In addition, attach a proposed academic performance framework for evaluating the school's academic progress.

School-wide Performance Standards Narrative Ignite's school-wide performance standards draw from the Alabama Course of Study (ACOS), Alabama College and Career Readiness Standards, and recognized industry-based credentialing requirements in Advanced Manufacturing and Health Science. By merging rigorous academic benchmarks with practical career-technical competencies, Ignite ensures each scholar graduates with both a solid scholastic foundation and the applied skills needed for high-wage, high-demand career paths. To create a data-rich learning environment, teachers administer comprehensive exams, standards-based interim assessments, adaptive platform checks, and daily exit tickets. This ongoing flow of performance data allows educators to tailor interventions, adjust pacing, and set individual goals with students in weekly advisory sessions. Beyond preparing students for state assessments (e.g., ACAP) and college entrance exams (ACT), Ignite integrates manufacturing or health care credential standards (like NCCER or OSHA-10) into core and elective coursework. As a result, scholars routinely practice problem-solving techniques that mirror advanced industry tasks. In addition to meeting the Alabama High School Diploma requirements, students may also earn a CTE Diploma Endorsement by completing a designated sequence of Advanced Manufacturing or Health Science classes and attaining the relevant industry credentials. Advisors collaborate with students early in high school to craft a "Pathway Plan," selecting CTE courses that fulfill both academic graduation needs and the specialized competencies required for endorsement. Through frequent check-ins, teachers and students review progress on ACOS objectives and CTE standards, compiling evidence of mastery in performance tasks and real-world projects. Lastly, Ignite will ensure continuous academic progress through a quarterly data review cycle, analyzing student performance in academic achievement, competency mastery, work-based learning, and social-emotional growth. See Attachment for the full Academic Performance Framework

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At Ignite, while we adhere to the Alabama State Standards, we enhance our curriculum by integrating two additional competency frameworks:

1. **Building 21 Competency Framework:** This framework emphasizes critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, collaboration, and self-directed learning, extending beyond traditional content mastery.

Example: In 10th-grade science, students not only meet state benchmarks but also engage in advanced scientific inquiry, data analysis, and experimental design. These competencies are assessed through authentic performance tasks using Building 21 rubrics, ensuring deep and applicable learning.

Development Process: These competencies were developed collaboratively with educational experts, industry partners, and experienced teachers to align with college and career readiness goals.

2. **Valor Collegiate's Compass Model:** This model focuses on holistic human development, encompassing mind, body, heart, and spirit. It includes social-emotional learning (SEL) competencies that promote self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.

Example: Through weekly "Circle" exercises, students engage in practices that enhance their emotional intelligence and community building, fostering a supportive and inclusive school culture.

Implementation Process: The Compass model is implemented through structured activities and community commitments, creating a foundation of trust and safety that encourages personal growth and development.

Development Process: These competencies were developed collaboratively with educational and social psychology experts and rooted in trauma informed care.

These Standards Differ from a Traditional School Model in Three Ways:

- **Skill Acquisition Over Seat Time** – Students progress based on demonstrated mastery of skills rather than traditional time-based measures.

- Holistic Development – Learning integrates personal, interpersonal, academic, and technical skills, ensuring students develop as whole individuals.
- Career & Workforce Integration – Academic standards align with industry expectations in STEM, healthcare, and technical careers, preparing students for high-demand fields.

Ignite Academy's promotion guidelines ensure that all students demonstrate both academic proficiency and consistent engagement before advancing to the next grade.

At each grade level, scholars must earn a cumulative passing score of at least 70% in core academic courses (Math, ELA, Science, Social Studies) while meeting attendance requirements (no more than 10% unexcused absences) and maintaining positive progress in any career pathway or performance-based electives.

Middle School Promotion

Families of scholars at risk of failing a core subject—based on interim data or end-of-semester grades—are notified immediately, and students receive targeted remediation or individualized support (e.g., after-school tutoring, small-group intervention blocks). Students failing more than one core subject by the end of the year must attend our Summer Academic Intervention. During this structured program, they receive focused assistance and must pass a mastery assessment in each subject to move on to the next grade.

Grades 6 through 8 Breakdown

6th Grade Promotion

At Ignite Academy, students must demonstrate academic proficiency and engagement in career-connected learning to be promoted. To move from 6th to 7th grade, students must pass all core subjects (ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies) with a minimum cumulative score of 70% in each course. Additionally, students must complete at least 5 clock hours of hands-on learning experiences related to Advanced Manufacturing or Health Science, such as STEM challenges, health science simulations, or project-based learning experiences that integrate multiple subjects.

7th Grade Promotion

To be promoted from 7th to 8th grade, students must pass all core subjects with a 70% or higher. Students must also participate in at least 10 clock hours of applied learning experiences, including engineering design challenges, medical case studies, or real-world data analysis projects that require interdisciplinary problem-solving.

8th Grade Promotion

To ensure that students are fully prepared for the rigor of high school coursework, 8th-grade promotion requires students to pass all core subjects with a 70% or higher and successfully complete a Personalized High School & Career

Pathway Plan in collaboration with their advisor.

Additionally, students must complete at least 15 clock hours of career-connected learning, including job site visits, industry mentor collaborations, or capstone projects.

Students who qualify may also take Algebra I and Physical Science for high school credit, allowing them to accelerate in their career pathway in high school.

High School Readiness & Transition

At the end of 8th grade, students will work with their advisors to develop a Personalized High School & Career Pathway Plan, mapping out their academic goals and industry-aligned learning experiences for high school. Students who demonstrate advanced proficiency in math and science may also qualify for high school credit in Algebra I or Physical Science, allowing them to accelerate in their career pathway.

High School Promotion

At the high school level, students earn credits by completing each course with a 70% or higher; promotion from 9th to 10th grade, 10th to 11th, and 11th to 12th hinges on earning the requisite credits, including any state-required CTE course components. Students who do not meet passing criteria can enroll in credit recovery (through summer sessions or online modules), ensuring they remain on track for on-time graduation.

9-12 Grade Breakdown

9th Grade Promotion

At Ignite Academy, we maintain rigorous academic and career readiness expectations to ensure that all students progress successfully. To be promoted from 9th to 10th grade, students must earn all 4 core subject credits and earn a minimum of 6 total units of credit, including at least one industry-based elective in Advanced Manufacturing or Health Science. Additionally, students must complete at least 10 clock hours of hands-on applied learning, such as simulations, lab work, or career exploration activities tied to their individual pathway plan.

10th Grade Promotion

To advance from 10th to 11th grade, students must earn a credit in all 4 core subjects each semester and accumulate at least 12 total units of credit, including at least one industry-based elective. Students must also complete a minimum of 20 clock hours of career-focused experiences,

which may include job shadowing, internships, or other applied learning opportunities relevant to their pathway.

11th Grade Promotion

To be promoted from 11th to 12th grade, students must have successfully earned a minimum of 18 units of credit, including at least two industry-based electives. Additionally, students must complete 30 clock hours of industry-aligned experiences such as apprenticeships, internships, or technical simulations that prepare them for postsecondary success.

Graduation Requirements

To graduate from Ignite Academy, students must complete a minimum of 24 units of credit, including all core academic courses and industry-based electives aligned to their career pathway. Students must also complete 40 clock hours of applied learning experiences—such as simulations, apprenticeships, or internship-based projects—demonstrating real-world competency in their chosen field.

In addition to these credit and experiential learning requirements, students must meet at least three of six college and career readiness indicators, as outlined by Alabama’s Plan 2020:

- A benchmark score on any section of the ACT test.
- A qualifying score on an AP or IB exam.
- Approved college or postsecondary credit while in high school.
- A benchmark level on the ACT WorkKeys.
- An approved industry credential (e.g., OSHA-10, NCCER).
- Documented acceptance for enlistment into the military.

Students who complete a designated sequence of CTE coursework will be eligible to earn a CTE Diploma Endorsement, verifying their mastery of industry-specific competencies.

Communication & Supports

All promotion requirements are communicated at the start of each school year via the Student-Parent Handbook, which details policies for promotion, interventions, and retake or recovery options. Parents also receive regular progress updates: advisors hold quarterly conferences to review academic standing, while weekly progress reports offer ongoing visibility into grades and attendance.

For scholars with limited English proficiency or disabilities, Ignite provides the necessary accommodations as determined by their language proficiency plan or Individualized Education Program (IEP). This approach underscores our commitment to ensuring every learner—regardless of background—understands the criteria for promotion early on and has abundant support to achieve readiness for the next grade level and, ultimately, to meet graduation requirements.

e) Attach the school's exit standards for graduating students. These should clearly set forth what students in the last grade served will know and be able to do.

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Element Review

Reviews is not provided

4. High School Graduation Requirements (if applicable)

Reviewer Instructions

Please rate the application using the provided rubric.

Status: Not Reviewed

Form Result

High schools will be expected to meet the state graduation standards as established by the Alabama State Board of Education (ALSDE).

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Compelling evidence of how the proposed high school's standards will directly and consistently meet or exceed Alabama State standards.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

Course Offerings and
Transcript Narrative

At Ignite Academy, students earn credits through successful completion of Alabama Course of Study (ACOS)-aligned coursework and competency-based mastery in both core academic subjects and career-technical education (CTE) pathways. Our course offerings ensure that students graduate fully prepared for postsecondary education and career opportunities, with additional requirements that integrate hands-on learning experiences and industry-recognized credentials.

Credit Earning & Course Offerings

Students earn credits by demonstrating a minimum of 70% mastery in each course, assessed through standards-aligned summative assessments, project-based learning tasks, and real-world performance evaluations. In addition to traditional coursework, students may earn credits through dual enrollment, Advanced Placement (AP), or industry-based credentialing programs.

Ignite follows the Alabama High School Diploma framework and offers the following core courses:

- English Language Arts (4 Credits)
 - English 9, English 10, English 11, English 12
 - Advanced coursework: AP English Language, AP English Literature, Dual Enrollment English
- Mathematics (4 Credits)
 - Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II with Statistics, Pre-Calculus
 - Advanced coursework: AP Calculus, AP Statistics, Dual Enrollment Math
- Science (4 Credits)
 - Biology, Chemistry, Physical Science, Environmental Science
 - Advanced coursework: AP Biology, AP Environmental Science, Dual Enrollment Science
- Social Studies (4 Credits)
 - World History, U.S. History I & II, Government/Economics
 - Advanced coursework: AP U.S. History, AP Government, AP Human Geography

- Career Preparedness (1 Credit)
 - Includes financial literacy, digital skills, and postsecondary planning
- Physical Education (1 Credit) & Health (0.5 Credit)
 - PE I, Lifetime Fitness, or Health & Wellness
- Electives (Minimum 2.5 Credits)
 - General electives, Fine Arts, and additional CTE courses based on student pathway

CTE Pathways & Industry-Based Electives

Students will select a career pathway by 10th grade and complete at least two industry-based electives, ensuring alignment with Advanced Manufacturing or Health Science career tracks.

- Advanced Manufacturing Pathway
 - Principles of Manufacturing
 - Precision Machining
 - Engineering & Design
 - Industry Certifications: OSHA-10, NCCER
- Health Science Pathway
 - Foundations of Health Science
 - Patient Care Technician
 - Biomedical Innovations
 - Industry Certifications: CNA, CPR, EKG Technician

Students must also complete a minimum of 40 clock hours of hands-on career-connected learning, including internships, job shadowing, apprenticeships, or simulations.

Transcript & Graduation Differences

Ignite Academy adheres to the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) transcript guidelines but enhances the standard framework with:

1. CTE Diploma Endorsement for students completing a three-course career pathway sequence and earning an industry credential.

2. Competency-Based Progression, where students demonstrate skill mastery through authentic assessments, portfolio submissions, and applied learning projects.
3. Postsecondary Readiness Indicators, ensuring students graduate meeting at least three of six Alabama Plan 2020 benchmarks (e.g., ACT scores, AP exams, industry certifications, dual enrollment credits).

b) Explain how the graduation requirements will ensure student readiness.

Student Readiness
Narrative

Ignite Academy's graduation requirements are designed to ensure that every scholar is fully prepared for postsecondary education, high-wage careers, and long-term economic mobility. By combining rigorous academics, career-aligned coursework, hands-on experience, and industry credentials, graduates will leave Ignite positioned for higher education, direct workforce entry, or advanced technical training—all while reducing financial barriers to future success.

Graduates will complete a minimum of 24 credits, including at least two career-aligned electives in Advanced Manufacturing or Health Science, ensuring exposure to real-world skills and certifications required for high-demand jobs. By completing a three-course CTE pathway and earning industry-recognized credentials such as OSHA-10, NCCER, CNA, CPR, or EKG Technician, graduates will qualify for entry-level positions that pay above minimum wage, setting them on a trajectory for financial independence. According to labor market data, certified manufacturing and healthcare technicians earn 20-40% more than non-certified entry-level employees, providing a direct pathway to economic stability and long-term career growth. For students pursuing higher education, Ignite's dual enrollment program allows scholars to earn college credits while still in high school—reducing the number of courses they need to take (and pay for) after graduation. By earning free or reduced-cost college credits before enrolling in a degree program, students can shorten their time in college, lower tuition costs, and graduate with significantly less student debt. This positions them ahead of their peers both academically and financially, allowing them to enter the workforce or pursue further education with a reduced financial burden.

In addition to career training, students must meet at least three of six college and career readiness benchmarks (such as ACT scores, AP exams, industry certifications, or dual enrollment credits) ensuring they are competitive for college admission, technical apprenticeships, or direct workforce entry.

By graduation, Ignite students will have mastered industry competencies, completed real-world internships or apprenticeships, earned college credit, and gained essential problem-solving and professional skills. Whether pursuing higher education, continuing in an advanced training program, or entering the workforce, Ignite graduates will be financially and academically ahead, ensuring greater career stability and wealth-building potential.

At-Risk Narrative

At Ignite Academy, every scholar has a pathway to success, and we actively track student progress to ensure no one falls behind. Our early identification system uses real-time academic monitoring, tracking grades, attendance, engagement, and behavior to flag students at risk of not meeting graduation requirements. Advisors and teachers review this data weekly, and when concerns arise, we follow a structured intervention process to provide targeted support.

Early Identification & Intervention Steps

1. Monitoring & Flagging – We track attendance, grades, participation, and career engagement to identify students in need of support.
2. Advisor Check-Ins – Scholars meet regularly with their advisor to discuss academic progress, challenges, and goals.
3. Personalized Intervention Plans – When a student is flagged, a team of teachers and advisors creates a customized plan, which may include:
 - Small-group instruction or one-on-one tutoring in Personalized Learning Labs.
 - Credit recovery through extended learning, online modules, or competency reassessments.
 - SEL support through on-campus counseling, Valor Circles, and mentorship.
4. Hands-On Career Engagement – Struggling students are connected with internships, apprenticeships, or industry mentors to keep them engaged and motivated. Advisors make extra effort to reinforce academic content through these hands-on activities.
5. Family Communication & Support – Parents receive weekly progress updates, quarterly report cards, and are invited to mandatory success meetings if their child is at risk of retention.

For students who may not pursue a traditional four-year college path, Ignite provides alternative pathways through dual enrollment, industry credentialing, and technical training programs. Every scholar, regardless of their starting point, leaves Ignite with a high school diploma, career-ready skills, and a clear plan for their future—ensuring they graduate on time and positioned for economic mobility.

Element Review

Reviews is not provided

5. School Calendar and Schedule

Reviewer Instructions

Please rate the application using the provided rubric.

Status: Not Reviewed

Form Result

Provide information on the typical school day schedule and the academic calendar.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Compelling evidence of how the school day schedule and academic calendar will directly and consistently meet the needs of the educational program and how it will optimize student learning.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

a) Discuss the annual academic calendar for the school. Explain how the calendar reflects the needs of the educational program. Attach the school's proposed calendar for the first year of operation, including total number of days/hours of instruction.

Academic Calendar
Narrative

At Ignite Academy, our academic calendar is designed to maximize student learning, provide targeted intervention, and integrate career-connected experiences that prepare scholars for postsecondary success. We will operate on a 180-day instructional calendar, aligning with Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) requirements while embedding hands-on career learning, extended academic support, and professional development for teachers.

Calendar Features Reflecting Educational Priorities

- **Instructional Time & Rigor** – Ignite scholars will engage in full-day instruction with an extended block schedule that supports project-based learning, industry lab experiences, and applied career training. Core subjects, including language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies, will receive a minimum of 300 minutes of instruction weekly, exceeding state requirements.
- **Targeted Intervention & Credit Recovery** – Every quarter includes structured intervention cycles, where students receive small-group support, credit recovery opportunities, and academic acceleration in core subjects.
- **Career & Industry Learning Days** – Students will participate in 12 full-day career-connected learning experiences throughout the year, including job shadowing, industry site visits, mentor-led projects, and credentialing preparation. These days are built into the quarter system to ensure seamless integration without disrupting core academics. Students in upper grades will have staggered schedules for externships, ensuring adequate transportation and coordination with industry partners.
- **Extended Summer Learning** – Scholars who need additional support will participate in a Summer Bridge Program, designed to reinforce math, literacy, and technical skills while providing career exploration opportunities.
- **Teacher Professional Development** – Our calendar includes dedicated PD days each quarter to ensure teachers are equipped with best practices in competency-based education, differentiated instruction, and career-aligned pedagogy.

School Hours & Weekly Schedule

- **School Day:** 7:45 AM – 3:30 PM (Monday–Thursday)

- Early Dismissal for Professional Development: Fridays at 1:45 PM
- After-School Programming: Available for academic support, enrichment, and extracurriculars.
- Work-Based Learning Logistics: Students in grades 10–12 will participate in off-site work-based learning on a rotational basis, with dedicated advisors coordinating transportation, attendance tracking, and employer feedback sessions. Industry mentors will also provide on-campus training for younger students to prepare them for future placements.

Proposed First-Year Calendar

The Ignite academic calendar includes:

- 180 instructional days, meeting ALSDE requirements.
- 1,080 instructional hours, exceeding the state's minimum instructional time.
- Four 9-week quarters, each ending with structured intervention and career-exploration weeks.
- 12 dedicated Career & Technical Learning Days, allowing students to gain hands-on training, industry exposure, and mentorship.
- Built-in holidays, state assessment days, and inclement weather make-up days.

The attached calendar outlines the first-year instructional schedule, intervention weeks, professional development days, and career learning experiences, ensuring a rigorous, supportive, and career-aligned learning experience for every scholar.

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227.25 KB • Added 5 days ago

b) Describe the structure of a typical school day and week. Include the number of instructional hours/ minutes in a day for core subjects such as language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Note the length of the school day, including start and dismissal times. Explain why the school's daily and weekly schedule will be optimal for student learning. Provide the minimum number of hours/minutes per day and week that the school will devote to academic instruction in each grade. Attach a sample daily and weekly schedule for each division of the school.

Ignite Academy's academic program is designed to balance rigorous core instruction, career-connected learning, and targeted support, ensuring that scholars master both academic and industry competencies. Our modified block schedule provides extended learning cycles, hands-on application, and structured intervention.

Monday – Thursday: Core Academics & Career Pathways

Each school day consists of four instructional blocks to support deeper learning and reduce transitions:

- **Core Academic Labs (Math, ELA, Science, Social Studies Integration):**
Scholars take three 75-minute blocks per day for Math, ELA, and Science (Social Studies is integrated into ELA through HMH Social Studies & DBQ Project).
- **Applied Learning Studios (CTE & PBL):**
On Monday & Wednesday, scholars participate in 90-minute hands-on career pathway studios focused on Advanced Manufacturing and Health Science.
- **Personalized Learning Labs:**
On Tuesday & Thursday, scholars receive 90-minute targeted intervention and extension in Math and ELA, utilizing adaptive technology and small-group tutoring.
- **Electives & Physical Education:**
In grades 6-8, students receive 50 minutes of daily physical education. In grades 9-12, PE, Art, and Foreign Language rotate daily in the afternoons to meet Alabama's graduation and instructional requirements.
- **Advisory & College Readiness:**
Scholars start their day with advisory and postsecondary planning, ensuring that all students stay on track for graduation, internships, and college or career pathways.

Friday: Career Immersion & Leadership Development

Fridays are dedicated to real-world learning experiences, ensuring that every Ignite scholar graduates with at least 40+ hours of hands-on career preparation.

- **Internships, Work-Based Learning, & Studio Projects**
Scholars engage in job shadowing, applied learning projects, and mentorship experiences.

- **Advisory & Postsecondary Readiness**
Afternoon sessions focus on resume-building, financial literacy, FAFSA support, and career exploration.
- **SEL Circles & Leadership Development (CCM)**
Scholars participate in structured circles to develop leadership, communication, and conflict resolution skills.

School Day & Weekly Instructional Time

- **School Hours:** 7:45 AM – 3:30 PM (Monday – Thursday), Early Release at 1:45 PM (Friday)
- **Total Instructional Minutes:** ~420 per day (~7 hours)
- **Core Academic Instruction (Math, ELA, Science, Social Studies):** 300 minutes per week per subject (~180 hours/year)
- **Personalized Learning & Advisory:** 240 minutes per week (~144 hours/year)
- **CTE & Applied Learning Studios:** 360 minutes per week (~216 hours/year)

Why This Schedule Maximizes Learning & Readiness

Ignite Academy's block structure and applied learning Fridays ensure that students receive:

- Deep learning cycles that allow for inquiry-based instruction, extended lab work, and problem-solving projects.
- Personalized academic support through dedicated intervention labs and small-group instruction, ensuring every scholar meets competency-based mastery benchmarks.
- Industry-connected experiences that give scholars a competitive edge in workforce entry and postsecondary applications, while reducing financial barriers through dual enrollment and credentialing opportunities.

This schedule is designed to prepare every Ignite scholar for college, technical training, and direct entry into high-wage careers, ensuring that they graduate academically, professionally, and financially ready for their future.

Sample Daily & Weekly
Schedules

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172.31 KB • Added 5 days ago

Element Review

Reviews is not provided

6. School Culture

Reviewer Instructions

Please rate this section using the provided rubric.

Status: Not Reviewed

Form Result

Provide details on the overall school culture planned for the school, how this culture aligns with the mission and vision statements, and how the culture will promote academic growth and achievement.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Compelling evidence of how the school culture or ethos will directly and consistently promote a positive academic environment and abundantly reinforce student intellectual and social development.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

a) Give a brief description of the planned culture, how it aligns with the mission statement and vision of the school, and how it will support students and staff.

Ignite is built on a culture of purpose, mastery, and opportunity, ensuring that scholars develop the confidence, skills, and networks needed to pursue high-wage, high-demand careers. The school's culture is rooted in high expectations, career-connected learning, and a deep sense of community, aligning directly with its mission to prepare the next generation of leaders in South Alabama.

From the moment scholars enter Ignite, they are immersed in a culture of belonging and achievement. Morning activation and Home Team meetings set the tone for the day, fostering self-discipline, teamwork, and goal-setting. Scholars engage in structured advisory sessions that support personal and professional growth, reinforcing the idea that success is not just about academic achievement but about developing leadership, resilience, and a clear sense of purpose.

Ignite's learning environment is career-connected and competency-driven, which means that scholars are expected to take ownership of their learning. The school operates on the belief that mastery is more important than seat time, and scholars are encouraged to reflect on their progress, seek feedback, and continually improve their skills. This culture of continuous learning and accountability supports both students and staff in reaching their full potential.

For staff, Ignite fosters a collaborative and innovative professional culture, ensuring that teachers are not just educators but career coaches and mentors. Teachers work alongside industry partners, engaging in professional learning experiences that help them bring real-world applications into their classrooms. Structured professional development, peer coaching, and leadership opportunities ensure that every staff member is supported in their own growth.

This culture supports students by providing clear pathways to success, access to industry mentorship, and a community that believes in their potential. It supports staff by ensuring that they are valued, developed, and equipped to make a lasting impact. At Ignite, the culture is not just about preparing scholars for their next step—it's about transforming their future and the future of South Alabama's workforce.

b) Explain how you will create and implement this culture for students, teachers, administrators, and parents starting from the first day of school. Describe the plan for enculturating students who enter the school mid-year. Provide specific events which support the culture.

How Culture is Built from Day One

Before school begins, scholars participate in Launch Week, an intensive orientation designed to introduce Ignite's core values: purpose, mastery, and opportunity. Scholars set personal and academic goals, participate in hands-on career exploration activities, and engage in team-building exercises led by trained Student Ambassadors—upperclassmen who model Ignite's culture and serve as peer mentors throughout the year. Home Team and Morning Activation begin every day with structured routines that reinforce executive functioning, self-reflection, and goal-setting. Scholars track their progress toward mastery and participate in Weekly Circles, where they develop leadership skills and process challenges in a supportive environment. Throughout the day, teachers use Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) to reinforce expectations, recognizing scholars for demonstrating professionalism, perseverance, and collaboration—key workplace skills.

Supporting Staff & Family Engagement

Staff culture is built through the Ignite Educator Institute, a pre-service training where teachers engage in competency-based learning, mentorship strategies, and industry-aligned instruction. Staff receive ongoing professional development through biweekly instructional rounds and monthly professional learning communities (PLCs), ensuring continuous alignment with Ignite's culture.

Families are integrated into Ignite's culture through Family Onboarding & Career Pathways Night, where they learn about academic expectations, industry opportunities, and how to support their scholar's journey. Quarterly family workshops provide updates on career pathways, financial literacy, and scholar progress, ensuring a strong home-school connection.

Mid-Year Culture Integration

New scholars who enroll mid-year complete an accelerated Ignite Orientation, where they receive a peer mentor, a career interest assessment, and an advisor-led onboarding session. They are introduced to Ignite's core routines, participate in a leadership circle, and meet with their Home Team to integrate into the school community quickly.

By embedding culture in structured daily rituals, mentorship, and accountability systems, Ignite ensures that every scholar,

teacher, and family member is actively engaged in a culture of high expectations and career readiness from day one.

c) Explain how the school culture will take account of and serve students with special needs, including students receiving special education services, English Language Learners, and any students at risk of academic failure.

Ignite's culture is designed to ensure that every scholar—regardless of ability, language background, or prior academic challenges—feels valued, supported, and prepared for success in high-wage, high-demand careers. The school integrates universal design, personalized supports, and career-connected learning to meet the needs of scholars receiving special education services, English Language Learners (ELLs), and those at risk of academic failure.

Creating an Inclusive Culture from Day One

Ignite's Launch Week and Home Team structure create an immediate sense of belonging, reinforcing that all scholars are capable of mastery. Scholars receiving special education services and ELLs are paired with peer mentors and advocate counselors, ensuring they have social and academic support from the start. Teachers and staff receive targeted professional development in inclusive teaching practices, ensuring all scholars engage meaningfully in coursework while receiving individualized accommodations.

Special Education: Competency-Based Supports & Individualized Learning Plans

For scholars with IEPs or 504 Plans, Ignite uses a strength-based, competency-driven approach to ensure progress toward both academic and career goals. Special education teachers and general educators collaborate to provide co-taught classes, small-group interventions, and industry-aligned modifications that allow scholars to access rigorous coursework. Scholars have flexible pacing and mastery-based advancement, ensuring that learning is driven by skill acquisition rather than time constraints.

Career-connected learning is designed to be inclusive. Industry Labs provide hands-on, scaffolded experiences that allow scholars to demonstrate skills in manufacturing, healthcare, or business analytics in ways that align with their strengths. For scholars requiring additional support, work-based learning placements include structured mentorship and job coaching, ensuring they gain career experience with appropriate accommodations.

English Language Learners: Language Immersion & Career-Relevant Literacy

ELL scholars are fully integrated into Ignite's Core Learning Labs, Personalized Learning, and Industry Labs, ensuring they receive language-rich, real-world experiences that develop both

academic and professional fluency. Educators use sheltered instruction, visual supports, and structured language modeling to help scholars access content while strengthening English proficiency.

Industry-focused literacy instruction ensures ELLs develop career-relevant communication skills, including technical vocabulary, workplace writing, and industry-specific discourse. In advisory sessions, scholars receive goal-setting support and language coaching to track their growth and ensure they are making progress toward both academic and career readiness.

Scholars At Risk of Academic Failure: Early Intervention & Wraparound Supports

Ignite's multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) ensures that scholars struggling academically receive targeted interventions early and often. Scholars at risk of failure engage in small-group instruction, one-on-one tutoring, and extended learning opportunities, ensuring gaps in foundational skills do not prevent career or academic success. Every three weeks, scholars participate in case conferencing with advisors to assess their progress, adjust learning plans, and set targeted goals. Social-emotional learning is embedded into Ignite's culture to support scholars facing academic or personal challenges. Weekly Circles and 1:1 coaching sessions provide space for scholars to build resilience, develop executive functioning skills, and reflect on their growth. For scholars requiring deeper support, school-based mental health counselors and community partnerships provide additional interventions.

d) Describe a typical school day from the perspective of a student in a grade that will be served in your first year of operations.

Middle School A Day in the Life of an Ignite 6th Grader

7:15 AM – Arriving at Ignite

I step off the bus, excited to start the day. As I walk into school, I check in with my Home Team Advisor and grab a quick breakfast. There's a big project showcase coming up, and I'm looking forward to working with my team on our eco-friendly manufacturing prototype later today.

7:45 AM – Advisory & College Readiness

The day starts with Advisory, where my Home Team gathers for a short mindfulness exercise, movement break, and goal-setting session. Our advisor asks us to reflect on yesterday's learning and set an intention for the day. Some of us share our goals—mine is to ask more questions in Math Lab today. We also discuss career pathways, and our mentor explains how problem-solving skills in school relate to success in advanced manufacturing and healthcare careers.

8:15 AM – Math Lab (Core Learning)

In Math Lab, we are working on fractions and ratios by analyzing blueprints and scale models. Our teacher connects today's lesson to real-world careers, explaining how engineers and medical professionals use ratios daily. We work through a few practice problems as a class before breaking into small groups. I join a group using interactive software to visualize how ratios apply in manufacturing and medical imaging.

9:30 AM – ELA Lab (Literacy & Technical Communication)

Our ELA class is all about reading nonfiction and writing for real-world purposes. Today, we're learning how to write clear step-by-step instructions, just like technicians do in hospitals and factories. My group is writing a guide on how to assemble a small model using 3D-printed parts, while another group is writing a set of instructions for basic first aid. I practice explaining my steps to a partner to make sure my writing is easy to follow.

10:45 AM – Break

We take a short break to stretch, grab a snack, and reset before our next learning block.

11:00 AM – Science Lab (STEM & Engineering Applications)

In Science Lab, we're investigating renewable materials and how they're used in biotechnology and product design. Our teacher connects today's topic to advanced manufacturing and healthcare innovations, explaining how researchers develop biodegradable medical tools and sustainable packaging materials. We get to experiment with different materials, testing their strength and flexibility. Later this week, we'll design a prototype using what we've learned.

12:15 PM – Lunch & Movement Break

Lunchtime is a chance to connect with friends and mentors. I sit with my Home Team and talk about our upcoming Industry Lab projects. After eating, I join a quick movement break, where we do some stretching and a team-building game to get our energy up for the rest of the day.

12:45 PM – PE

During our health reflection warm-up activity, our class is learning medical terminology that connects to our Health Science pathway. For our physical education activity today, we're working on team-based challenges to build coordination and leadership.

1:30 PM – Break

A quick break before we dive into our afternoon learning sessions.

1:45 PM – Applied Learning Studio (CTE & PBL)

Now it's time for Applied Learning Studios, where we work on real-world projects connected to Advanced Manufacturing & Health Science. Today, I'm in the Manufacturing Lab, learning how to use precision measurement tools like digital calipers. My classmates in the Health Services Lab are practicing taking vital signs and learning basic patient care skills. Later this semester, we'll rotate so everyone gets experience in both career fields.

3:30 PM – Dismissal & Optional Industry Workshops

School officially ends, but some scholars stay for tutoring, industry workshops, and mentoring sessions. A few of my classmates head to a robotics workshop, while others meet with a guest speaker from a local hospital to learn about healthcare careers. I decided to stay for extra help in ELA, making sure my technical writing project is as clear and professional as possible.

High School: A Day in the Life of an Ignite Scholar (9th Grade - First Year of Operations)

7:45 AM – Arriving at Ignite

I step off the bus and walk into Ignite's career-driven campus, where students are already discussing competency progress and upcoming apprenticeships. I grab breakfast, check my CBE portfolio, and chat with a mentor about my goal of earning an industry credential before graduation.

8:15 AM – Morning Activation & Home Team

The day kicks off with Home Team, where we set goals, reflect on progress, and check in on our dual enrollment schedules and career pathways. Today, our advisor walks us through how industry certifications can lead to higher starting wages and more job opportunities right after high school.

8:30 AM – Mathematics Lab (Academic Labs – Core Content)

Math Lab is hands-on and career-connected. Today, we're using

algebra to optimize real manufacturing production—analyzing engineering blueprints and calculating material costs. In the Healthcare Pathway, students are using statistics to analyze patient data trends.

9:45 AM – English Language Arts (Academic Labs – Core Content)

ELA isn't just about essays—it's about career communication. Today, we're analyzing safety manuals and medical reports, breaking down complex procedures into clear, step-by-step instructions—an essential skill in both healthcare and engineering.

11:00 AM – Science Lab (Biology - Healthcare Applications) (Academic Labs – Core Content)

I am taking a college level Science class as part of my dual enrollment. Today we conduct diagnostic tests just like lab technicians. I analyze bacteria samples under a microscope, while my Health Science classmates practice patient assessments. Meanwhile, students on the Manufacturing Pathway are testing materials used in aerospace production.

12:15 PM – Lunch & Movement Break (Community, Circles & Mentorship – CCM)

Lunch is more than just a meal—it's a networking opportunity. Some students meet with advisors to finalize their dual enrollment courses, while others discuss their upcoming internships. After eating, I join a quick movement break (soccer) to reset before afternoon labs.

12:45 PM – Applied Learning Studios (Manufacturing or Health Science Pathway)

Now it's time for my Studio—where I get real-world experience. I'm in Advanced Manufacturing, using CAD software to design a prototype for a medical device. Next door, my Health Science classmates are practicing CPR techniques with an industry mentor. Today, an engineer from Airbus is walking through the lab, giving us feedback on our designs.

1:45 PM – Personalized Learning Lab (Competency-Based Mastery)

This is where I own my learning. I log into my CBE system to track progress toward my OSHA-10 certification. Students who need extra support get small-group coaching, while others accelerate through dual enrollment coursework.

2:30 PM – Postsecondary Readiness

We're back in our Home Teams and we have a mini-advisory session based on some questions my classmates raised- "how much money will I be making?" Our advisor helps us map out our career paths and discuss how our certifications and apprenticeships will impact our future wages. I work with my advisor to see how earning dual enrollment credits now will save me thousands in tuition costs later.

2:45 PM – Reflection & Home Team Check-Out

To end the day we reflect on our progress, check our competency-based portfolios, and set goals for tomorrow. One of my classmates just secured an internship at a local hospital, so we celebrated his win before heading home.

4:15 PM – Dismissal & Optional Industry Workshops

School is over, but many of us stay for industry workshops, dual enrollment courses, or career mentorship. Some students are in a guest lecture on biomedical engineering, while others head to their apprenticeship sites. I check in with my dual enrollment professor, ensuring I stay on track for earning college credit before graduation.

School Day Narrative -
Teacher Perspective

A Day in the Life of an Ignite 6th Grade Teacher

7:15 AM – Arriving at Ignite

I arrive at school and check in at the staff work room. I look over the staff shout out board and notice a new note for my team's math teacher. I make note to celebrate and ask her more about it later today. I then head to my classroom to check emails for any important updates and prepare for Advisory.

7:45 AM – Advisory & College Readiness

I meet with my Home Team to lead them in some mindfulness exercises and support them with goal setting for the day. While scholars are working on their goals, a scholar comes in a little late and seems down. I check in with him privately to offer support and ask how he would like to spend his goal setting time this morning. He chooses to work on his goals but tells me he wants to talk during lunch later today. After a few minutes of individual goal setting time, I invite a few scholars to share their goals for the day. I hear a trend in student goals today that have to do with time management, as many scholars have major group projects due at the end of the week. We talk about how time management skills might come up in the different career pathways and a few students share some ways they've improved their own time management skills this year.

8:15 AM – ELA Lab (Literacy & Technical Communication)

I teach two blocks of ELA Lab in the morning. Today, I am teaching students about how nonfiction text features like headings, graphs, diagrams, and charts can aid them in communicating critical information in step-by-step technical guides - a necessary skill for advanced careers. I check for understanding by facilitating a Show Me 1-2-3 (hand signal) protocol for scholars to share which text feature out of a given set of three would be most appropriate for a technical guide topic. Scholars then work in groups to plan and create a technical guide for a process in their chosen career pathway. I pull a small group of scholars for a few minutes to introduce them to some sentence frames they might find helpful in writing their guides. I make sure they practice using the frames appropriately before sending them back to continue working with their groups.

10:45 AM – Break

Before my second ELA Lab class transitions, we take a short break to stretch, grab a snack, and reset before our next learning block.

11:00 AM – Collaborative Planning

Our grade-level team meets in the staff work room every Tuesday through Thursday (Mondays are for individual prep and planning). Today's Thursday, so our team's math teacher and I are planning our schedule for small group supports for the next

week. To do this, we review our formative assessment data for the week and check it against critical standards we are teaching next week so we can prioritize which learners need more immediate support from each of us.

12:15 PM – Lunch

During lunch, we often sit with our Home Team to check in and celebrate successes from the morning. Today, before talking with the whole team, I go to check in with my scholars from Advisory who asked for a little support. He was tardy this morning, and is tardy once or twice a week, because of his younger siblings' school dropoff time. He feels stressed before he even gets to school because he thinks everyone notices him being late. I assured him that his whole team is here to support him, and we are also here to support his family. I make a note to talk to his mom this afternoon about how we might help with morning arrivals.

12:45 PM – ELA Lab

I teach one more ELA Lab in the afternoon.

2:00 PM – Personalized Learning Lab

During Personalized Learning Lab, scholars work independently and in small groups for intervention and extension. I facilitate this lab with our grade's math teacher and a special education teacher. Our math teacher leads the whole group in a brief opening activity during which students review their schedule for the block and set some intentions for what they want to accomplish that day. I then pull each of my three small groups for 25-minute intervention instruction. These groups are working on closing some fundamental phonics gaps. Between each small group rotation, I walk around and check in on individual scholars who I want to ensure hit their end-of-week learning plan goals.

3:30 PM – Dismissal & Optional After School Activities

School officially ends, but for 30 minutes after dismissal I work with two scholars who asked for help on a history essay they have due next week. We do some collaborative feedback and revision during this time. After those scholars leave, I prepare my materials for the next day and call a couple of parents before I close out for the day.

Element Review

Reviews is not provided

7. Supplemental Programming

Reviewer Instructions

Please rate this section using the provided rubric.

Status: Not Reviewed

Form Result

Provide details on planned supplemental programming that will augment the academic program for students and support intellectual growth and academic achievement.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Compelling evidence of how supplemental programming will directly and consistently enrich a positive, high-quality academic program and overall school program.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

At Ignite Academy, co-curricular programming is designed to be culturally responsive, career-aligned, and student-driven, ensuring scholars engage in meaningful leadership, skill-building, and community-based learning experiences. These programs extend beyond traditional extracurriculars by embedding career exploration, entrepreneurship, and real-world application into student activities.

Community Partnerships & Industry-Aligned Programs

Ignite partners with local industries, healthcare networks, small businesses, and colleges to offer co-curricular learning experiences that align with scholars' career pathways:

- Healthcare Rotations – Scholars in the Health Science pathway engage in clinical experiences, shadowing professionals and practicing hands-on skills.
- Advanced Manufacturing & Engineering Labs – Students work in makerspaces, fabrication labs, and industry-sponsored engineering projects.
- Entrepreneurship Incubators – Scholars collaborate with local business leaders to develop and pitch ventures while gaining real-world business experience.

Student-Led Organizations & Leadership Teams

To ensure student agency and cultural responsiveness, Ignite supports student-led initiatives where scholars design and manage clubs with faculty and community mentors:

- Future Healthcare Leaders of Alabama (FHLA) – Focuses on medical case competitions, health advocacy, and innovation.
- Ignite Robotics & Engineering Club – Competes in regional and national STEM challenges while applying math, physics, and coding concepts.
- Student Business Collective – A peer-run incubator where students develop, market, and pitch business ideas.
- Community Impact Council – Partners with local non-profits to create service-learning projects addressing community needs.
- Culturally Responsive Clubs – Includes Art Club, Jazz Band, Gaming Club, Student Government, Drama Club, and

Scholars Bowl, all shaped by student interest.

Frequency & Funding

Co-curricular activities occur daily after school and on select weekends, depending on the program. Scholars may also participate in off-campus opportunities, such as industry summits, field experiences, and community-based apprenticeships. Funding sources include:

- Federal & state grants supporting career and technical education (CTE), STEM, and entrepreneurship initiatives.
- Local business and industry sponsorships providing resources, mentorship, and internship stipends.
- Nonprofit partnerships that fund leadership programs, community-based projects, and student-led initiatives.

Our co-curricular activities are culturally responsive by connecting students with industry mentors from a variety backgrounds, embedding real-world projects that address community needs, and providing leadership opportunities that reflect their identities and aspirations.

Structured Scheduling & Accessibility: Co-curricular activities will take place after school, on designated weeks off, and during summer programs, ensuring all scholars have access to enrichment without disrupting core instruction.

Facilitation & Student Support: Each program will have a designated faculty lead, industry mentor, and student leadership team to ensure smooth coordination, participation tracking, and career pathway alignment. Students will be matched with industry partners based on their career interests and receive guidance through structured advisory and mentorship sessions.

Measuring Impact & Continuous Improvement: Student engagement and progress will be assessed through competency-based portfolios, mentor evaluations, and student reflections, ensuring alignment with academic and career goals.

b) Describe the programs or strategies to address student mental, emotional, and social development and health. Please include funding sources for these programs if known.

Ignite Academy takes a holistic approach to student wellness, ensuring that scholars have the mental, emotional, and social support they need to thrive. Our multi-tiered system integrates school-based mental health services, social-emotional learning (SEL), and community partnerships while also providing hands-on learning opportunities through the Health Services pathway.

School-Based Mental Health & SEL Supports

- Full-Time School Counselor & Mental Health Specialists – Scholars have access to on-campus counseling, crisis intervention, and support groups tailored to their needs.
- Valor Circles & Restorative Practices (CCM: Community, Circles, & Mentorship) – Weekly structured SEL circles help scholars build emotional intelligence, leadership skills, and conflict resolution strategies.
- School-Wide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS) Framework – A tiered behavioral support system fosters a positive school culture, ensuring strong peer relationships and teacher-student connections.

Integration with the Health Services Pathway (Real-World Learning & Career Training)

Ignite Academy's Health Services pathway provides a unique opportunity for scholars to develop practical mental health and wellness expertise while supporting their peers.

- Mental Health Peer Ambassadors Program – Scholars in the Health Services pathway can train as peer wellness coaches, helping to facilitate SEL Circles, mental health awareness campaigns, and peer mediation programs.
- Clinical Rotations & Internships – Through partnerships with local hospitals and behavioral health centers, students interested in mental health careers gain hands-on experience in adolescent psychology, crisis intervention, and therapeutic support settings.
- School-Based Wellness Clinics – Scholars preparing for health certifications (e.g., Certified Patient Care Technician) have opportunities to shadow medical and behavioral health professionals, reinforcing both technical skills and emotional intelligence needed in the field.

Community Mental Health Partnerships

Ignite collaborates with AltaPointe Health and other local providers to ensure students have access to specialized mental health services:

- Trauma-informed counseling & crisis intervention services
- Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) and peer mentoring programs
- Social skills and interpersonal development workshops

These partnerships allow Ignite to expand mental health services, ensuring that scholars receive care both in school and in community-based settings.

Data-Driven Intervention & Targeted Supports

Ignite's real-time data tracking ensures that students who need academic, social, or emotional support are quickly identified:

- Mental Health Screenings & Personalized Wellness Plans – Advisors, teachers, and counselors use early intervention strategies to provide individualized supports.
- MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Support) Model – A tiered intervention system that allows for preventative care, small-group counseling, and high-touch intervention when needed.

Funding Sources & Sustainability

Ignite secures funding through federal, state, and private sources, including:

- ESSER & Title IV-A Grants supporting mental health services and SEL integration into CTE pathways.
- Local Healthcare Networks & Hospitals providing clinical internships and in-kind counseling services.
- Behavioral Health Grants & Nonprofit Partnerships supporting school-based wellness programs and trauma-informed education.

In this context, we are being culturally responsive because our mental health supports integrated trauma-informed, healing-centered practices that honor cultural perspectives on wellness, ensuring access to high-quality interventions for all students.

N/A

d) If summer school will be offered, describe the program(s). Explain the schedule and length of the program including the number of hours and weeks. Discuss the anticipated participants including number of students and the methods used to identify them. What are the anticipated resource and staffing needs for these programs?

Ignite Academy offers a targeted summer program designed to support credit recovery, accelerate learning, and provide career-connected experiences for scholars. The four-week summer session operates on a structured schedule that ensures students receive academic intervention, hands-on industry exposure, and personalized coaching to prepare them for success in the next academic year.

Program Structure & Schedule

- Duration: 4 weeks (June – July)
- Schedule: Monday – Thursday, 8:30 AM – 12:30 PM
- Instructional Hours: 16 hours per week, 64 hours total
- Location: Ignite Academy campus and off-site industry partner locations
- Format: Hybrid model, combining academic reinforcement, career-based learning, and competency-based projects

Program Tracks & Student Participation

1. Credit Recovery & Mastery Learning (Personalized Learning Labs – Intervention)

- Participants: Scholars who did not meet mastery on core academic competencies (Math, ELA, Science, Social Studies)
- Identification: Selected based on competency-based progress tracking, teacher recommendations, and advisory check-ins
- Instructional Approach: Small-group instruction, adaptive learning platforms, and personalized goal-setting with advisors
- Outcome: Scholars demonstrate mastery on unfinished competencies, ensuring they start the new year on track. Students will be required to earn a 70% or higher on a summative exam at the end of summer school to be awarded credit.

2. Summer Bridge & Acceleration (Applied Learning Studios – CTE & PBL)

- Participants: Rising 6th and 9th graders transitioning into Ignite, as well as students seeking dual enrollment prep

- Identification: Open to all incoming scholars, with priority given to students who need additional support in academic and career exploration
- Instructional Approach: Hands-on STEM challenges, career pathway exploration, and project-based learning in Advanced Manufacturing & Health Science
- Outcome: Scholars build foundational skills, engage with industry mentors, and earn early progress in their CBE portfolio

3. Career-Connected Learning & Industry Exposure (Internships & Work-Based Learning – Applied Learning Studios)

- Participants: Scholars in 10th–12th grade who are preparing for apprenticeships, industry certifications, or work-based learning experiences
- Identification: Selected through career advisory meetings, industry partner recommendations, and student interest in early workforce entry
- Instructional Approach: Hands-on projects, employer-led workshops, and industry site visits in healthcare, advanced manufacturing, and engineering
- Outcome: Scholars gain 40+ hours of career-connected learning, strengthening their professional portfolios and industry networks

Staffing & Resources

To successfully run Ignite’s summer program, we will need:

- Certified Teachers (Core Subjects & CTE Instructors) for credit recovery and CTE pathway instruction
- Advisors & Coaches to support scholars in goal-setting, college and career exploration, and competency tracking
- Industry Mentors & Community Partners providing internships, work-based learning, and career workshops
- Technology & Adaptive Learning Platforms to facilitate competency-based mastery and personalized intervention

Funding Sources & Sustainability

Ignite’s summer program is supported through:

- ESSER & Title I Funds to provide intervention for academically at-risk students
- Workforce Development Grants to fund paid internships and career-connected learning experiences
- Local Business & Industry Partnerships to offer work-based learning placements and employer-led training

Element Review

Reviews is not provided

8. Special Populations and At-Risk Students

Reviewer Instructions

Please rate this section using the provided rubric.

Status: Not Reviewed

Form Result

Describe programming that specifically addresses and supports special populations of students, including efforts to hire personnel with relevant expertise. Identified populations include: students at risk of withdrawal, students with special needs, English Language Learners, and students identified as intellectually gifted.

Preference: Preference will be given to applications that employ proven methods for educating at-risk students or students with special needs.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Compelling evidence of how the school will directly and consistently ensure that it hires licensed, endorsed, experienced, and well-qualified special educators pursuant to law and how it will ensure compliance with applicable laws and regulations for programming requirements of these populations.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

a) Describe the overall academic and organizational framework serving students with special needs, including but not limited to students with Individualized Education Programs or Section 504 plans; English Language Learners; students identified as intellectually gifted; and students

at risk of academic failure or dropping out. Specifically address how the plans for individual groupings interrelate.

Ignite Academy is committed to providing equitable access to high-quality education for all scholars, including those with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), Section 504 plans, English Language Learners (ELLs), gifted students, and those at risk of academic failure or dropping out. Our framework integrates inclusive, competency-based learning, targeted interventions, and career-connected opportunities, ensuring that all scholars have the support they need to thrive academically and professionally.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) & Individualized Supports

Ignite educates all scholars in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), ensuring that students with IEPs, 504 plans, and ELL needs learn alongside their peers to the greatest extent possible. Differentiated instruction, assistive technology, and flexible grouping models allow scholars to engage in project-based learning, industry labs, and work-based learning experiences while receiving the accommodations and modifications necessary for success.

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) for Individualized Learning

Ignite uses a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework to identify and provide targeted interventions for students with academic, behavioral, or social-emotional needs:

- Tier 1: Universal Supports – All students receive high-quality instruction, culturally responsive teaching, and universal design strategies.
- Tier 2: Targeted Interventions – Small-group instruction and additional supports for scholars identified as needing more assistance.
- Tier 3: Intensive Interventions – One-on-one academic, behavioral, and social-emotional support, with possible referral for special education services.

Progress is monitored continuously using real-time data from the competency-based learning system (CBE), teacher observations, and advisory check-ins to ensure that students receive the right level of support at the right time.

Academic & Career Pathway Supports for Special Populations

1. Students with IEPs & Section 504 Plans (Academic Labs, Personalized Learning Labs, & Industry Labs – CTE & PBL)

- Scholars receive individualized accommodations and modifications through push-in or pull-out support in core subjects, CTE coursework, and work-based learning experiences.

- Special education teachers co-teach in academic and career pathway classes, ensuring that scholars develop job-readiness skills alongside their academic growth.
- Scholars with disabilities are supported in earning industry certifications with accommodations tailored to their needs, ensuring career accessibility.
- Transition plans are developed with each student's career pathway and ongoing career development plan in mind.

2. English Language Learners (ELLs) (Academic Labs, Personalized Learning Labs, & Community, Circles & Mentorship – CCM)

- ELL specialists provide language acquisition support, integrating content-based ESL instruction, vocabulary scaffolding, and peer-supported learning.
- Valor Circles & Mentorship offer a structured social-emotional learning space for language development, identity affirmation, and career readiness.

3. Gifted & High-Performing Scholars (Applied Learning Studios – CTE & PBL & Dual Enrollment Opportunities)

- Scholars demonstrating advanced mastery access accelerated coursework, dual enrollment, and industry-led mentorships aligned with their career pathway.
- Applied Learning Studios provide deeper engagement in engineering, biomedical sciences, and entrepreneurship.

4. Students At-Risk of Academic Failure or Dropping Out (Personalized Learning Labs & Advisory & College Readiness – Post-Secondary Readiness)

- Real-time progress tracking through the competency-based learning system (CBE) ensures early identification of struggling students.
- Targeted advisory coaching & career planning keeps scholars engaged by connecting coursework to real-world applications and high-wage careers.
- Apprenticeships, dual enrollment, and industry certifications provide alternative pathways to postsecondary success, ensuring that all students graduate with career-ready skills and professional networks.

Staffing & Community Partnerships for Special Populations

To effectively serve our special populations, Ignite will employ certified special education, ELL, and gifted education teachers and contract with external providers for speech therapy, occupational therapy, and mental health services as needed. Community partnerships with AltaPointe Health, local workforce agencies, and higher education institutions will support academic, career, and mental health needs for diverse learners.

Compliance

Ignite Academy complies with all federal and state regulations, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the Alabama Administrative Code. We are committed to ensuring that no scholar is denied access to high-quality, career-connected learning due to language, disability, or socioeconomic status.

b) Identify the size of special populations and at-risk groups that the school expects to successfully serve, whether through data related to a specifically targeted school or neighborhood or more generalized analysis of the population to be served. Discuss how the course scope and sequence, daily schedule, staffing plans, and support strategies and resources will meet or be adjusted for the expected size of the groupings and the diverse needs of these students.

Identified Populations Narrative Ignite Academy expects to serve a diverse student body, including scholars with IEPs, 504 plans, ELLs, gifted students, and those at risk of academic failure. Projections are based on ALSDE data, local feeder schools, and community demographics, indicating a high need for specialized academic support and free/reduced lunch eligibility.

Possible Special Population Enrollment

Student Population	Estimated Percentage	Projected Number of Scholars (Based on Full Enrollment)
Students with Disabilities (IEPs/504 Plans)	15%	131
English Language Learners (ELLs)	3%	26
Gifted & Advanced Learners	8%	70
Students At-Risk of Academic Failure	40%	350
Economically Disadvantaged Scholars	80%	700

Works Cited

- Students with Disabilities (IEPs/504 Plans): According to the Alabama State Department of Education's Special Education Reports for the 2020-2021 school year, 12.96% of students were identified with disabilities. alabamaachieves.org
- English Language Learners (ELLs): The Alabama State Department of Education's [Alabama Framework for English Learner Success](#), 2021-2022, indicates that ELLs constitute approximately 3.95% of the student population.
- Gifted & Advanced Learners: The same Special Education Reports from 2020-2021 report that 7.69% of students are identified as gifted. alabamaachieves.org

- In 2022, 46% of Alabama eighth graders scored below the Basic level in reading on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), indicating they did not demonstrate even partial mastery of grade-level skills. parcalabama.org+2sreb.org+2parcalabama.org+2
- Similarly, in mathematics, 52% of Alabama eighth graders scored below the Basic level on the NAEP in 2022. sreb.org+1parcalabama.org+1
- Approximately 20% of South Alabamians live [below the state poverty line](#), with some counties, such as Dallas and Bullock, experiencing poverty rates exceeding 30%, highlighting the region's significant economic challenges.

How Ignite's Model Adapts to the Needs of Special Populations

Course Scope & Sequence Adjustments

- The curriculum is designed to integrate accommodations and differentiated instruction across academic, technical, and career-readiness courses.
- Special populations will have access to modified coursework, adaptive assessments, and real-world applications tailored to their individual career goals and industry credentialing requirements, all in alignment with any relevant IEP or 504 Plan.
- Competency-Based Learning (CBE) ensures that all students progress at a pace that supports mastery, rather than being constrained by seat time.

Daily Schedule Accommodations

- Personalized Learning Labs (Intervention & Acceleration): Scholars with IEPs, 504 plans, or at-risk indicators receive structured, small-group support multiple times per week in alignment with the supports detailed on each student's Student Support, IEP, or 504 Plan.
- Embedded Advisory & College Readiness Coaching: Ensures scholars track progress, set goals, and receive individualized academic and career planning support.
- Applied Learning Studios: Allows gifted and advanced learners to engage in real-world problem-solving, while providing scaffolding and peer collaboration opportunities for struggling learners.

Staffing & Resource Allocation

- Certified Special Education & ELL Teachers support co-taught core content and CTE courses to ensure full participation.
- Industry Mentors & Career Pathway Coaches provide hands-on work-based learning tailored to diverse learning needs.
- Bilingual Educators & Translators assist ELL scholars with language development in academic and industry-specific contexts.

Support Strategies for Targeted Populations

- MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports): Ensures that scholars receive universal, targeted, and intensive interventions as needed.
- Restorative Justice & Social-Emotional Learning (SEL): Provides students at risk of dropping out with structured mentorship, goal-setting, and career-based motivation strategies.
- Industry Certification Accessibility: Scholars with IEPs or 504 plans receive accommodations and modifications for career pathway exams, ensuring equitable access to industry credentials.

Ensuring Long-Term Success

By adjusting our scope and sequence, embedding support services, and maintaining a student-centered approach, Ignite Academy ensures that all scholars—regardless of ability, language, or background—are positioned for postsecondary success and economic mobility. Through targeted staffing, competency-based instruction, and a structured support system, Ignite is prepared to meet the diverse needs of its special populations while maintaining a rigorous, career-connected learning model.

c) Explain more specifically how you will identify and meet the learning needs of students with mild, moderate, and severe disabilities in the least restrictive environment possible. Specify the programs, strategies, and supports you will provide, including the following:

- i) Methods for identifying students with special education needs (and avoiding misidentification), including use of school personnel to participate in developing Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), identify and refer students for assessment of special education needs, maintain records, and cooperate in the delivery of special education instruction and services, as appropriate.

- ii) Specific instructional programs, practices, and strategies the school will employ to provide a continuum of services; ensure students' access to the general education curriculum; and ensure academic success for students with special education needs;
- iii) Plans for monitoring and evaluating the progress and success of special education students with mild, moderate, and severe needs to ensure the attainment of each student's goals as set forth in the Individualized Education Program (IEP);
- iv) Plans for promoting graduation for students with special education needs (high school only);
- v) Plans to have qualified staffing adequate for the anticipated special needs population.

Ignite Academy is committed to identifying and serving students with disabilities in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) while ensuring equitable access to rigorous academics and career-connected learning. Scholars with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), 504 Plans, or diagnosed disabilities receive targeted supports that are integrated into general education, career pathways, and competency-based learning models to ensure success.

i) Identification & Avoiding Misidentification

To accurately identify students with disabilities and prevent misidentification, Ignite Academy follows a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework and complies with Child Find obligations under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

- Early Identification & Referral:
 - Universal screening of all scholars occurs within the first six weeks of enrollment using academic performance data, teacher observations, and social-emotional checklists.
 - Referral Process: Teachers, families, and advisors can refer students for special education evaluation based on documented academic or behavioral concerns.
 - Pre-Referral Interventions: Before formal evaluation, scholars receive targeted Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions, ensuring students are not misidentified due to lack of instruction, language barriers, or socio-economic factors.
 - Evaluation & IEP Development: A multidisciplinary team—including special educators, general educators, school psychologists, and families—reviews evaluation data to determine eligibility and develops an individualized plan.
- IEP Development & Record Maintenance:
 - Each IEP is developed in collaboration with families and reviewed annually to ensure goals align with student needs.
 - Special education teachers track accommodations in the competency-based learning system (CBE) to ensure consistent implementation across courses.

ii) Instructional Programs & Access to General Education

Scholars with disabilities receive a continuum of services based on their individual needs, ensuring that they have equitable access to academic coursework, industry labs, and work-based learning experiences.

- Push-In Support & Co-Teaching (Mild to Moderate Needs):
 - Special education teachers provide in-class supports, co-teaching with general educators in Academic Labs, Applied Learning Studios, and Personalized Learning Labs.
 - Assistive technology, scaffolding strategies, and structured peer collaboration ensure that scholars engage in rigorous content without barriers.
- Small-Group & Pull-Out Intervention (Moderate to Severe Needs):
 - Scholars requiring intensive support receive targeted instruction in small-group settings, focusing on literacy, numeracy, and executive functioning skills.
 - Life Skills & Career Transition Programs are integrated for scholars who need modified pathways toward independent living and employment.
- Access to Career & Technical Education (CTE):
 - Scholars with disabilities participate in work-based learning, apprenticeships, and dual enrollment, with accommodations tailored to ensure success in industry certification exams.

iii) Monitoring & Evaluating Progress on IEP Goals

- Competency-Based Tracking: Teachers monitor student growth weekly using formative assessments, adaptive technology, and project-based learning evaluations.
- Quarterly IEP Progress Reports: Families receive IEP progress reports aligned with competency benchmarks, tracking mastery of academic and functional goals.
- Annual IEP Reviews: Each IEP is reviewed annually to update goals, services, and accommodations based on student performance and career aspirations.

iv) Graduation Pathways for Students with Disabilities

Ignite Academy ensures that scholars with disabilities graduate with the credentials and skills necessary for postsecondary

SUCCESS.

- Modified & Standard Diploma Pathways:
 - Scholars follow Alabama's CTE-endorsed diploma track with accommodations for career certifications and dual enrollment coursework.
 - Some students may complete an alternative academic pathway, focusing on job readiness and independent living skills.
- Credit Recovery & Extended Learning:
 - Scholars who need additional time to meet graduation requirements can access summer learning, extended-year support, and online credit recovery programs.
- Transition Planning for Post-Graduation:
 - Beginning in 9th grade, all students participate in Individualized Career & Postsecondary Readiness Planning, aligning their coursework and industry experiences with their long-term goals.
 - Transition support includes college/career counseling, work-based learning, and partnerships with vocational rehabilitation services.

v) Staffing for Special Education Services

Ignite Academy will employ highly qualified special education staff to meet the anticipated needs of the student population.

- Licensed Special Education Teachers:
 - Each grade level will have at least one full-time special education teacher co-teaching in general education and leading specialized support sessions.
- Paraprofessionals & Support Staff:
 - Trained paraprofessionals will assist with small-group instruction, executive functioning coaching, and transition services.
- Related Service Providers:
 - Ignite will contract with external providers for speech therapy, occupational therapy, and behavioral counseling based on student needs.

- Professional Development for General Educators:
 - All teachers receive ongoing training on Universal Design for Learning (UDL), differentiated instruction, and inclusive teaching strategies. This development is provided during teacher planning and institute days and is reinforced during PLC meeting days and individualized teacher coaching throughout the year.

d) Explain how the school will meet the needs of English Language Learner (ELL) students, including the following:

- i) Methods for identifying ELL students (and avoiding misidentification);
- ii) Specific instructional programs, practices, and strategies the school will employ to ensure academic success and equitable access to the core academic program for these students;
- iii) Plans for monitoring and evaluating the progress and success of ELL students, including exiting students from ELL services;
- iv) Means for providing qualified staffing for ELL students

Our culturally responsive, competency-based approach ensures that ELLs develop English proficiency while mastering grade-level content and preparing for postsecondary success.

i) Identification & Avoiding Misidentification

To accurately identify ELL students and avoid misidentification, Ignite Academy follows Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) guidelines and the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

- Home Language Survey (HLS): Administered to all new students during enrollment to determine if a language other than English is spoken at home.
- Initial Language Proficiency Screening: Students flagged through HLS take the WIDA Screener to assess English proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
- Review of Prior ELL Status & Academic Data: If transferring from another school, Ignite reviews previous ACCESS for ELLs scores, prior ELL services, and academic records to determine ongoing support needs.
- Avoiding Misidentification:
 - If a student is struggling academically, Ignite ensures that language barriers are not mistaken for learning disabilities before referring them for special education evaluations.
 - ELL students receive Tiered Language Supports before being placed in remediation programs, preventing unnecessary referrals.

ii) Instructional Programs & Strategies for ELL Success

Ignite Academy employs evidence-based, language-integrated strategies that allow ELL scholars to simultaneously develop English proficiency and master core academic content.

- Sheltered Instruction & Integrated Content Learning:
 - Teachers use Scaffolded Instruction, Visual Supports, and Sentence Stems to ensure ELLs engage meaningfully in Math, ELA, Science, and Social Studies.
 - Sheltered English Instruction (SEI) embeds language supports within core content instruction, ensuring scholars build academic vocabulary while learning subject material.

- English Language Development (ELD) Courses:
 - ELLs receive dedicated language development blocks focusing on academic English, grammar, writing, and comprehension strategies.
 - These sessions are aligned to [WIDA](#) standards and scaffolded for beginner, intermediate, and advanced ELLs.
- Small-Group & Personalized Language Labs:
 - Targeted interventions provide additional English support without pulling students from core academic instruction.
 - Scholars work in small groups with ELL specialists to develop listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills.
- Bilingual & Peer Support Systems:
 - Peer-assisted learning & structured conversation partners help scholars strengthen their English skills in a collaborative, low-risk environment.
 - Multilingual Glossaries & Digital Translators are used for newcomers to bridge initial comprehension gaps.
- Career-Connected Learning for ELLs:
 - Applied Learning Studios (PBL & CTE) embed language-rich, hands-on projects, reinforcing real-world communication skills.
 - Workplace & Industry Labs ensure scholars gain professional English proficiency, supporting resume writing, interview preparation, and workplace communication.

iii) Monitoring & Exiting ELL Services

Ignite Academy uses data-driven monitoring to track ELL progress and ensure timely exit from ELL services while maintaining continued support as needed.

- Ongoing Progress Monitoring:
 - Quarterly formative assessments track growth in academic vocabulary, comprehension, and writing.
 - Real-time progress data from the competency-based learning system (CBE) ensures that teachers can

adjust instruction as needed.

- Advisors and teachers collaborate to track language proficiency alongside academic mastery.
- ACCESS for ELLs Testing:
 - Annual WIDA ACCESS 2.0 assessments measure ELL students' proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
 - Scholars meeting state exit criteria (4.8 composite WIDA score) are formally transitioned out of ELL services.
- ELL Exit & Post-Exit Monitoring:
 - Scholars who exit ELL programs receive two years of academic monitoring to ensure continued success.
 - If an exited student struggles, targeted interventions are provided without reclassification into ELL services.

iv) Qualified Staffing for ELL Scholars

To meet the needs of ELL students, Ignite Academy employs certified ELL teachers and general educators trained in language acquisition strategies.

- Certified ELL Specialists:
 - Ignite will hire state-certified ELL teachers to provide direct instruction, small-group support, and teacher coaching.
- Co-Teaching & Professional Development for General Educators:
 - All content teachers receive training in Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), WIDA Standards, and Universal Design for Learning (UDL).
 - ELL specialists co-teach in Academic Labs to embed language development within core subjects.
- Community Partnerships:
 - Ignite partners with local universities and community organizations to support bilingual tutoring, cultural mentorship programs, and translation services for families.

e) Explain how the school will identify and meet the learning needs of students who are struggling academically or performing below grade level and monitor their progress. Specify the programs, strategies, and supports you will provide for these students. Include any personnel resources specifically targeting this population.

Early Identification & Assessment

To ensure struggling scholars receive timely intervention, Ignite Academy utilizes a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework to identify and address academic challenges. Our approach includes:

- Baseline & Diagnostic Assessments – Scholars take the NWEA MAP Growth assessment three times per year to identify gaps in reading and math.
- Ongoing Progress Monitoring – Bi-weekly standards-based interim assessments, exit tickets, and digital progress tracking allow teachers to intervene early.
- Competency-Based Tracking – The CBE system provides real-time data on which skills each scholar has mastered and where additional support is needed.
- Teacher & Advisory Check-ins – Advisors conduct weekly check-ins to ensure scholars are progressing academically and socially.

Targeted Interventions & Support Strategies

Once identified, scholars receive individualized, small-group, or technology-enhanced interventions designed to accelerate skill mastery.

1. Personalized Learning Labs (45–60 minutes daily)

- Scholars receive targeted interventions in math and literacy through small-group instruction and adaptive technology.
- Adaptive learning platforms such as i-Ready, Math 180, and Read 180 provide personalized skill reinforcement.
- Real-time progress tracking ensures that interventions are adjusted based on student performance.

2. Structured Tiered Interventions (MTSS Model)

- Tier 1: High-quality, differentiated instruction in the general education classroom.
- Tier 2: Small-group tutoring during Personalized Learning Labs for scholars needing extra support.
- Tier 3: One-on-one academic coaching and intensive intervention, with referrals for specialized services if

necessary.

3. Advisory & College Readiness (Postsecondary Readiness)

- Advisors monitor each scholar's academic progress, career pathway, and engagement levels, ensuring interventions are aligned with long-term goals.
- Scholars work with mentors to track their competency progress and adjust course selection to meet graduation requirements.

4. Extended Learning Opportunities

- Before/After-School Tutoring – Scholars have access to academic support sessions with certified teachers.
- Summer Bridge Programs – Designed to prevent learning loss and close gaps in core academic areas before scholars transition to the next grade.

Personnel & Resources

Ignite Academy will employ a dedicated intervention team, including:

- Reading & Math Intervention Specialists who provide direct instruction in Personalized Learning Labs.
- Special Education & ELL Coordinators who ensure that struggling scholars with additional learning needs receive appropriate accommodations.
- Advisors & Career Coaches who help scholars stay on track with their personalized learning plans and career goals.

Progress Monitoring & Accountability

Scholars' progress is tracked through:

- Quarterly Data Reviews – Educators meet every 9 weeks to analyze data and adjust instructional plans.
- Competency-Based Benchmarks – Scholars advance only when they demonstrate mastery of core competencies.
- Parental Communication – Families receive weekly progress reports and attend advisory meetings to discuss academic growth.

f) Explain how the school will identify and meet the needs of highly capable students, including the following:

- i) Specific research-based instructional programs, practices, strategies, and opportunities the school will employ or provide to enhance their abilities;
- ii) Plans for monitoring and evaluating the progress and success of highly capable students;
- iii) Means of providing qualified staffing for intellectually gifted students.

Identification & Early Assessment

Highly capable scholars are identified through multiple measures, ensuring equitable access to advanced learning opportunities. These measures include:

- NWEA MAP Growth assessments to identify students performing in the top 20% of grade-level nationally.
- Classroom performance & competency mastery tracking in the CBE system.
- Teacher recommendations and advisory check-ins to assess scholars' ability to engage with accelerated coursework.
- Portfolio reviews and interest-based surveys to align learning opportunities with scholars' strengths and goals.

Advanced Learning Opportunities & Enrichment Strategies

1. Accelerated Core Instruction & Differentiated Learning

- Scholars who demonstrate early mastery in math, ELA, science, or social studies progress to higher-level coursework through the CBE system.
- Teachers provide tiered instruction and flexible grouping to allow highly capable scholars to engage in deeper, inquiry-based learning.
- Scholars have the opportunity to test out of introductory coursework and move into more advanced content early.

2. Dual Enrollment & College-Level Courses

- High school scholars have access to dual enrollment with local colleges, allowing them to earn college credit while in high school.
- Courses in Advanced Manufacturing, Health Sciences, and Engineering align with industry and university requirements, ensuring scholars graduate career and college-ready.
- Scholars who complete entry-level college courses early can take additional advanced coursework or work-based learning experiences.

3. Applied Learning Studios (CTE & PBL)

- Scholars engage in real-world, interdisciplinary projects that bridge academic knowledge with career applications.

- Project-based learning (PBL) challenges scholars to apply knowledge in entrepreneurship, biomedical research, advanced robotics, and environmental engineering.
- Industry mentors provide structured feedback, ensuring high expectations for rigor and professional skills development.

4. Advanced & Industry-Aligned Certifications

- Scholars on accelerated pathways can pursue multiple industry certifications, including:
 - Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) or Medical Lab Technician (MLT) for Health Sciences
 - OSHA-10 or NCCER Certification for Advanced Manufacturing
 - CompTIA IT Fundamentals for technology-focused scholars
- Earning these certifications before graduation ensures highly capable scholars enter the workforce at higher wage levels or transition to competitive postsecondary programs.

5. Entrepreneurship & Research-Based Opportunities

- Scholars interested in business or research participate in entrepreneurship incubators or independent research projects aligned with their career pathways.
- Mentorship & Internship Programs connect scholars with industry leaders, allowing them to solve real-world problems and present solutions to professionals in the field.

Monitoring & Progress Tracking

To ensure highly capable scholars remain challenged and engaged, Ignite Academy will:

- Use real-time CBE tracking to assess mastery and adjust learning paths accordingly.
- Conduct bi-weekly progress check-ins with scholars in advisory to align coursework with career goals.
- Review scholar portfolios and competency-based assessments to track growth and adjust enrichment opportunities.

- Hold quarterly mentorship meetings where scholars receive individualized coaching from industry and university partners.

Qualified Staffing for Gifted Education

Ignite Academy will ensure highly capable scholars receive specialized support by:

- Training all teachers in differentiation strategies, project-based learning, and CBE best practices to support advanced learners within the general classroom.
- Partnering with local universities and STEM programs to give scholars early access to higher-level coursework and research opportunities.

Element Review

Reviews is not provided

9. Unique / Innovative Program Offering

Reviewer Instructions

Please rate this section using the provided rubric.

Status: **Not Reviewed**

Form Result

Describe mission specific programming, or other initiatives, that go beyond that provided within the local school system.

Preference: The Commission prefers applications that employ unique programs or characteristics that may not be found in the traditional school model.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Compelling evidence of how the school will offer unique or innovative programs or characteristics that are otherwise not offered by the local school system or not offered to the same extent.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

a) Describe the unique/innovative program(s) or characteristic(s) being offered and explain how they differ from what is offered by the local school system. If applicable, connect to the mission

or vision statements. Include identified funding sources.

At Ignite Academy, we want our unique programming to ensure young people have a competitive edge. While our general programming will prepare them for high-wage, high-demand career paths, unique program offerings will bolster that. We have five specific offerings that scholars can leverage:

1- J-Term: Intensive Career Immersion

During this two-week winter or summer session, scholars step out of the classroom and into the workplace. They gain hands-on experience through:

- Micro-Internships & Shadowing with professionals in engineering, healthcare, and automation.
- Certification Boot Camps offering industry-recognized credentials (e.g., OSHA, CNA, Machining Fundamentals).
- Rotations through multiple departments in biomedical, industrial automation, and healthcare technology.

J-Term allows young people to explore variations. For example you could shadow nurses, medical billing, and/or the hospital lab all part of the health services field but different angles).

2- Rising 6th & 9th Grade Bridge Program

To ease major academic transitions, Ignite offers a structured summer program with:

- Foundational Skills in Literacy and Math: Revisiting basic skills that are required for success.
- Career Exploration through industry visits and hands-on STEM activities.
- Success Skills Training in time management, self-advocacy, and goal setting.
- STEM & Career Bootcamp introducing coding, robotics, and medical simulations.

This ensures that every scholar enters their new grade level confident, prepared, and engaged.

3- Ignite Fellows: Paid Apprenticeships for High Schoolers

Starting in 10th grade, scholars participate in paid, employer-sponsored apprenticeships, gaining real-world work experience while earning a paycheck. Each scholar is placed in a specific department within a healthcare, engineering, or advanced manufacturing company, where they:

- Work alongside industry professionals in a structured apprenticeship role.

- Receive one-on-one mentorship from a workplace mentor who supports their growth and skill development.
- Gain hands-on experience that aligns with industry needs, preparing them for full-time employment or competitive college programs.

4- Industry Innovation Challenges: Real-World Problem Solving

Each year, scholars work in teams to solve challenges posed by local companies, applying their skills in biotech, sustainable manufacturing, and engineering. They:

- Develop prototypes and business solutions with industry mentors.
- Pitch their ideas to professionals, competing for scholarships, internships, and funding.

This entrepreneurial, project-based approach builds critical thinking, teamwork, and leadership skills.

5- College Fast-Track & Dual Enrollment

Through partnerships with HBCUs and community colleges, scholars can earn up to 30+ college credits while still in high school—at zero cost. This program eliminates financial barriers and allows students to graduate with an associate degree or workforce-ready certifications.

b) Explain how the unique/innovative program(s) and characteristic(s) are integral to the educational and student-development plans, the instructional design and/or the planning of curriculum.

Our J-Term, apprenticeships, and industry challenges bridge academics with hands-on experience:

- J-Term & Industry Challenges apply STEM and technical skills to real-world problems.
- Apprenticeships & Dual Enrollment allow scholars to learn while earning, gaining workforce-ready credentials.
- Advisory & Mentorship provide personalized guidance for career and academic growth.

The Rising 6th & 9th Grade Bridge Programs and dual enrollment ensure scholars enter key transition years academically prepared and equipped with foundational skills and financial security to thrive.

All of these experiences ensure that young people graduate workforce-ready, financially empowered, and confident in their career path.

c) Explain how the unique/innovative program(s) and characteristic(s) will integrate with state initiatives. (ARI, AMSTI)

Ignite Academy's career-connected learning model aligns with Alabama's key education initiatives, ensuring scholars develop both academic proficiency and workforce-ready skills.

- Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI): Scholars strengthen technical literacy and communication through apprenticeships and industry challenges, where they engage in technical writing, research, and professional presentations, reinforcing reading comprehension in real-world contexts.
- Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative (AMSTI): J-Term and hands-on STEM projects provide applied learning experiences in biomedical science, automation, and engineering, ensuring scholars master AMSTI-aligned math and science concepts through real-world problem-solving.
- Dual Enrollment: Scholars take college-level coursework in math, science, and technical writing, supporting both ARI and AMSTI by deepening literacy skills, strengthening STEM competencies, and ensuring readiness for high-wage, high-demand careers.

d) Provide evidence that the unique/innovative program(s) and characteristics utilize proven methods for success or that are cited in educational literature.

Ignite Academy's unique programs are grounded in proven educational research that demonstrates their effectiveness in increasing student engagement, career readiness, and long-term success.

- **J-Term: Intensive Career Immersion**
Research from The Christensen Institute (2020) highlights that experiential learning improves knowledge retention and career preparedness. Models like January Term at MIT and Williams College have shown that intensive, short-term career experiences increase student motivation and expand career awareness. Ignite's structured workplace rotations, micro-internships, and industry certifications follow this research-backed approach, ensuring students explore diverse career pathways before committing to a field.
- **Rising 6th & 9th Grade Bridge Program**
Studies from The Wallace Foundation (2019) and Harvard's Center for Education Policy Research (2021) show that structured transition programs significantly improve academic confidence, reduce dropout rates, and increase college readiness. By integrating literacy and math skill-building, hands-on STEM activities, and career exposure, Ignite ensures scholars enter their next academic phase prepared, engaged, and future-focused.
- **Ignite Fellows: Paid Apprenticeships**
Research from The Urban Institute (2021) and Jobs for the Future (2020) confirms that high school students in structured, paid apprenticeships are more likely to complete postsecondary education, earn higher wages, and secure employment in high-demand industries. Ignite's model—where scholars work in a designated department with professional mentorship and real-world training—mirrors these successful workforce development strategies.
- **Industry Innovation Challenges: Real-World Problem Solving**
According to Advance CTE (2020) and The National Academy of Sciences (2019), problem-based learning in STEM fields enhances critical thinking, collaboration, and technical proficiency. Ignite's team-based challenges, where scholars develop and pitch industry-aligned prototypes, provide authentic opportunities to apply skills in high-stakes, competitive environments, reinforcing college and career readiness.

- College Fast-Track & Dual Enrollment

Studies from the Community College Research Center (CCRC, 2019) confirm that dual enrollment increases college enrollment rates, degree completion, and academic persistence. Ignite's partnerships with HBCUs and community colleges provide scholars with tuition-free college coursework, workforce certifications, and accelerated degree pathways, ensuring they graduate both academically and professionally prepared.

Element Review

Reviews is not provided

10. Student Recruitment and Enrollment

Reviewer Instructions

Please rate this section using the provided rubric.

Status: Not Reviewed

Form Result

Describe the recruitment efforts, including the marketing campaign, and measures to ensure fair enrollment opportunities for all interested students in the community.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Compelling evidence of how the school will directly and consistently recruit students and market the school in such a way as to adequately ensure equal access to interested students and families. In addition, provide ample evidence of the target plan for recruiting at-risk students.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

a) Complete the attached enrollment projection spreadsheet that provides information on anticipated enrollments, with maximum and minimum bounds, for each grade served over the contract period.

File Upload

3-10A Enrollment Projections-DONE.pdf

164.16 KB • Added 5 days ago

- b) Attach the school's Enrollment Policy, which should include the following:
- i) Tentative dates for application period, enrollment deadlines, and procedures.
 - ii) A timeline and plan for student recruitment/engagement and enrollment;
 - iii) Policies and procedures for student waiting lists, withdrawals, re-enrollment, and transfers; and
 - iv) Explanation of the purpose of any pre-admission activities for students or parents

Ignite Academy Enrollment Policy

Ignite Academy is committed to providing equitable educational opportunities to all students, adhering strictly to Alabama state requirements and best practices from approved charter schools.

Tentative Dates for Application Period, Enrollment Deadlines, and Procedures

- Application Period: November 1, 2026 – January 15, 2027
- Enrollment Lottery (if necessary): February 1, 2027
- Notification of Admission Status: February 5, 2027
- Acceptance Deadline: February 20, 2027
- Enrollment Documentation Due: March 1, 2027

Application Procedures:

1. Submission: Prospective students must submit a completed application form during the application period.
2. Lottery Process: If applications exceed available seats, a public lottery will be conducted on February 1, 2027, to ensure a fair selection process.
3. Notification: Families will be informed of their admission status by February 5, 2027.
4. Acceptance: Admitted students must confirm their intent to enroll by February 20, 2027.
5. Documentation: Required enrollment documents are due by March 1, 2027.

Timeline and Plan for Student Recruitment/Engagement and Enrollment

- August – October 2026:
 - Host informational sessions and open houses to engage prospective families.
 - Participate in community events to raise awareness about Ignite Academy.
- November 2026 – January 2027:
 - Open application period; provide assistance to families completing applications.
 - Offer school tours and classroom observations.

- February 2027:
 - Conduct enrollment lottery (if necessary) and notify families of admission status.
- March – April 2027:
 - Collect enrollment documentation and finalize student placements.
 - Organize orientation sessions for admitted students and families.

Policies and Procedures for Student Waiting Lists, Withdrawals, Re-enrollment, and Transfers

- Waiting Lists:
 - Students not admitted through the lottery will be placed on a waiting list in the order drawn.
 - As seats become available, families will be notified and given a specified period to accept the offer.
- Withdrawals:
 - Parents/guardians must submit a written notice to the school administration.
 - The school will process the withdrawal and update records accordingly.
- Re-enrollment:
 - Students who previously withdrew and wish to return must reapply during the standard application period.
- Transfers:
 - For incoming transfers, students must follow the standard application process.
 - Outgoing transfers will be coordinated with the receiving school to ensure a smooth transition.

Explanation of the Purpose of Any Pre-admission Activities for Students or Parents

Ignite Academy offers optional pre-admission activities, such as informational sessions and school tours, to help families make informed decisions. These activities are not mandatory and do not influence the admission process.

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3-10B Enrollment Policy-DONE.pdf

174.8 KB • Added 5 days ago

c) If there are more students interested in a school than spaces are available, State law requires admission to be based on a lottery. Please describe your lottery process and explain how you will ensure a fair and equitable process for students and families.

If the number of applicants exceeds available seats, Ignite Academy will conduct a random, transparent, and equitable lottery process to determine admissions. The lottery will be publicly conducted and open to all applicants who submit a complete application by the deadline.

Lottery Process & Notification

1. Application Submission – All applications submitted by the deadline will be entered into the lottery system.
2. Random Selection – A digital lottery system will generate a randomized list of accepted students and waitlisted applicants.
3. Notification of Results – Families will receive lottery results via email, text message, and postal mail within 72 hours of the lottery.
4. Enrollment Confirmation – Accepted families will have 10 calendar days to confirm their enrollment and submit required documents.

Waitlist Policy

- If all seats are filled, a waitlist will be established in the order determined by the lottery.
- As spots become available, students will be offered admission in waitlist order.
- The waitlist does not roll over to the following year; students must reapply for the next enrollment cycle.

Ensuring Fairness & Accessibility

- Ignite Academy will use a secure, third-party digital lottery system to ensure an unbiased selection process.
- Families needing assistance with the application process will have in-person support available at the school and community centers.
- Multiple communication channels (email, phone, text) will be used to ensure all families receive timely updates.
- The lottery process will be monitored for transparency, and results will be made available upon request.

d) Specifically describe the plan for outreach to families in poverty; academically low-achieving students; students with disabilities; and other youth at risk of academic failure.

Ignite Academy will implement a targeted outreach plan to remove barriers to enrollment and ensure students who need career-connected learning the most can access it.

- Low-Income Families – Partnering with housing authorities, food pantries, and faith-based organizations, hosting on-site enrollment events, and providing digital and in-person application support so families with limited access to resources can easily apply.
- Academically Struggling Students – Collaborating with feeder schools, offering career-focused info sessions, and providing early academic support through the Rising 6th & 9th Grade Bridge Programs so students who have struggled in traditional settings can engage in hands-on learning that builds confidence and skills.
- Students with Disabilities – Engaging with special education advocacy groups, offering personalized enrollment assistance, and ensuring transparency about IEP and 504 plan accommodations so families know Ignite provides the right support for their child's success.
- At-Risk Youth – Partnering with foster care networks, juvenile justice programs, and youth services, while providing mentorship, flexible pacing, and wraparound support so students at risk of disengagement can thrive in a school designed for real-world success.

Element Review

Reviews is not provided

11. Student Discipline Policy and Plan

Reviewer Instructions

Please rate this section using the provided rubric.

Status: Not Reviewed

Form Result

Describe the policies and procedures for handling students' behavior problems, including measures to afford a student's right to due process.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Compelling evidence of an approach to student discipline that will directly and consistently address compliance with applicable laws and school district and the school culture.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

a) Describe the practices the school will use to promote good discipline, including both penalties for infractions and incentives for positive behavior.

At Ignite, discipline is not about punishment—it's about growth, accountability, and connection. We recognize that scholars learn best when they feel safe, respected, and supported, and we reject disciplinary models that remove students from learning spaces and perpetuate disengagement. Instead, Ignite integrates restorative practices, social-emotional learning, and community responsibility to address behavioral challenges in a way that supports self-regulation, personal growth, and professional readiness.

Principles of Ignite's Restorative Discipline Model

1. Connection Before Correction – Scholars are taught self-awareness, conflict resolution, and emotional regulation before discipline is needed.
2. Restoration Over Punishment – When conflicts arise, the focus is on repairing relationships and rebuilding trust, rather than exclusion.
3. Accountability Through Growth – Scholars take responsibility for their actions in a way that strengthens their sense of agency and self-worth.
4. Skill-Building for Future Success – Discipline at Ignite is an opportunity to develop the professionalism, teamwork, and emotional intelligence needed for life and career success.

Preventative Practices

Before behavioral challenges arise, Ignite intentionally teaches self-awareness, conflict resolution, and personal responsibility through structured student experiences:

- Advisory: Career & Personal Development – Scholars engage in structured self-reflection, goal-setting, and mentorship to develop emotional intelligence, professionalism, and self-regulation skills.
- Community, Circles, & Mentorship (CCM) – Scholars participate in weekly structured circles, focusing on relationship-building, social-emotional skill development, and conflict prevention.
- Work-Based Learning & Industry Integration – Professional expectations and workplace behaviors are explicitly taught through career-connected learning, reinforcing real-world accountability and conflict resolution.
- Personalized Learning & Coaching – Scholars receive 1:1 academic and emotional coaching to help them develop

self-awareness, emotional regulation, and decision-making skills before issues escalate.

Restorative Discipline Process: Repairing Harm & Building Growth

When conflicts arise, scholars move through a structured process focused on reflection, accountability, and relationship repair.

Step 1: Reflection & Self-Regulation (Advisory & Coaching)

- Scholars meet with an advisor or mentor to identify triggers and develop self-regulation strategies.
- They complete a reflection exercise and set goals for behavior improvement.

Step 2: Community Repair (Restorative Circles in CCM)

- If harm occurs, scholars participate in a Restorative Circle, where they listen, share perspectives, and create a plan to rebuild trust.

Step 3: Growth & Accountability (Mentorship & Industry-Aligned Consequences)

- Scholars engage in coaching check-ins, career-connected accountability processes, or trust-building leadership roles to reinforce personal growth.

This process ensures scholars learn from mistakes, repair harm, and develop real-world skills in conflict resolution and professionalism.

Incentives for Positive Behavior

Ignite reinforces positive behavior by embedding real-world, career-connected rewards that recognize scholars' growth, professionalism, and leadership. Incentives are tied to responsibility, engagement, and contributions to the school community rather than compliance.

Career & Industry-Based Incentives

- **Early Access to Work-Based Learning** – Scholars demonstrating professionalism and leadership gain priority placement in internships, apprenticeships, and job shadowing opportunities.
- **Industry Certifications & Badging** – Scholars who consistently meet behavioral expectations can earn additional micro-credentials that boost their career readiness.

- Scholar-Led Career Spotlights – High-performing scholars are invited to present at Industry Nights, employer meetups, or school-wide showcases to highlight their skills.

Leadership & Trust-Based Incentives

- Student Leadership Roles – Scholars demonstrating strong decision-making can serve as peer mentors, student ambassadors, or advisory captains.
- Restorative Leadership Opportunities – Instead of punitive measures, scholars build community by leading restorative circles or school-wide initiatives.
- Exclusive Career & College Experiences – Positive engagement unlocks access to college visits, specialized industry training, and networking events.

School-Wide Recognition & Privileges

- “Industry Ready” Awards – Monthly recognition for scholars who exemplify professionalism, teamwork, and responsibility.
- Earned Independence & Scholar Autonomy – Scholars who demonstrate trustworthiness gain flexibility in scheduling, independent study opportunities, or leadership over school projects.
- Celebrations & Incentive-Based Activities – High-performing scholars participate in team outings, industry-sponsored events, and incentive-based social experiences.

Monitoring the Effectiveness of the Restorative Discipline Model

Ignite will regularly evaluate the impact of its restorative discipline practices through data tracking, student and staff feedback, and continuous refinement of interventions.

- Behavioral Data Tracking – Discipline records, including the frequency and resolution of infractions, will be analyzed quarterly to assess trends and identify areas for improvement.
- Student Growth & Reflection – Scholars engaged in restorative practices will complete self-reflections and goal-setting exercises, measuring their progress in self-regulation and conflict resolution.

- Staff & Student Feedback – Surveys and focus groups will gather insights on the effectiveness of restorative circles, mentorship programs, and industry-aligned accountability strategies.
- Academic & Attendance Impact – The school will track suspension rates, attendance, and academic performance to ensure disciplinary practices support, rather than hinder, student success.
- Annual Review & Adjustments – The leadership team will conduct an annual evaluation of discipline policies, making data-driven adjustments to ensure alignment with student needs and school culture goals.

b) Give a list and definitions of the offenses for which students in the school must (where non-discretionary) and may (where discretionary) be suspended or expelled, respectively.

Ignite Charter School follows a tiered discipline model that prioritizes restorative practices and accountability while ensuring a safe, professional learning environment. Certain offenses require mandatory (non-discretionary) suspension or expulsion, while others allow for administrative discretion based on context, intent, and prior behavior history.

Non-Discretionary (Mandatory) Suspension or Expulsion

Scholars *must* be suspended or expelled for the following offenses, in alignment with Alabama state law and school safety policies:

- Possession of a firearm or dangerous weapon on school property.
- Violent physical assault causing serious injury.
- Sexual assault or harassment.
- Distribution of illegal substances.
- Repeated, egregious threats toward students or staff.

Discretionary Suspension or Expulsion

Scholars *may* be suspended or expelled for:

- Physical altercations that do not result in serious injury.
- Repeated, severe disruption of the learning environment after multiple interventions.
- Harassment, bullying, or intimidation (severity and frequency considered).
- Academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, cheating on assessments).
- Possession or use of illegal substances (case-by-case intervention approach).

All discretionary cases will involve a hearing with school leadership, a review of interventions attempted, and potential restorative alternatives before suspension or expulsion is considered.

c) Provide an explanation of how the school will consider the rights of special education students and students with disabilities in disciplinary actions and proceedings.

Ignite Charter School ensures that all disciplinary actions involving students with disabilities comply with IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and Alabama state law.

Before issuing suspensions exceeding 10 cumulative days or considering expulsion, the school will conduct a Manifestation Determination Review (MDR) to determine whether the behavior was a result of the student's disability or the school's failure to implement their Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan.

If the behavior is found to be related to the student's disability, Ignite will:

- Provide appropriate behavioral supports and interventions instead of punitive discipline.
- Adjust the student's IEP or 504 Plan to address behavioral needs.
- Offer alternative disciplinary measures that do not deny the student access to educational services.

For students whose behavior is not a direct result of their disability, standard disciplinary procedures will apply, but with appropriate accommodations to ensure fairness and access to due process.

d) Discuss the procedures for due process when a student is suspended or expelled as a result of a code of conduct violation, including a description of the appeal process that the school will employ for students facing expulsion and a plan for providing services to students who are expelled or out of school for more than ten days.

Ignite Charter School ensures that all disciplinary decisions involving suspensions or expulsions follow a clear, fair, and legally compliant due process that prioritizes student rights, restorative interventions, and continued educational access.

Due Process for Suspensions & Expulsions

Short-Term Suspensions (10 Days or Less)

1. Notice & Explanation – The scholar and their guardian will receive written notice detailing the violation, the proposed suspension, and supporting evidence.
2. Informal Meeting – The scholar meets with an administrator to explain their side of the incident before a final decision is made.
3. Final Decision & Family Notification – The school will issue a written decision explaining the length of the suspension and next steps.
4. Reintegration & Restorative Plan – Scholars returning from suspension will participate in a restorative meeting with an advisor and any affected parties to repair relationships and create a success plan.

Long-Term Suspensions & Expulsions (More Than 10 Days)

1. Formal Written Notice – Families will receive a detailed letter outlining the infraction, evidence, and the proposed disciplinary action.
2. Hearing Opportunity – Scholars and their families may request a formal disciplinary hearing before the governing board or disciplinary review panel.
 - The scholar may present evidence, call witnesses, and have an advocate present.
 - The panel will review all facts and issue a decision based on school policy, state law, and restorative discipline principles.
3. Final Decision & Appeal Rights
 - If expulsion is upheld, families may appeal within 5 days to an independent review panel.
 - If the appeal is denied, the family may request an alternative resolution, such as a behavior intervention plan or alternative education placement.

Educational Services for Scholars Out of School for More Than 10 Days

Ignite believes in continuous education, even when students face discipline-related absences. If a scholar is expelled or suspended for more than ten days, they will have access to:

- Remote Learning & Academic Support – Scholars will receive virtual instruction, self-paced coursework, and teacher check-ins to stay on track academically.
- Behavior Intervention & Reintegration Support – Scholars will complete a restorative action plan with a mentor, ensuring a path back to structured learning.
- Alternative Placement Options – If expulsion is upheld, the school will collaborate with the family to identify an alternative education program, career training pathway, or re-engagement plan.

e) Provide the school's proposed discipline policy. Discuss how students and parents will be informed of the school's policies.

See attachment.

File Upload

3-11E Discipline Policy.pdf

215.77 KB • Added 5 days ago

Element Review

Reviews is not provided

12. Family and Community Involvement

Reviewer Instructions

Please rate this section using the provided rubric.

Status: **Not Reviewed**

Form Result

Provide evidence of significant engagement efforts with the community in which the proposed school will reside.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Compelling evidence of how parents and community members will directly, consistently and appropriately be involved in the development of the proposed school.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

a) Describe and provide evidence of the role to date of any parents and community members involved in developing the proposed school. Evidence may include sign-in sheets, surveys, photos, and direct feedback by community members.

Ignite Academy's school design is deeply informed by community input, ensuring that the model reflects the needs, aspirations, and priorities of families, educators, and industry partners. While formal design sessions with families on this specific model are forthcoming, extensive community collaboration and student voice work have shaped its development.

Community & Stakeholder Engagement to Date

1. Youth Success Partnership (YSP) & ME² Collaborative Meetings

- Through YSP and ME², we engaged with families, educators, and community leaders to discuss barriers to career-connected learning and identify essential supports for student success.
- Key takeaways emphasized the need for early career exposure, hands-on learning, and real-world skill-building, all of which are embedded in Ignite's J-Term, apprenticeships, and dual enrollment model.

2. I-LEAD Student Insights & Youth-Centered Design

- Student engagement through I-LEAD sessions provided critical insights into what young people need and want from their education.
- Scholars expressed a strong desire for personalized learning, mentorship, and pathways to meaningful careers, reinforcing Ignite's competency-based, career-connected approach.

3. Community Partnerships & Industry Feedback

- Conversations with local employers, workforce development groups, and postsecondary institutions have helped align Ignite's pathways with real job opportunities in healthcare, engineering, and advanced manufacturing.
- Industry leaders emphasized the importance of paid apprenticeships, certifications, and professional mentorship, which directly shaped Ignite's Ignite Fellows Program.

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3.12A.pdf

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b) Describe and provide evidence of initiatives to assess and build parent and community demand for the school. Describe planned engagement efforts with parents and community members from the time that the school is approved through opening.

Ignite Academy has engaged families, educators, and industry partners through YSP and ME² collaborative meetings, confirming strong demand for career-connected learning, paid apprenticeships, and dual enrollment.

Demand Assessment & Early Engagement

- Community Conversations – Gathered input from families and industry leaders to align Ignite’s model with local needs.
- Industry & Post Secondary Partnerships – Secured early commitments for apprenticeships, internships, and career pathway alignment.
- Interest Tracking – Conducting informal sign-ups and early outreach efforts to gauge demand.

Planned Engagement (Post-Approval to Opening)

- Parent & Student Design Sessions – Co-designing programming and supports with families.
- Community Information Campaigns – Expanding outreach via bilingual digital and in-person efforts.
- School Transition Support – Hosting family onboarding events and bridge programs for incoming students.

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3-12B Evidence of Initiatives.pdf

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c) Describe planned efforts to engage and provide opportunities for parents in the life of the school beyond the role of a parent advocate on the governing board. Explain the plan for building family-school partnerships that strengthen support for learning and encourage parental involvement. Describe any commitments or volunteer activities the school will seek from, offer to, or require of parents.

Ignite Academy will foster strong family-school partnerships by providing multiple opportunities for parents to engage beyond governance through:

- Parent Advisory Council – A forum for parents to provide feedback on school initiatives and programming.
- Career & Mentorship Opportunities – Parents can support students through career talks, job shadowing, and networking events.
- Family Learning Nights – Workshops on college planning, career pathways, and student success strategies.
- Volunteer & Engagement Activities – Families can participate in school events, student showcases, and mentorship programs (volunteering encouraged but not required).

d) Please describe any expectations for parents that are part of your educational plan or model. Explain clearly how parent expectations will support your educational plan. Reflect upon alternatives if parents are unwilling or unable to participate.

Ignite Academy encourages, but does not require, parent participation to support student success. Expectations include:

- Regular Communication – Parents are expected to engage in student progress meetings, advisory check-ins, and school updates.
- Career & Learning Support – Families are invited to participate in career exploration events, mentorship, and student showcases.
- Student Success Partnerships – Parents are encouraged to reinforce time management, goal setting, and engagement in real-world learning experiences at home.

For families unable to participate, Ignite ensures flexible engagement options, such as virtual meetings, recorded workshops, and community support networks, so all students receive the necessary support.

Element Review

Reviews is not provided

13. Partnership or Contractual Relationships

Reviewer Instructions

Please rate this section using the provided rubric.

Status: **Not Reviewed**

Form Result

Provide information on any anticipated partnerships or contractual relationships with local community organizations or other groups that will enhance the curricular or co-curricular aspects of the student experience. The next section covers partnerships with Education Service Providers (ESP), Charter Management Organizations (CMO), Education Management Organizations (EMO) and other such partnerships.

Preference: Preference is given to applications that pursue unique connections with community partners (e.g. facilities, fundraising) including those that enhance the student experience (e.g. mission specific programming, taking best-practices to scale.) Applicants are encouraged to engage such groups early in the process to allow a more meaningful and productive partnership.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Compelling evidence of high-quality partnerships and connections with community organizations, business, or other educational institutions that enhance or support the academic plan.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

Industry & Workforce Partners (Hands-on Career Learning & Internships)

Ignite is collaborating with local manufacturing, healthcare, and technology companies to provide real-world work-based learning opportunities, mentorship, and certifications. These partnerships include:

- Mobile Chamber of Commerce & South Alabama Workforce Council – Connecting scholars to high-wage, high-demand career pathways in advanced manufacturing and health sciences.
- Austal USA, Airbus, and Alabama Power – Providing apprenticeships, mentorship, and technical skill training in engineering, automation, and energy sectors.
- Infirmary Health & USA Health – Offering job shadowing, clinical rotations, and patient-care certifications for scholars pursuing healthcare careers.

Higher Education & Dual Enrollment Partnerships (Early College Credit & Technical Training)

Ignite scholars will have early access to college coursework, industry certifications, and technical training. Partnerships with University of South Alabama and Bishop State Community College will offer dual enrollment courses in pre-engineering, medical assisting, and business administration. In addition the Alabama Aviation Center – Supporting scholars in earning FAA-aligned aviation certifications. Both partnerships will support career fairs, and early college exposure.

All partnerships provide fee-free in-kind contributions such as guest speakers, site visits, mentorship. Others will offer paid internship opportunities for scholars in grades 10-12 and dual enrollment courses will be paid through state funding.

We are actively working to secure commitment letters from all our partners. The commitment letters we have received to date are attached.

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3-12A Evidence of Community Involvement-DONE.pdf

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b) Provide details of all curricular or co-curricular needs that the applicant seeks to fulfill with either an unidentified community partner or an identified partner that has yet to commit.

While some partnerships are established, we are actively seeking additional collaborators in the following areas:

- Work-Based Learning & Apprenticeships – Industry partners in healthcare, advanced manufacturing, and engineering to provide paid apprenticeships, internships, and real-world learning experiences.
- Student Mentorship & Career Coaching – Employers and professionals willing to serve as mentors, job shadow hosts, and guest speakers.
- J-Term Industry Experiences – Companies willing to provide short-term career immersions, site visits, and hands-on STEM experiences.

c) Identify any other partnerships or contractual relationships given above that are critical to the school's operations or mission, i.e. identify partnerships whose dissolution fundamentally changes the culture or nature of the proposed school.

Industry & Workforce Partnerships (Hands-on Career Learning & Certifications)

Partners: Austal USA, Airbus, Alabama Power, Infirmity Health, USA Health, South Alabama Workforce Council

Why It's Critical: Ignite's industry partnerships are essential to preparing scholars for high-wage, high-demand careers through real-world, career-connected learning. These partnerships provide hands-on training, mentorship, and internship placements, allowing scholars to gain OSHA, NIMS, and healthcare certifications, ensuring they graduate workforce-ready. Without these partnerships, Ignite would lose critical industry-aligned training opportunities, significantly reducing scholars' exposure to high-skill careers and weakening a core pillar of the school's model. The ability to connect classroom learning with industry experience is what differentiates Ignite, and without these relationships, scholars would have fewer pathways to employment and technical mastery before graduation.

Higher Education & Dual Enrollment Partnerships (Early College & Technical Training)

Partners: Bishop State Community College (HBCU), University of South Alabama, Alabama Aviation Center

Why It's Critical: Ignite's higher education partnerships, including Bishop State Community College (HBCU) and the University of South Alabama, allow scholars to earn college credits, complete industry certifications, and participate in technical training while still in high school. Bishop State, as an HBCU, provides culturally responsive pathways that increase college enrollment and retention for scholars of color. Without these partnerships, Ignite would lose dual enrollment opportunities, postsecondary access, and workforce credentials, limiting scholars' ability to graduate with a competitive advantage in both career and college pathways. The disruption of these partnerships would undermine Ignite's mission to provide an integrated academic and workforce-driven education, significantly reducing scholars' opportunities for economic mobility.

d) Disclose and explain any existing or potential conflicts of interest between the charter school board, the charter school administration, and the proposed service provider or any affiliated business entities.

Conflict of Interest
Narrative

No conflicts of interest.

Element Review

Reviews is not provided

14. Educational Service Providers (ESP), Charter Management Organizations (CMO), Education Management Organizations (EMO) and Other Such Partnerships

Reviewer Instructions

Please rate this section using the provided rubric.

Status: Not Reviewed

Form Result

Provide details on the anticipated use of Education Service Providers (ESP), Charter Management Organizations (CMO), Education Management Organizations (EMO) or similar partnerships. This includes details on the selection process.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Compelling evidence of how any ESP, CMO, EMO, or other partnerships will be used and how these partnerships will directly and consistently enhance the school program. Evidence that the organization used proper procedures for a public school in entering into the agreement.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

a) Provide the details of the selection process, including evaluation criteria used to pick the provider and provide the Request for Proposal (RFP) used to solicit applicants.

N/A

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b) Provide evidence of the provider's or organization's success in serving student populations that are similar to the targeted population, including demonstrated academic achievement as well as successful management of nonacademic school functions, if applicable. Attach a completed Portfolio Summary for the partner organization.

Evidence of Success N/A

Narrative

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c) Provide a term sheet that includes:

- i) Proposed duration of the service contract
- ii) Roles and responsibilities of the governing board, school staff, and ESP
- iii) Scope of services and resources to be provided by the ESP
- iv) Performance evaluations measures and timelines
- v) Compensations structure, including clear identification of all fees to be paid to the ESP
- vi) Methods of contract oversight and enforcement
- vii) Investment disclosure
- viii) Conditions for renewal and termination of the contract

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d) Disclose and explain any existing or potential conflicts of interest between the charter school board, the charter school administration, and the proposed service provider or any affiliated business entities.

N/A

Element Review

Reviews is not provided

15. Educational Program Capacity

Reviewer Instructions

Please rate this section using the provided rubric.

Status: Not Reviewed

Form Result

Name the people who have been identified for key positions in the proposed school, their collective capacity for operating the school, and disclose any potential conflicts of interest.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Compelling evidence of how the school will open and continue to operate a high-quality educational program with high capacity in the following areas: school leadership, administration, governance, curriculum, instruction, assessment, performance management, parent involvement, and community engagement.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

Ignite Academy's leadership team consists of experienced educators, industry leaders, and operational experts committed to ensuring a successful launch and long-term governance of the school. Each member plays a critical role in school development, ensuring alignment with Ignite's mission and workforce-driven model.

Governing Board Members (Oversight & Accountability)

- Rob McGinley Jr., Board Chair – Experienced transaction lawyer and energy start-up entrepreneur; former Board Chair of MAEF Public Charter Schools. Leads board oversight to ensure academic rigor, workforce alignment, and long-term strategic planning, securing key partnerships with regional employers and postsecondary institutions.
- Richard Perry, Vice-Chair – Retired corporate VP with expertise in advanced manufacturing; former Board Chair of MAEF Public Charter Schools. Advises on workforce development, employer partnerships, and industry-driven curriculum alignment.
- Mark Spivey, Treasurer – VP at Hancock-Whitney Bank, brings charter school financial oversight experience. Ensures sustainable funding, compliance, and responsible budgeting through grants, industry sponsorships, and state funding allocations.
- Contina Woods, Board Member – Executive VP at Regions Bank, contributing expertise in financial management and business strategy to ensure long-term fiscal health.
- Dr. Andi Kent, Board Member – Provost & EVP at the University of South Alabama, ensuring curriculum alignment with postsecondary expectations and dual enrollment opportunities.
- Nadia Legir, Board Member – Vice President at Airbus Americas, providing industry expertise in advanced manufacturing, engineering, and workforce readiness.
- Dr. Ashley Williams-Hogue, Board Member – Director of the Trauma Center and Center for Health Communities at University Hospital, advising on health sciences curriculum, student well-being, and workforce alignment in healthcare.

- Erin Delaporte, Board Member – Senior Manager at Alabama Power, bringing expertise in STEM workforce development and industry connections.
- Gia Wiggins, Board Member - CEO of Audocity and national HR professional of fortune 500 companies.
- Lissa Watkins & Gia Wiggins, Board Members – Ensuring strong community engagement, family representation, and student advocacy.

Central Office Leadership Team (Implementation & Day-to-Day Start-Up)

Dr. Jeremiah Newell's (Chief Executive Officer) success in founding and leading ACCEL Academy, Alabama's first charter school, provides firsthand knowledge of charter operations, compliance, and student-centered learning models. His continued work in these roles at both ACCEL and Floretta P. Carson gives him a breadth and depth of understanding to support the school's opening. At Ignite, he will oversee the development of competency-based mastery tracking, ensuring students progress by demonstrating skills rather than seat time. His relationships with state and local policymakers, school district leaders, and industry partners will also strengthen Ignite's position as a workforce-aligned charter school, securing funding, partnerships, and long-term sustainability.

Christy Taylor's (Chief Financial Officer) financial expertise, particularly in corporate finance and managing large budgets in advanced manufacturing, is essential for ensuring Ignite's financial health and sustainability. Her experience navigating complex funding models, government contracting, and public-private partnerships (including currently serving as the CFSO of an existing Alabama public charter school) will be instrumental in managing state and federal grants, industry funding, and operational budgets. She will also oversee effective resource allocation to support Ignite's dual enrollment, workforce training, and career certification programs.

Amy Owens's (Director of Strategy) background in competency-based education and instructional leadership will guide Ignite's approach to explicit instruction and mastery-based learning. Having worked with national charter networks like Rocketship Education, she will oversee the implementation of academic studios and personalized learning labs to effectively integrate small-group instruction, targeted intervention, and career-aligned skills development. She will also oversee curriculum alignment to industry and postsecondary expectations, ensuring students graduate prepared for their next steps.

Monique Baugh's (Director of Programs) leadership in community partnerships and student support services is critical to Ignite's full-service school model. Her experience directing multi-million-dollar community school initiatives will help Ignite build mentorship programs, career pipelines, and wraparound services to remove barriers to student success. She will also oversee family and community engagement efforts, ensuring Ignite is deeply connected to the Mobile area.

Shernita Taylor's (Director of Workforce Development) expertise in workforce development and human resources aligns directly with Ignite's mission to prepare students for high-wage, high-demand careers. She will oversee the establishment of industry-aligned workforce training programs, internships, and apprenticeships, ensuring students graduate with recognized credentials and professional experience. Her role in building relationships with employers and industry leaders will be key to developing career pathways that align with local and regional job market demand.

Resumes for all transitional team members are attached.

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3-15A Resumes of Key Personnel and Board.pdf

1.32 MB • Added 5 days ago

b) Describe the team's collective qualifications for implementing the school design successfully, including capacity in areas such as:

- i) School leadership, administration, and governance;
- ii) Curriculum, instruction, and assessment;
- iii) Financial management;
- iv) Performance management; and
- v) Parent and community engagement.

Collective Qualifications
Narrative

Ignite Academy's governing board provides deep expertise across education, industry, finance, and community engagement, ensuring strong oversight and strategic leadership.

- Rob McGinley Jr., Board Chair – Experienced transaction lawyer and energy start-up entrepreneur with governance expertise as former Board Chair of MAEF Public Charter Schools.
- Richard Perry, Vice-Chair – Retired corporate executive with advanced manufacturing expertise and prior experience chairing a public charter school board.
- Dr. Andi Kent, Board Member – Provost & EVP at the University of South Alabama, providing leadership in postsecondary education and curriculum alignment.
- Nadia Legir, Board Member – Vice President at Airbus Americas, ensuring workforce alignment with aerospace and advanced manufacturing industries.
- Mark Spivey, Treasurer – VP at Hancock-Whitney Bank, bringing extensive experience in charter school finance and treasury management.

Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Ignite's instructional team has designed and implemented career-integrated curricula that merge academic learning with hands-on industry experience.

- Dr. Andi Kent ensures curriculum alignment with postsecondary expectations and best practices in education leadership.
- Richard Perry contributes K-12 and workforce-aligned education insights, ensuring Ignite's instructional model meets both academic and employer needs.
- Industry partners from Airbus, healthcare, and advanced manufacturing will collaborate on curriculum development and industry certification alignment.

Financial Management

Ignite Academy has a strong financial oversight team to ensure long-term sustainability.

- Mark Spivey (Treasurer) and Contina Woods (Regions Bank EVP) bring expertise in charter school financial management, auditing,

and sustainability planning.

- Rob McGinley Jr. provides legal and compliance oversight for all financial operations and governance.
- The team has experience securing workforce development grants, employer partnerships, and sustainable funding streams.

Performance Management

Ignite Academy will use data-driven continuous improvement systems to ensure student success.

- Industry-aligned assessment rubrics will be co-developed with employers like Airbus and healthcare partners, ensuring graduates earn credentials valued in the workforce.
- Real-time mastery tracking will be implemented to provide actionable insights for educators and students.
- Dr. Ashley Williams-Hogue (Trauma Center & Health Communities Director at University Hospital) will contribute expertise on student well-being and community health initiatives, ensuring holistic performance metrics beyond academics.

Parent and Community Engagement

Ignite Academy was designed with input from families, industry leaders, and local stakeholders to ensure alignment with student needs and regional workforce demands.

- Lissa Watkins and Gia Wiggins ensure community engagement remains central, representing family perspectives in school operations.
- Family listening sessions shaped Ignite's career pathways advisory model, work-based learning structure, and early college access opportunities.
- Community partnerships with local employers, colleges, and workforce organizations ensure continued alignment with regional economic needs.

The leadership team of MAEF's of Executive Team represents significant experience to support the implementation of the school design, develop Ignite's instructional model, support operational needs, and position for long-term sustainability. **Dr. Jeremiah Newell's (Chief Executive Officer)** success in founding and leading ACCEL Academy, Alabama's first charter

school, provides firsthand knowledge of charter operations, compliance, and student-centered learning models. His continued work in these roles at both ACCEL and Floretta P. Carson gives him a breadth and depth of understanding to support the school's opening. At Ignite, he will oversee the development of competency-based mastery tracking, ensuring students progress by demonstrating skills rather than seat time. His relationships with state and local policymakers, school district leaders, and industry partners will also strengthen Ignite's position as a workforce-aligned charter school, securing funding, partnerships, and long-term sustainability.

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c) Describe the group's ties to and/or knowledge of the target community.

Community Ties Narrative Ignite Academy's governing board provides deep expertise across education, industry, finance, and community engagement, ensuring strong oversight and strategic leadership.

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d) Identify any organizations, agencies, or consultants that are partners in planning and establishing the school, along with a brief description of their current and planned role and any resources they have contributed or plan to contribute to the school's development.

Ignite Academy is collaborating with key industry, higher education, and workforce partners to ensure students gain the skills, certifications, and hands-on experience needed for high-wage careers.

Workforce Development & Industry Collaboration

- SAWDC AlabamaWorks! – Connecting students to apprenticeships, industry mentors, and technical training programs.
- Austal, Ingalls Shipbuilding, AM/NS Calvert, Airbus, and the Port of Mobile – Ensuring career pathways align with regional workforce needs in advanced manufacturing, maritime, and engineering.
- Alabama Defense Advanced Manufacturing Community (ADAMC) – Advising on lab design, equipment procurement, and industry certifications (OSHA, CNC, welding, automation, etc.).
- U.S. Navy Maritime Industrial Base- supporting specific maritime training initiatives for the U.S. Navy

Higher Education & Postsecondary Pathways

- Bishop State Community College & the University of South Alabama – Providing dual enrollment, industry certifications, and college-credit courses, ensuring students graduate with postsecondary credentials and workforce readiness.

Government & Workforce Alignment

- City of Mobile, Mobile County Public Schools, and the Mobile Chamber of Commerce – Supporting regional workforce alignment, economic development initiatives, and student career placement opportunities.

Education & Skills-Based Learning

- Alabama State Department of Education's Be Pro Be Proud Initiative – Supporting competency-based learning models and career exposure through hands-on technical workshops.

e) Identify the principal/head of school candidate and explain why this individual is well-qualified to lead the proposed school in achieving its mission. Summarize the proposed leader's academic and organizational leadership record. Provide specific evidence that demonstrates capacity to design, launch, and manage a high-performing charter school. If the proposed leader has never run a school, describe any leadership training programs that (s)he has completed or is currently participating in. Also provide, as an attachment, the qualifications, resume, and professional biography for this individual. Discuss evidence of the leader's ability to effectively serve the anticipated population.

If no candidate has been identified, attach the job description or qualifications, and discuss the timeline, criteria, recruiting and selection process for hiring the school leader.

The school leader has not yet been identified. Attached is the job description and below is a timeline for hiring.

Our Timeline for Hiring

Phase	Completion Date	Key Activities
Job Posting & Outreach	October, 2025	• Post job description on education, workforce development, and charter networks. • Engage in targeted recruitment through Alabama education leadership programs, CTE associations, and charter school organizations. • Use professional networks, local community connections, and national charter school leadership pipelines.
Initial Screening & Vetting	January 2026	• Review applications and resumes to assess leadership experience and mission alignment. • Conduct initial phone/video interviews focused on instructional leadership, workforce integration, and charter school experience. • Verify references, employment history, and track record in competency-based or career-connected education.
In-Depth Interviews & Performance Evaluation	March 2026	• Invite top candidates for panel interviews with governing board members, teachers, and community partners. • Require candidates to present a strategic plan outlining how they will execute Ignite's model.

		Assess problem-solving, data-driven leadership, and ability to engage families and industry partners.
Final Selection & Appointment	April 2026	- Governing board deliberates and selects the strongest candidate. - Offer extended; contract terms negotiated. - Public announcement of the new school leader.
Pre-Opening Leadership & Planning	June 2026 - June 2027	- The school leader works with the board and operations team to finalize curriculum, staffing, and industry partnerships. - Begins hiring teachers and support staff. - Engages in community outreach and parent engagement.
Operational Readiness & School Launch Preparation	July 2027	- Final teacher onboarding and professional development. - Ensure all compliance, facilities, and operational systems are in place. - Conduct family and student orientations, ensuring a strong culture from day one.

Supporting Documents

WILL NOT FIT.doc

13.7 KB • Added 5 days ago

f) Describe the responsibilities and qualifications of the school's leadership/management team beyond the principal/head of school. If known, identify the individuals who will fill these positions. Provide the qualifications, resumes, and professional biographies for these individuals if not so provided above. If these positions are not yet filled, explain the timeline, criteria, and process for recruitment and hiring.

1. Key Leadership Roles & Responsibilities

Beyond the Superintendent/Head of School - Ignite Academy's leadership team will include experienced professionals overseeing academics, operations, student support, and workforce integration. These roles are essential to executing Ignite's career-connected, competency-based learning model and ensuring operational excellence.

- MS & HS Principal (Two Positions)
 - Responsibilities: Leads all aspects of school vision, academics, operations, and staff evaluation
 - Qualifications: Master's degree in education or related field; experience leading a school as principal or assistant principal
- MS & HS Deans Teaching & Learning (Two Positions)
 - Responsibilities: Leads curriculum development, teacher training, and instructional oversight to ensure rigorous academics and career-aligned pathways. Oversees data-driven instruction and professional development to improve student outcomes.
 - Qualifications: Master's degree in education or related field; experience in competency-based learning, curriculum design, and teacher coaching; proven success in improving academic performance in a career-connected school setting.
- MS & HS Deans of Students & Operations (Two Positions)
 - Responsibilities: Leads student culture, facilities, budgeting, regulatory compliance, and enrollment, ensuring seamless day-to-day operations and financial sustainability. Works closely with the governing board to maintain fiscal transparency.
 - Qualifications: Master's degree in education or a related field; experience in charter school operations, financial management, compliance, and facilities oversight.

2. Hiring Timeline & Process

The recruitment and hiring process for these leadership roles will follow a structured timeline to ensure the best candidates are identified and onboarded ahead of Ignite Academy's launch.

- Spring 2025 – Post job descriptions and begin targeted recruitment through education networks, workforce organizations, industry partners, and local community connections.
- Early 2026 – Screen and interview candidates, prioritizing expertise in competency-based learning, workforce integration, charter school operations, and student-centered educational leadership.
- Spring 2026 – Final hiring decisions and comprehensive onboarding, ensuring the leadership team is fully prepared to oversee teacher recruitment, student engagement, and pre-launch planning.

3. Qualifications and Hiring Criteria

For all leadership positions, Ignite Academy will seek candidates who demonstrate:

- Deep alignment with Ignite’s mission to provide career-connected, rigorous education.
- Proven success in similar roles within education, industry, or workforce development.
- Strong leadership and collaboration skills to drive school-wide effectiveness and innovation.
- Experience working with diverse populations and supporting underserved communities.
- Ability to execute and scale career-aligned, competency-based learning models.

File Upload

3-15F School Mgt Team Qualifications-Job Descriptions-DONE.pdf

190.8 KB • Added 5 days ago

Attachment Set Up_2025-7.pdf

173.39 KB • Added 4 days ago

g) Explain who will work on a full-time or nearly full-time basis following assignment of a location to lead development of the school and the plan to compensate these individuals.

Once a location for Ignite Charter School is secured, the MAEF members of the central office team will be joined by the school leader and key operational staff to ensure a successful launch. These individuals will oversee curriculum finalization, staff hiring, industry partnerships, and operational readiness.

Full-Time Staff Following Location Assignment

- Superintendent/ Founding School Leader) – Full-Time. Competitive salary based on Alabama charter school benchmarks, funded through state per-pupil revenue, start-up grants, and philanthropic contributions.
- HS & MS Principal – Full-Time. Salary funded through school start-up grants and the operational budget. (Joining in Fall of 2026)
- HS & MS Dean of Teaching and Learning – Full-Time. Initial salary covered by start-up funds and federal grants for instructional improvement, transitioning to state per-pupil revenue and CTE funding. (Joining in Spring of 2027)
- HS & MS Dean of Culture and Operations– Full-Time. Initial salary covered by start-up funds and federal grants , transitioning to state per-pupil revenue. (Joining in Spring of 2027)

Compensation Plan

- Start-Up Phase (Pre-Opening) – Salaries funded through start-up grants, philanthropic contributions, and state charter funding allocations.
- Operational Phase (Post-Opening) – Compensation shifts to state per-pupil funding, Title I and CTE grants, and local workforce partnerships.

Conflict of Interest
Narrative

We have no conflicts of interest.

Element Review

Reviews is not provided

4. OPERATIONS PLAN AND CAPACITY

Effective management, including oversight by a governing board, is critical for long term and sustainable school success. This section outlines the organizational aspects necessary for effective management of a high-quality public charter school.

1. Organization Structure and Relationships

Reviewer Instructions

Please rate this section using the following rubric.

Status: Not Reviewed

Form Result

The organization charts should clearly delineate the roles and responsibilities of – and lines of authority and reporting among – the governing board, staff, any related bodies (such as advisory bodies or parent/teacher councils), and any external organizations that will play a role in managing the school. The organization charts should also document clear lines of authority and reporting within the school.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Evidence of organizational charts for governance, management and staffing.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

File Upload

4-1A Organizational Chart.pdf

194.59 KB • Added 5 days ago

Element Review

Reviews is not provided

2. Governing Board

Reviewer Instructions

Please rate this section using the provided rubric.

Status: Not Reviewed

Form Result

The governing board holds the charter contract and should be an active participant in overseeing the school in partnership with the school administration. The board is responsible for the success of the school and should be responsive to the various stakeholders. The board should periodically evaluate the leadership team and hold the team responsible for school performance.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Evidence of an effective and ethical governing philosophy and structure that directly and consistently guides the board toward educational and operation success and effective representation of key stakeholders, including parents.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

- a) Describe clearly the governance structure of the proposed school, including the primary roles of the governing board members. In this explanation, please include the following:
 - i) Describe the size, current and desired composition, powers, and responsibilities of the governing board;
 - ii) Identify key skills and areas of expertise desired among board members;
 - iii) Identify key constituencies/stakeholders that will be represented on the governing board.

Governance Structure The governance structure of Ignite Academy ensures strong oversight, financial and academic accountability, and alignment with the school's mission to prepare students for high-wage, high-demand careers through career-connected learning. The governing board serves as the ultimate decision-making body, providing strategic leadership, fiduciary oversight, and ensuring adherence to the charter and all legal requirements.

Board Size and Composition

The governing board consists of 10 members, each selected for their expertise in education, workforce development, finance, law, and community engagement. The board is intentionally designed to be diverse and representative of the school community and its career pathways.

Ignite Academy Governing Board Members:

- Rob McGinley Jr., Board Chair – Experienced transaction lawyer and energy start-up entrepreneur. Former Board Chair of MAEF Public Charter Schools.
- Richard Perry, Vice-Chair – Retired corporate vice president for a Fortune 100 organization, with expertise in advanced manufacturing plant operations. Former Board Chair of MAEF Public Charter Schools.
- Mark Spivey, Treasurer – Vice President at Hancock-Whitney Bank. Experienced public charter school treasurer.
- Erin Delaporte, Board Member – Senior Manager at Alabama Power.
- Dr. Andi Kent, Board Member – Provost & Executive Vice President at the University of South Alabama.
- Contina Woods, Board Member – Executive Vice President at Regions Bank.
- Nadia Legir, Board Member – Vice President at Airbus Americas.
- Dr. Ashley Williams-Hogue, Board Member – Director of the Trauma Center and Center for Health Communities at University Hospital.
- Gia Wiggins, Board Member – Corporate HR Entrepreneur.
- Lissa Watkins, Board Member – Community Volunteer.

Powers and Responsibilities of the Board

The governing board has full authority over Ignite Academy's strategic direction, ensuring that the school fulfills its mission while maintaining compliance and accountability. Key responsibilities include:

1. Strategic Leadership & Mission Alignment – Ensuring Ignite Academy adheres to its mission and achieves academic and workforce outcomes.
2. Financial & Legal Oversight – Approving budgets, overseeing audits, and ensuring compliance with all regulations.
3. Executive Oversight – Hiring, evaluating, and supporting the school leader (Executive Director/Principal).
4. Academic & Programmatic Oversight – Approving curriculum, student achievement targets, and industry partnerships.
5. Stakeholder & Community Engagement – Ensuring transparency and engagement with students, parents, and industry partners.
6. Compliance & Policy Making – Overseeing school policies, including admissions, discipline, and operations.

Key Skills and Areas of Expertise Represented on the Board

The board collectively brings expertise in the following areas to ensure effective governance and oversight:

- Education Leadership & Curriculum Development – Dr. Andi Kent provides expertise in postsecondary education leadership, while Richard Perry and others contribute insights from K-12 and workforce-aligned education models.
- Workforce & Industry Expertise – Nadia Legir (Airbus Americas) and Richard Perry (Advanced Manufacturing) ensure strong alignment with industry and workforce needs.
- Finance, Accounting, & Auditing – Mark Spivey (Hancock-Whitney Bank) and Contina Woods (Regions Bank) bring financial oversight experience.

- Legal & Compliance Knowledge – Rob McGinley Jr. (lawyer) supports legal compliance and governance policies.
- Fundraising & Development – Board members with corporate and nonprofit experience will guide philanthropic strategies and external funding.
- Community Engagement & Advocacy – Lissa Watkins and Gia Wiggins ensure strong connections with local stakeholders and families.

All board members will undergo annual governance training to ensure continued effectiveness in oversight, financial management, and school leadership.

Key Constituencies/Stakeholders Represented on the Board

Ignite Academy's governing board reflects key stakeholders invested in the school's success:

1. Education Leadership & Higher Education

- Dr. Andi Kent (University of South Alabama) ensures alignment with postsecondary expectations.
- Richard Perry contributes expertise from K-12 and workforce-aligned education.

2. Industry & Workforce Development Partners

- Nadia Legir (Airbus Americas) and Richard Perry (Advanced Manufacturing) provide insight into workforce demands.

3. Financial & Legal Experts

- Mark Spivey (Hancock-Whitney Bank) and Contina Woods (Regions Bank) oversee financial sustainability.
- Rob McGinley Jr. (lawyer) ensures legal compliance.

4. Community Leaders & Family Representation

- Lissa Watkins and Gia Wiggins provide family and community perspectives to ensure Ignite meets the needs of students and their families.

By balancing strategic expertise with community representation, Ignite Academy's governing board ensures accountability,

innovation, and student success.

b) Explain the governance philosophy that will guide the board, including the nature and extent of involvement by key stakeholder groups. Include how the board will interact with the principal/head of school and any advisory bodies. Attach the governing bylaws for the proposed school.

Governance Philosophy The Ignite Academy Governing Board is committed to strategic oversight, mission alignment, and stakeholder engagement, ensuring academic excellence, financial sustainability, and workforce integration. The board will focus on policy, accountability, and strategic direction, while daily operations remain with the CEO and school leadership team.

Board Governance Philosophy

The board operates as a fiduciary, policy-setting body that ensures Ignite's mission is upheld while providing leadership autonomy. Key principles include:

- **Strategic Oversight, Not Micromanagement** – The board sets goals, approves budgets, and ensures compliance but delegates operations to the leadership team.
- **Stakeholder-Driven Decision-Making** – A diverse board ensures student, parent, and industry voices inform decisions.
- **Transparency & Accountability** – Meetings comply with Alabama Open Meetings Law, and the board conducts annual self-evaluations and external governance reviews.
- **Data-Driven Oversight** – The board reviews KPIs on student achievement, financial health, and workforce outcomes quarterly.

Stakeholder Involvement in Governance

- **Families & Community** – A Parent & Community Advisory Council meets quarterly to advise on school culture and engagement. A board liaison ensures feedback is integrated into policy.
- **Industry & Workforce** – A Workforce Advisory Council of employers and industry leaders meets biannually to ensure career pathways, internships, and credentials align with labor market needs.
- **Higher Education Partners** – The HBCU partner has a board representative to support dual enrollment, shared facilities, and college alignment.
- **Educators & Leadership** – A Teacher Leadership Team collaborates with the CEO and principal to refine instructional practices. The principal provides monthly updates on student performance and school needs.

Board-Leadership Team Interaction

- The board hires, supports, and evaluates the CEO, who manages school leadership.

- The CEO provides monthly reports on academic, financial, and operational progress.
- The board conducts an annual CEO evaluation to ensure accountability.

Decision-Making Authority:

Area	Board Role	Leadership Role (CEO & Principal)
Mission & Strategic Direction	Sets policies & approves long-term vision	Implements board-approved strategic initiatives
Financial Oversight	Approves budget, ensures compliance, reviews audits	Manages daily financial operations, reporting to board
Hiring & Staffing	Hires, supports, and evaluates CEO	Manages staff recruitment, professional development
Academic Oversight	Approves key instructional models and performance goals	Implements curriculum, supports teachers
Community & Industry Partnerships	Ensures school maintains strong relationships	Executes partnership agreements, oversees internships

File Upload

4-2B Governing Board Bylaws.pdf

1.69 MB • Added 5 days ago

- c) Explain how this governance structure and composition will help ensure that
- i) The school will be an educational and operational success;
 - ii) The board will evaluate the success of the school and school leader;
 - iii) There will be active and effective representation of key stakeholders, including parents.

Governance Composition The Ignite Academy Board is designed to provide strong oversight, accountability, and stakeholder engagement to ensure the school's success.

- i) The board includes members with expertise in education, finance, workforce development, and community engagement, ensuring informed decision-making. It sets policies, reviews performance data quarterly, and holds leadership accountable while allowing autonomy in daily operations.
- ii) The board evaluates school and leadership success through an annual CEO review, external audits, and performance monitoring. It tracks student achievement, financial sustainability, and stakeholder feedback to guide continuous improvement.
- iii) Stakeholder representation is built into the governance structure. A Parent & Community Advisory Council provides quarterly input, with a board liaison ensuring parent perspectives inform decisions. A Workforce Advisory Council ensures career pathways align with industry needs, and an HBCU representative supports post secondary partnerships.

This governance structure ensures transparency, data-driven oversight, and meaningful stakeholder engagement to drive long-term success.

d) List all current and identified board members and their intended roles. Provide the qualifications, interest for serving on the board, full resume, and professional biographies for these individuals. If these positions are not yet filled, explain the timeline, criteria, and process for recruitment.

Board Members

Current Board Members & Roles

- Rob McGinley Jr., Board Chair – Transaction lawyer, energy start-up entrepreneur, and former Board Chair of MAEF Public Charter Schools. Provides legal expertise, governance leadership, and strategic oversight.
- Richard Perry, Vice-Chair – Retired corporate VP with expertise in advanced manufacturing. Supports workforce development, industry partnerships, and employer engagement.
- Mark Spivey, Treasurer – VP at Hancock-Whitney Bank, experienced in charter school finance and treasury management, ensuring fiscal oversight and sustainability.
- Contina Woods, Board Member – Executive VP at Regions Bank, contributing expertise in financial strategy, economic development, and business operations.
- Dr. Andi Kent, Board Member – Provost & EVP at the University of South Alabama, ensuring curriculum alignment, dual enrollment pathways, and postsecondary partnerships.
- Nadia Legir, Board Member – Vice President at Airbus Americas, advising on advanced manufacturing, engineering career pathways, and workforce readiness.
- Dr. Ashley Williams-Hogue, Board Member – Director of the Trauma Center & Center for Health Communities at University Hospital, ensuring health sciences pathway alignment and student well-being.
- Erin Delaporte, Board Member – Senior Manager at Alabama Power, providing insight into STEM career pathways and industry partnerships.
- Gia Wiggins, Board Member – Corporate HR entrepreneur, advising on talent development, school culture, and employer partnerships.
- Lissa Watkins, Board Member – Community volunteer, ensuring family and community engagement are central to Ignite's mission.

Board Recruitment Process (If Additional Members Are Needed)

If further board members are needed before launch, the recruitment process will follow:

1. Timeline – New board members identified 12-18 months before school opening (2026-2027).
2. Criteria – Candidates must have expertise in education, workforce development, finance, legal compliance, or community engagement.
3. Process – Candidates will be vetted through board nominations, interviews, and a formal selection process to ensure alignment with Ignite's mission.

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Board Member Biographies.pdf

688.3 KB • Added 5 days ago

e) Disclose any potential conflict of interest for identified board members and their association with the school. Consult the Alabama Ethics Law. *Ala Code* § 36-25-1 through 36-25-30 (1975).

Conflict of Interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

f) If the current applicant team does not include the initial governing board, explain how and when the transition to the formal governing board will take place.

Transition Narrative

The MAEF governing board will serve as the founding board of Ignite Academy. Please see attachment from section D.

g) If this application is being submitted by an existing non-profit organization respond to the following:

- i) Will the existing non-profit board govern the new school, or has the school formed a new non-profit corporation governed by a separate board?
- ii) If the non-profit's current board will govern the charter school, what steps have been taken to transform its board membership, mission, and bylaws to assume its new duties? Describe the plan and timeline for completing the transition and orienting the board to its new duties.
- iii) If a new board has been formed, describe what, if anything, its ongoing relationship to the existing non-profit board will be.

Formation of a new board

i) Governance Structure

MAEF will establish a new 501(c)(3) non-profit entity to govern Ignite Academy, but the members of the MAEF governing board will serve as the members of the Ignite governing board to ensure alignment and support.. MAEF will retain an oversight role, ensuring the school operates in alignment with its mission, financial responsibilities, and strategic vision while allowing the school's leadership to manage daily operations.

ii) Transition Plan & Timeline for Board Conversion

To ensure a smooth transition to charter school governance, the following steps will be taken:

Phase	Timeline	Key Actions
Board Bylaw Review & Updates	Q3 2025	Amend bylaws and governance policies to reflect the oversight of Ignite Academy under the new 501(c)(3).
Board Training on Charter Oversight	Q4 2025 - Q1 2026	Provide governance training on charter school accountability, compliance, and financial oversight.
Formation of School-Focused Committees	Q1 2026	Establish finance, compliance, and academic performance committees within the existing board.
Formal Establishment of the New C3	Q2 2026	Finalize legal and financial documentation, securing IRS 501(c)(3) status for the new entity.
Charter Contract Finalization & Governance Alignment	Q3 2026	Ensure full board integration with charter accountability requirements, solidifying roles and responsibilities.

Full Transition to Operational Oversight	2027 (Pre- Openi ng)	The board fully assumes governance duties, supporting school leadership in staff hiring, student enrollment, and compliance monitoring.
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This structured approach ensures that the board is fully prepared to govern Ignite Academy while maintaining alignment with MAEF's strategic oversight role.

iii) Relationship Between the New Board and MAEF Board

The MAEF Board remains intact and will govern the new 501(c)(3) entity, maintaining continuity in leadership and governance.

Element Review

Reviews is not provided

3. Legal Status and Governing Documents

Reviewer Instructions

Please rate this section using the provided rubric.

Status: Not Reviewed

Form Result

Only organizations that have a 501(c)(3) non-profit federal tax-exempt status may hold a charter school contact in the State of Alabama.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Evidence of non-profit and federal tax-exempt status.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

Legal Status

Ignite Academy will be established as a non-profit 501(c)(3) public charter school under the oversight of MAEF. See Attachment for the non-profit status, articles of incorporation, and bylaws of MAEF, which will be adopted for Ignite, once its established.

File Upload

4-3 Articles of Incorporation.pdf

457.22 KB • Added 5 days ago

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4-3A Non-Profit and Tax Exempt Status.pdf

305.03 KB • Added 5 days ago

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4-2B Governing Board Bylaws.pdf

1.69 MB • Added 5 days ago

b) Attach, the completed and signed Statement of Assurances (template provided).

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4-3B Statement of Assurances.pdf

335.49 KB • Added 5 days ago

Element Review

Reviews is not provided

4. Advisory Bodies

Reviewer Instructions

Please rate this section using the provided rubric.

Status: Not Reviewed

Form Result

Advisory bodies, including professional organizations, can provide valuable insight to enhance the effectiveness of the governing board and school administration. Applicants are encouraged to consult with these outside bodies, and secure their participation, to strengthen the application. New advisory bodies tied to the school become stakeholders in the success of the institution and should be included in the decision-making process.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Compelling evidence of the use of advisory bodies to directly and consistently enhance the successful operation of the school.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

a) List any existing professional organization or body that will be joined or consulted by the governing board to inform their work

The Ignite Academy governing board will join and consult the following professional organizations and advisory bodies to ensure strong governance, compliance, and best practices in education and workforce development:

- Alabama Public Charter School Commission (APCSC) – To stay aligned with state charter regulations and compliance expectations.
- National Charter Schools Institute (NCSI) – To receive guidance on governance best practices, board training, and accountability frameworks.
- National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) – To access policy recommendations, governance tools, and compliance support.
- Charter School Growth Fund (CSGF) or equivalent network – To explore financial sustainability, facilities planning, and operational best practices.
- Local Industry and Workforce Advisory Councils – To align career pathways with regional workforce needs, particularly in healthcare and advanced manufacturing.
- HBCU Partnerships – To inform dual enrollment strategies and postsecondary alignment.

Advisory Bodies Formed Ignite Academy will establish advisory bodies to engage stakeholders, support decision-making, and align education with industry needs. These councils will provide input to the governing board and school leadership.

- Parent & Community Advisory Council – Meets quarterly to provide feedback on school culture, family engagement, and student support. A board liaison ensures input is integrated into policy decisions.
- Workforce Advisory Council – Meets biannually with industry leaders to align career pathways, internships, and certifications with workforce demands.
- Educator Advisory Committee – Meets monthly with school leadership to provide insights on curriculum, instructional practices, and professional development needs.
- ACIP Committee - Meets quarterly to set and reflect on school improvement plans and targets using the Cognia school improvement process
- HBCU Postsecondary Advisory Council – Meets semi-annually to strengthen dual enrollment, postsecondary alignment, and student transition strategies.

Execution & Impact Measurement of Advisory Bodies

Each advisory body will have a designated facilitator to organize meetings, collect feedback, and report to the governing board. Recommendations will be reviewed quarterly and integrated into school decision-making.

- Parent & Community Advisory Council (Quarterly): Led by the Family Engagement Coordinator, providing feedback on school culture and student support. Impact measured through family engagement surveys and participation rates.
- Workforce Advisory Council (Biannual): Industry leaders advise on internships, certifications, and career pathways. Success tracked through work-based learning participation and postsecondary/job placements.
- Educator Advisory Committee (Monthly): Teachers provide input on curriculum and professional development. Measured by teacher retention and instructional quality data.
- ACIP Committee (Quarterly): Comprised of teachers, parents, students who guide the establishment of school

goals and targets aligned to the ACIP plan and monitor the progress towards these goals

- HBCU Postsecondary Advisory Council (Semi-Annual): Guides dual enrollment and college readiness. Success is measured by college matriculation and student persistence rates.

Quarterly reports to the board ensure advisory input drives policy and school improvements. Annual impact reviews assess engagement and student outcomes. This structure ensures stakeholder voices shape school success.

Element Review

Reviews is not provided

5. Grievance / Complaint Process

Reviewer Instructions

Please rate this section using the provided rubric.

Status: Not Reviewed

Form Result

Provide documentation for a grievance policy that gives students and parents due process rights.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Evidence of a useful grievance process for use by parents and students.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

a) Explain the process the school will follow should a parent or student have an objection to a governing board policy or decision, administrative procedure, or practice at the school. Attach any adopted policies or procedures.

Ignite Academy will implement a clear and structured process to address concerns from parents and students regarding school policies, administrative decisions, or practices.

A. Informal Discussion – If a student believes there is a basis for complaint, he/she shall discuss the complaint with his/her principal or the designee of the principal, (except in cases of discrimination or harassment involving the principal or the designee, in which case the complainant shall report to a person designated by the Superintendent) within five (5) days of the occurrence of the alleged violation except in cases involving harassment or discrimination in which thirty (30) days will be allowed.

B. Level One – The student or parent filing the grievance shall complete the Ignite Academy Grievance Report (attached and/or in possession of the principal). The report shall be submitted to the principal or his/her designee. The principal or his/her designee shall conduct an investigation in a timely manner. The principal or his/her designee's decision shall be reduced to writing and presented to the student and/or parent. In no event, shall an appeal to Level Two be allowed without the involvement of the principal or his/her designee. The principal or his/her designee shall document his/her involvement with the problem.

C. Level Two – In the event the problem is not resolved at Level One, the student/parent may file an appeal in writing with the Superintendent by completing the Ignite Academy Grievance Report (attached and/or in possession of the Superintendent's office). Such appeal shall be presented within ten (10) days of the Level One decision. The Superintendent shall request a conference with the aggrieved or render a written decision within ten (10) days from the receipt of the grievance.

D. Board Appeal – In the event the problem is not resolved at Level Two, the student/parent may request the Superintendent to schedule a hearing before the Board. The Board shall issue a decision within forty-five (45) days after the hearing. The aggrieved person may select a representative to accompany him/her, may state the facts in written form, and may request a written decision.

File Upload

4-5A Grievance Policy & Procedures.pdf

378.54 KB • Added 5 days ago

Element Review

Reviews is not provided

6. Staff Structure

Reviewer Instructions

Please rate this section using the provided rubric.

Status: Not Reviewed

Form Result

Provide a staffing chart that identifies all key personnel necessary to operate a high-quality public charter school.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Evidence of a staffing chart that identifies all personnel.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

- a) Attach a completed staffing chart for the school that includes:
 - i) Year 1 positions, as well as positions to be added in future years;
 - ii) Administrative, instructional, and non-instructional personnel;
 - iii) The number of classroom teachers, paraprofessionals, and specialty teachers; and
 - iv) Operational and support staff.

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Staffing List_Final.pdf

73.05 KB • Added 4 days ago

- b) Identify key responsibilities within the staffing chart including, but not limited to,
 - i) Child Nutrition;
 - ii) Federal Programs;
 - iii) Transportation (if applicable); and

iv) Financial Reporting.

Through MAEF, Ignite Academy has assigned the following responsibilities to ensure compliance, efficiency, and student support in key operational areas:

Child Nutrition

- The Director of Operations will oversee food service operations, ensuring compliance with federal and state nutrition guidelines.
- Ignite Academy will contract with an approved food service vendor to provide healthy, balanced meals, following National School Lunch Program (NSLP) standards.

Federal Programs

- The Chief Financial Officer, under the supervision of the CEO, will manage Title I, Title II, and other federally funded programs, ensuring compliance with grant requirements.
- The CFO will submit required reports, manage funds, and oversee program implementation to align with student success goals.

Transportation (if applicable)

- The Director of Operations will coordinate transportation services in partnership with local transit providers or contracted bus services.
- The school will provide free or reduced-fare transportation assistance for eligible students.

Financial Reporting

- The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) will be responsible for budget preparation, financial audits, and monthly financial reports presented to the board.
- The Board Treasurer will oversee financial transparency, ensuring compliance with state and federal financial policies.

c) Explain how the relationship between the school's senior administrative team and the rest of the staff will be managed. Note the teacher-student ratio, as well as the ratio of total adults to students for the school.

Relationship management narrative Ignite Academy will foster a collaborative and transparent leadership structure that ensures clear communication, accountability, and professional support between the senior administrative team and staff.

- **Leadership Oversight** – The Superintendent and Principal will oversee daily school operations, instructional quality, and staff development. The Director of Operations will manage logistics, student services, and compliance.
- **Regular Staff Meetings** – Weekly instructional team meetings will ensure alignment on curriculum, student support, and operational updates.
- **Open Communication Channels** – The administrative team will maintain open-door policies and schedule quarterly staff town halls for feedback and discussion.
- **Professional Development** – Teachers and staff will receive ongoing coaching, industry-aligned training, and career pathway-specific professional development to enhance instruction.

Teacher-Student and Adult-Student Ratios

School Year	Enrollment	Academic Teachers Needed (25:1)	Special Ed Teachers Needed	Total Teachers Needed	Staff-to-Student Ratio
2027-2028	250	14	2	16	~17:1
2028-2029	500	26	4	30	~17:1
2029-2030	750	39	5	44	~17:1
2030-2031	875	46	5	51	~17:1
2031-2032	875	46	5	51	~17:1

Element Review

Reviews is not provided

7. Staffing Plans, Hiring, Management, and Evaluation

Reviewer Instructions

Please rate this section using the provided rubric.

Status: Not Reviewed

Form Result

Provide details on the hiring and management of school staff that provides opportunities for meaningful staff contributions and gives staff rights suitable to their position.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Evidence of appropriate contractual relationships with staff.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

a) Explain the relationship that will exist between the proposed charter school and its employees, including whether the employees will be at-will and whether the school will use employment contracts. If the school uses contracts, explain the nature and purpose of the contracts. Attach any personnel policies or an employee manual, if developed.

Ignite Academy will establish a clear and structured employment framework that ensures transparency, accountability, and alignment with Alabama labor laws and charter school regulations.

1. **At-Will Employment** – All Ignite Academy employees will be at-will, meaning employment may be terminated by either the school or the employee at any time, with or without cause, except as otherwise provided in an employment contract.
2. **Employment Contracts** – While all employees will be considered at-will, Ignite Academy will issue one-year employment contracts for teachers and administrators. These contracts will:
 - Outline salary, benefits, and professional expectations.
 - Define performance evaluation criteria and renewal conditions.
 - Establish termination procedures in alignment with state regulations.
3. **Personnel Policies** – All employees will receive an Employee Handbook that details policies related to professional conduct, workplace expectations, disciplinary procedures, and grievance resolution.
4. **Compensation & Benefits** – Employees will have access to competitive salary structures and benefits, including participation in the Alabama Teacher Retirement System (TRS) **and Public Education Employees' Health Insurance Plan (PEEHIP)**, similar to the models followed by other charter schools

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b) Outline the proposed school's salary ranges and employment benefits for all employees, as well as any incentives or reward structures that may be part of the compensation system. Explain the school's strategy for retaining high-performing teachers. If available, include a salary chart based on years of experience.

Ignite Academy will offer a competitive salary and benefits package to attract and retain highly qualified educators while ensuring alignment with industry standards for career-connected learning. See attachment for salary ranges.

Benefits:

- State Retirement Plan (TRS) – Employees will participate in the Alabama Teacher Retirement System (TRS).
- Health Insurance – Coverage through the Public Education Employees' Health Insurance Plan (PEEHIP).
- Paid Leave – Competitive sick and vacation leave policies.
- Professional Development Stipends – Funding for training, certifications, and continuing education.

Incentives & Teacher Retention Strategy

Ignite Academy will use a two-pronged strategy to attract and retain high-performing educators:

1. Leadership & Growth Opportunities

- Teachers will have opportunities to lead professional learning communities (PLCs), mentor new educators, and take on instructional leadership roles.
- CTE instructors will have access to industry externships to stay updated on workforce trends.

2. Performance-Based Incentives

- Annual bonuses for exceeding student performance targets.
- Retention stipends for educators who stay beyond three years.
- Recognition programs, including an annual Excellence in Teaching Award.

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Attachment Set Up_2025-4.pdf

150.72 KB • Added 5 days ago

c) Describe your strategy, plans, and timeline for recruiting and hiring the teaching staff, including the school's plan for hiring "Highly Qualified" staff in accordance with the state accountability plan. Explain other key selection criteria and any special considerations relevant to your school design.

Ignite Academy will implement a targeted hiring plan to recruit highly qualified teachers in alignment with the Alabama state accountability plan while ensuring expertise in career-connected learning for healthcare and advanced manufacturing pathways.

Recruitment Strategy & Timeline

- **Upon charter approval:** Post positions on ALSDE job boards, partner with HBCUs and universities, and conduct community outreach.
- **Six to twelve months pre-opening:**
 - Application and screening – Review certifications, industry credentials, and experience.
 - Interviews and demonstration lessons – Assess instructional skills and mission alignment.
 - Final hiring and onboarding – Contract signing, background checks, and orientation.

Hiring Highly Qualified Teachers

- **State certification:** Priority will be given to state-certified educators, with alternative certification pathways for CTE instructors.
- **Workforce-aligned instruction:** Industry professionals will be recruited to teach career pathway courses.
- **Professional development:** Ongoing training in competency-based education and real-world learning models.

Special Considerations

- **Dual enrollment and college readiness:** Teachers will collaborate with postsecondary institutions to support credentialing opportunities.
- **Commitment to diversity:** Recruitment will prioritize hiring educators who reflect the student population.

d) Outline the school's procedures for hiring and dismissing school personnel, including conducting criminal background checks.

Hiring Process

Ignite Academy will follow a structured hiring process to recruit high-quality educators and staff while ensuring compliance with Alabama state requirements:

1. **Job Posting & Recruitment** – Positions will be posted on ALSDE job boards, industry associations, and community-based platforms.
2. **Application Screening & Interviews** – Candidates will undergo an initial resume review, phone screening, and in-person panel interview assessing their alignment with the school's mission.
3. **Demonstration Lesson (For Instructional Staff)** – Teaching candidates will present a sample lesson evaluated by the hiring committee.
4. **Background & Reference Checks** – Finalists will undergo criminal background screening, reference checks, and credential verification in accordance with Alabama law.
5. **Offer & Onboarding** – Selected candidates will sign an employment contract (if applicable) and complete an orientation program.

Dismissal Process

Ignite Academy will implement a progressive discipline policy for managing employee performance and conduct:

1. **Verbal Warning** – For minor infractions, employees will receive a documented verbal warning with coaching for improvement.
2. **Written Warning** – Repeated or more serious issues will result in a formal written notice, outlining concerns and corrective actions.
3. **Final Warning & Probation** – If issues persist, employees may be placed on a performance improvement plan (PIP) with specific timelines and benchmarks.
4. **Termination** – For severe misconduct or failure to improve, employees may be dismissed per board-approved policies, with the right to appeal to the governing board if applicable.

Criminal Background Checks

All employees will undergo state and federal background checks before employment, in compliance with Alabama Department of Education regulations. Background screenings will be conducted by a third-party provider and reviewed by the Director of Operations.

e) Explain how the school leader will be supported, developed, and evaluated each school year. Attach any leadership evaluation tool(s) that you have developed already.

Ignite Academy will implement a structured system to support, develop, and evaluate the school leader, ensuring accountability and continuous professional growth.

Support and Development

- Executive Coaching and Mentorship – The school leader will receive ongoing support from experienced education leaders, industry experts, and board members.
- Professional Development – Participation in state and national leadership programs, including training in competency-based learning, industry partnerships, and instructional leadership.
- Quarterly Performance Check-ins – The CEO and board will provide feedback aligned with the school's mission and goals.

Annual Evaluation Process

The school leader will be evaluated using a research-based framework, Marzano School Leader Evaluation Model. The evaluation will be conducted by the CEO or governing board and will assess:

1. Leadership effectiveness in student achievement and school performance goals.
2. Instructional leadership, including teacher development and curriculum implementation.
3. Operational efficiency, including budget management and compliance with federal and state regulations.
4. Stakeholder engagement, including parent, industry, and community partnerships.

The evaluation process will include three formal observations per year, a self-assessment, and stakeholder feedback from teachers, students, and parents. Performance results will inform leadership growth plans and targeted support initiatives.

Leadership Evaluation
Tool(s)

Attachment Set Up_2025-5.pdf
150.14 KB • Added 5 days ago

f) Explain how teachers will be supported, developed, and evaluated each school year. Attach any teacher evaluation tool(s) that already exist for the school.

Ignite Academy is committed to ongoing teacher support, professional development, and a structured evaluation process to ensure high-quality instruction and student success.

Teacher Support & Professional Development

- **Weekly Collaboration:** Teachers will engage in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to share best practices and analyze student data.
- **Ongoing Coaching:** The school will provide instructional coaching and real-time feedback through classroom observations.
- **Summer & Mid-Year Training:** Teachers will participate in summer induction programs and quarterly professional development aligned with competency-based learning and career pathways.
- **Industry Partnerships:** CTE instructors will have access to externships with industry partners to ensure real-world relevance.

Teacher Evaluation Process

- **Annual Evaluations:** Teachers will be assessed using the Marzano Focused Teacher Evaluation Model, which includes classroom observations, student outcomes, and professional growth measures
- **Multi-Source Feedback:** Evaluations will incorporate input from peer reviews, student performance data, and administrator observations.
- **Growth Plans:** Teachers identified for support will receive a Personalized Growth Plan with targeted coaching and professional development.

Teacher Evaluation Tool(s) [Attachment Set Up_2025-6.pdf](#)
156.34 KB • Added 5 days ago

Addressing Unsatisfactory Leadership or Teacher Performance

- **Performance Improvement Plans (PIP):** Clear benchmarks, coaching, and structured feedback cycles for improvement.
- **Ongoing Coaching & Development:** Regular observations, peer feedback, and targeted PD.
- **Accountability Measures:** If no progress, corrective actions include reassignment or non-renewal.

Managing Leadership & Teacher Turnover

- **Leadership Pipeline:** Internal development through mentorship and structured training.
- **Retention Strategies:** Competitive compensation, career growth pathways, and a strong school culture.
- **Smooth Transitions:** Leadership team ensures continuity; new hires receive structured onboarding.

Element Review

Reviews is not provided

8. Professional Development

Reviewer Instructions

Please rate this section using the provided rubric.

Status: Not Reviewed

Form Result

Provide details on known professional development policies and procedures, including the position or person responsible for implementing these policies.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Compelling evidence of a high quality professional development program for staff.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

a) Identify the person or position responsible for professional development.

Person Amy Owens

Title Director of Strategy

b) Discuss the core components of professional development and how these components will support effective implementation of the educational program. Discuss the extent to which professional development will be conducted internally or externally and will be individualized or uniform.

Core Components of Professional Development

- Career-Connected Instruction: Training on integrating real-world, industry-aligned learning into the curriculum to support CTE pathways.
- Data-Driven Teaching: Regular use of student performance data and industry certification benchmarks to adjust instruction.
- SEL & Work-Based Learning: Professional development on SEL strategies that align with career readiness skills (e.g., teamwork, communication, adaptability).
- Industry Partnerships & Dual Enrollment Alignment: Training with HBCU faculty and industry partners to ensure courses align with postsecondary and workforce requirements.

Structure & Delivery

- Internal & External Training: Includes pre-opening summer training, weekly PLCs, quarterly Data Days, and mid-year PD sessions to enhance CTE instructional practices.
- Individualized & Uniform Approaches: Uniform professional development focuses on core instructional practices in CTE, while individualized support targets technical skills specific to industry sectors.
- Continuous Learning Cycle: Annual summer externships, ongoing instructional coaching, and regular certifications align teacher competencies with evolving workforce demands.

c) Provide a schedule and explanation of professional development that will take place prior to school opening. Explain what will be covered during this induction period and how teachers will be prepared to deliver any unique or particularly challenging aspects of the curriculum and instructional methods.

Preparing Teachers for Ignite's Unique Curriculum

Teachers must be prepared for a variety of unique curriculum. As a result we will focus professional learning on:

- CTE-Specific Training: Teachers will learn how to integrate technical skills, industry certifications, and career pathways into instruction.
- Project-Based & Work-Based Learning: Educators will practice facilitating hands-on projects, internships, and mentorship programs.
- Interdisciplinary Teaching: Training on combining academic subjects with career skills, ensuring relevance and application.
- Access: Strategies for ensuring all students, especially those underrepresented in CTE fields, receive the support needed to succeed.

Schedule & Focus Areas for Pre Service

- Part 1: Foundations & School Culture
 - Team building, instructional vision, and expectations.
 - Introduction to Ignite's career-connected learning model.
 - Classroom management and SEL integration.
- Part 2: Curriculum & Instructional Methods
 - Training on competency-based learning and industry-aligned instruction.
 - Hands-on practice with career pathways, industry tools, and dual enrollment alignment.
 - Data-driven instruction and formative assessment strategies.

File Upload

d) Describe the expected number of days/hours for professional development throughout the school year, and explain how the school's calendar, daily schedule, and staffing structure accommodate this plan. Include time scheduled for common planning or collaboration and how such time will typically be used.

Expected Days and Hours of Professional Development

- Total PD Days: 20 days annually, including 10 days in summer and monthly full-day sessions during the school year.
- Weekly PD Time: 60-minute common planning meetings and 60-minute faculty meetings every week.
- Embedded Learning: Teachers receive targeted coaching and job-embedded PD focused on CTE instruction, competency-based learning, and SEL integration.

Alignment with School Calendar & Staffing Structure

- Monthly PD Days: Built into the school calendar to allow for deep dives into instructional best practices, industry collaboration, and student data analysis.
- Common Planning Time: Ensures weekly collaboration for curriculum alignment, interdisciplinary projects, and continuous improvement.
- Flexible Scheduling: Staffing design allows for early-release days and dedicated PD blocks without disrupting student learning.

Element Review

Reviews is not provided

9. Performance Management

Reviewer Instructions

Please rate this section using the provided rubric.

Status: Not Reviewed

Form Result

Applicants may propose to supplement the authorizer's performance standards with school-specific academic or organizational goals.

Note: The authorizer will evaluate the performance of every charter school annually and for renewal purposes according to a set of academic, financial, and organizational performance standards that will be incorporated into the charter agreement. The academic performance standards will consider status, growth, and comparative performance based on federal, state, and school-specific measures. The financial performance standards will be based on standard accounting and industry standards for sound financial operation. The organizational performance standards will be based primarily on compliance with legal obligations, including fulfillment of the governing board's fiduciary obligations related to sound governance.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Compelling evidence of high quality and sustainable performance standards and evidence of direct and consistent performance monitoring over time, which considers status, growth, comparative performance, and fulfillment of legal standards.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

Academic Performance Goals

Ignite Academy has adopted a rigorous competency-based education (CBE) model that goes beyond traditional accountability metrics to ensure students graduate prepared for high-wage, high-demand careers and postsecondary success. These goals reflect the academy's commitment to real-world learning, personalized mastery, and career readiness in alignment with industry needs.

1. Competency-Based Mastery Tracking

- Students progress based on demonstrated mastery of academic, technical, and career competencies, rather than seat time.
- Assessment Model: Digital portfolios, competency-based rubrics, and industry mentor evaluations are used to assess progress.
- Target: 100% of students demonstrate proficiency in core academic and technical competencies before advancing to the next level.

2. Capstone and Interdisciplinary Project Completion

- Scholars complete industry-aligned capstone projects in their career pathways (health sciences or advanced manufacturing).
- Target: 100% of high school graduates complete at least one interdisciplinary capstone project showcasing real-world problem-solving, collaboration, and communication.

3. Dual Enrollment and Industry Certification Excellence

- Year 3 Goal: 80% of high schoolers participate in dual enrollment or earn an industry-recognized credential.
- Year 5 Goal: 80% of graduates earn at least six college credits or a recognized industry credential to enhance workforce readiness.

4. Work-Based Learning and Paid Internship Participation

- Year 1: 100% of middle schoolers engage in career exploration and hands-on STEM learning experiences.
- Year 3: 75% of high school scholars complete at least one paid internship, apprenticeship, or work-based

learning experience.

5. Economic Mobility & Postsecondary Placement

- Year 5: 80% of graduates secure high-wage, high-demand jobs or enroll in postsecondary, technical, or workforce training programs within 12 months.
- Long-Term Goal: 80% of alumni earn at least the median wage for full-time workers in Alabama within five years of graduation.

Performance Monitoring & Industry Alignment

- Quarterly Industry Reviews: Workforce advisory partners will review student performance and provide feedback on skill mastery and job readiness.
- Employer Evaluation Metrics: Internship and apprenticeship partners will assess technical proficiency, workplace behavior, and professional communication.
- Graduate Outcomes Tracking: Ignite will use wage data, industry certifications, and employer surveys to measure alumni success in securing high-demand careers.

Element Review

Reviews is not provided

10. Facilities

Reviewer Instructions

Please rate this section using the provided rubric.

Status: Not Reviewed

Form Result

Provide evidence towards securing a safe, up to code, facility to house the school.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: High quality facilities plan that provides for the procurement of a suitable independent facility.

Note: Alabama charter schools may be able to utilize existing public school buildings for charter schools if they are located on the unused facility list.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

a) Describe the process for identifying and securing a facility, including any brokers or consultants you are employing to navigate the real estate market, plans for renovations, timelines, financing, etc.

MAEF is in the initial stages of facility selection and acquisition for Ignite Academy. Given the importance of the launch of this school for the greater workforce region, MAEF is in partnership with the Industrial Development Board, Mobile Chamber of Commerce, Mobile County Public School System, and Bishop State Community College to pursue the development of a joint site where Ignite Academy, a new CTE center for Mobile County Public School System, and a new advanced manufacturing/maritime training facility for Bishop State would be co-located.

Why collaborate in this manner? A shared site will allow for significant national and state investment to support the broader workforce development efforts in South Alabama. This will make the feasibility of a new build construction much more attainable for all parties involved. It will allow for synergies between the programs and a reduction in the duplication of cost for highly expensive technical training equipment needed for advanced manufacturing. It will also foster collaboration between students, faculty, and staff to accelerate innovation among partners.

Facility Acquisition Timeline/Process

Accomplishments to Date

- December 2024- Developed a shared vision with MAEF, MCPSS, Bishop State, Mobile Chamber of Commerce (See attached letter of support between educational entities)
- December 2024 - Hired Architectural firm Adams Stewart develop preliminary schematics for a shared educational site and consult with general contractors for estimated pricing (See summary of costs they provided attached)
- January 2025 - Secured the support of the Industrial Development Board (nonprofit economic quasi governmental economic development agency) to serve as fiscal sponsor for the project.
- January 2025 - Hired Vallas Realty to serve as representative in the acquisition of potential sites for this project (through Industrial Development Board).
- February 2025 - Developed legislative ask for both state and federal partners
- March 2025 - Engaged Adams and Reese to support advocacy efforts with federal partners for funding to support the acquisition and construction costs of a shared site.

- March 2025 - Engaged with U.S. Navy Maritime Industrial Base to confirm support for this project.
- March 2025 - Narrowed potential locations and begin negotiations through Vallas Realty for letters of intent with site ownership

Next Step Actions

- April 2025 - Visit Norfolk and Washington DC to refine vision for site and advocate for federal resources to support project
- April 2025 - Negotiate with ownership and secure letters of intent for one or more potential properties
- June 2025 - Conduct Phase 1 Environmental and Site Feasibility Studies
- July 2025 - Develop first phase of architect drawings
- October 2025 - finalize drawings for charter school building
- December 2025 - Secure funding for purchase of property and construction of building
 - Funding Sources
 - National/Federal Funding: \$50M - \$100M (Lower/Upper Estimate)
 - State Funding: \$15M-\$30M (Lower/Upper Estimate)
 - Local Funding: \$5-10M (Lower/Upper Estimate)
 - Remaining Financing: Charter School Lenders
- January 2026: Begin construction of charter school building
- June 2027: Substantial Completion Achieved for Charter School Building
- July 2027: Staff Move-In/ & Family/Community Open House
- August 2027: School Opens for 2027-2028 school year

Contingencies: If the potential for the planning joint site fails, Ignite will scale the size of the construction down to the required 90,000 sq/ft. Additionally, the leadership team through its joint

realtor has identified an alternative property that was a previous private school, which is owned by the City of Mobile. This facility could be used as a temporary location if construction runs longer than expected. Conversely, it could operate as an alternate permanent location with cheaper reduced construction costs.

b) If you currently hold a facility or have an MOU or other proof of intent to secure a specific facility, please provide proof of the commitment as attachment . Briefly describe the facility including location, size, and amenities. You may provide, as attachment, up to 10 pages of supporting documents providing details about the facility. Charter school facilities must comply with applicable state, local and authorizer health and safety requirements. In addition, charter school applicants must be prepared to follow applicable city planning review procedures.

While a facility has not been selected, materials from Vallas Realty supporting potential sites are attached.

Proof of Commitment

4-10B Facilities Proof of Commitment and Supporting Documents.pdf

809.5 KB • Added 5 days ago

Supporting Documents

Element Review

Reviews is not provided

11. Start-Up and Ongoing Operations

Reviewer Instructions

Please rate this section using the provided rubric.

Status: Not Reviewed

Form Result

Provide a timeline of the major tasks needed to open the school with an identification of the responsible individuals.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Compelling evidence of an effective, high-quality start-up plan that specifies detailed tasks, timelines, and responsible individuals.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

a) Provide, as an attachment, a detailed start-up plan for the school, specifying tasks, timelines, and responsible individuals. This plan should align with the Pre-opening Cashflow Workbook from 5.3.a.

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Attachment Set Up_2025-2.pdf

164.4 KB • Added 5 days ago

b) If the school will provide transportation, describe the transportation arrangements for prospective students. In addition to daily transportation needs, describe how the school plans to meet transportation needs for field trips and athletic events.

During the initial year of operations, the school will not offer transportation to and from school. Following the first year, the school will pursue contracting with a third-party transportation provider to operate bus routes, focusing on areas with high student enrollment. This arrangement will be subject to funding availability. Transportation eligibility will be determined based on distance from the school and student need. Following the second year, the school will pursue the purchase of buses to run its own transportation process.

- **Bus Routes & Stops:** Routes will be designed using student enrollment data to maximize efficiency and minimize travel time.
- **Public Transit Partnerships:** Students living near public transportation hubs will receive subsidized or free transit passes.
- **Transportation for Students with Disabilities:** Ignite will provide specialized transportation in compliance with IEP and 504 Plan requirements.

Field Trips & Extracurricular Transportation

To support career-connected learning, industry visits, and extracurricular activities, Ignite Academy will:

- Contract charter buses for field trips, career site visits, and academic enrichment experiences.
- Provide bus transportation for athletic teams traveling to competitions.
- Arrange carpools and parent-supported transportation for smaller events where feasible, ensuring adherence to safety policies.

After-School & Extended Learning Transportation

- Late bus services will be explored for students participating in internships, apprenticeships, and after-school programs.
- Partnerships with local transit agencies and rideshare programs will be considered to expand access to evening transportation.

c) Provide the school plan for safety and security for students, the facility, and property. Explain the types of security personnel, technology, equipment, and policies that the school will employ.

Ignite Academy will implement a multi-layered safety and security approach to ensure a safe learning environment for students, staff, and visitors. The plan includes personnel, technology, infrastructure, and emergency preparedness strategies.

Security Personnel & Monitoring

- School Resource Officers (SROs) – Ignite will collaborate with local law enforcement to station SROs on campus during school hours.
- Security Staff & Supervision – Designated staff members will oversee hallway monitoring, visitor screening, and crisis response.
- Emergency Response Team – Trained staff members will coordinate drills, safety training, and emergency procedures.

Technology & Infrastructure Security

- **Controlled Access & Visitor Management**
 - Secure entry systems with ID badge requirements for all staff.
 - Visitor check-in system with photo identification scanning.
 - Restricted access to classrooms, labs, and administrative areas.
- **Surveillance & Communication Systems**
 - 24/7 security cameras monitoring entry points, hallways, and outdoor areas.
 - Intercom and two-way radio systems for rapid communication.
 - Automated emergency notification system to alert families and authorities.

Emergency Preparedness & Safety Policies

- **Drills & Crisis Response**
 - Monthly fire, lockdown, severe weather, and evacuation drills.

- Partnership with local police, fire, and emergency medical services.
- Designated safe rooms and evacuation zones within and outside the facility.

- **Health & Medical Readiness**

- On-site medical response kits and AED stations.
- CPR and first aid training for staff and designated student leaders.
- Mental health crisis intervention protocols.

- **Cybersecurity & Data Protection**

- Firewall-protected network systems for student and staff information.
- Secure student records management system (SIS).
- Training on digital safety and responsible technology use.

d) Provide, as attachment a list of the types of insurance coverage the school will secure, including a description of the levels of coverage. Types of insurance should include workers' compensation, liability, property, indemnity, directors and officers, automobile, and other.

File Upload

24-25 Renewal Summary.pdf

504.18 KB • Added 5 days ago

e) Provide, as attachment, the meal delivery plan including a wellness plan.

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Attachment Set Up_2025-3.pdf

168.55 KB • Added 5 days ago

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Attachment Set Up_2025-3.pdf

168.55 KB • Added 5 days ago

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Element Review

Reviews is not provided

12. Operations Capacity

Reviewer Instructions

Please rate this section using the provided rubric.

Status: Not Reviewed

Form Result

Provide details on the implementation team and their expertise to successfully complete the tasks needed to open a high-quality charter school.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Compelling evidence of an effective capacity to implement the school's operations plan in a quality and effective manner.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

a) Describe the applicant team's individual and collective qualifications for implementing the Operations Plan successfully, including capacity in areas such as the following:

- i) Staffing;
- ii) Fund-raising;
- iii) Financial;
- iv) Marketing and Recruitment;
- v) General operations; and
- vi) Facilities management.

The Mobile Area Education Foundation (MAEF) was founded in 1992 as a convener of diverse stakeholders representing the entire community around the issues of public education. Its mission is to develop innovative solutions that dramatically improve the success of youth in Mobile County. For over 32 years, MAEF has served as Mobile's lead agency on many education-focused reform strategies/initiatives including: Yes We Can, 80/20 Graduate Ready, 75,000 Degrees, and Evidence2Success.

Financial Capacity: MAEF's experienced staff has managed major federal grants, including a \$15 million U.S. Department of Education Grant (current), a \$3.6 million National Science Foundation grant, a \$9 million U.S. Department of Education Grant, \$1.1 million U.S. Department of Education Grant, a \$500,000 U.S. Department of Labor Grant, a \$1 million Annenberg award for public engagement, a \$207,000 Workforce Investment Act stimulus award from SWAPTE (formerly Mobile Works), and a current \$160,000 Workforce Investment Innovation Act annual award from SWAPTE. In addition, MAEF serves as the financial agent for MAEF Public Charter Schools, Inc, which operates two charter schools with an annual budget of more than \$ 10 million in state, federal, and philanthropic funding. MAEF has managed these resources in full compliance with state, federal, and local laws and boasts clean audits since inception.

Programmatic Capacity: For the past 32 years, MAEF has worked to improve public education through innovative programming that serves some of the most at-risk youth in Mobile County, including the Engaging Youth in Engineering, Vital Link, and Mobile County Public Schools Themed Career Academies in all 12 high schools. Through these programs, MAEF has utilized national best-practices to develop strategies that keep students in school and recover those who might have dropped out. It is this experience that made MAEF the ideal partner to develop the Evening Educational Options Program (EEOP) in partnership with the Mobile County Public School System in 2009. The success and lessons learned from EEOP positioned MAEF to be the first agency approved in Alabama to open the state's first public charter high school, ACCEL Day and Evening Academy. ACCEL incorporates accelerated course offerings, trained support staff, and career and college development to serve high school students who are overaged and undercredited. There are students for whom the traditional high school environment has not worked. In 2017, MAEF launched ACCEL Day and Evening Academy with 250 students from Mobile and Baldwin counties. Since that time, ACCEL has routinely performed as the highest performing, high-poverty

high school in Mobile County. ACCEL has expanded to serve more than 800 students annually in grades 6-12 and has a 93% poverty rate. Two-thirds of the student body who enroll annually are overaged and undercredited at entry. ACCEL has graduated over 500 students with 85 percent of students accepted to postsecondary and workforce training programs.

This MAEF team serves as a founding team of Ignite Academy and brings a wealth of experience in school operations, financial management, fundraising, and facility oversight, ensuring the successful launch and sustainability of the school. Collectively, the team possesses deep expertise in K-12 education, charter school operations, workforce development, and strategic planning, positioning Ignite for long-term success. Below is a breakdown of the team's individual and collective qualifications in key operational areas.

Staffing

Dr. Jeremiah Newell, Monique Baugh, and Amy Owens bring expertise in human capital management, teacher pipeline development, and professional learning, with a proven track record in recruiting and retaining top educators in charter and public schools. Their leadership has strengthened teacher development programs, ensuring alignment with the school's mission.

Fundraising

The team, including Dr. Jeremiah Newell, Rob McGinley, Janice Rivers and Amy Owens, has collectively secured millions in state, federal, and private funding to support school expansion. Their expertise in grant writing, donor relations, and long-term fundraising strategy ensures sustainable financial growth beyond per-pupil state funding.

Financial Management

Led by Christy Taylor, Dr. Jeremiah Newell, Richard Perry, Dr. Andi Kent, and Mark Spivey, the financial team has managed multi-million-dollar education budgets, ensuring compliance with state and federal requirements. They specialize in budget forecasting, grant management, and financial accountability, supporting long-term fiscal health.

Marketing and Student Recruitment

Dr. Jeremiah Newell, Amy Owens, Monique Baugh and Shernita Taylor bring experience in community-based recruitment, digital marketing, and equitable enrollment strategies, ensuring strong brand awareness and student engagement. Their leadership has led to successful student recruitment campaigns in diverse communities and built strong school waiting lists for previous charter models.

General Operations

With expertise in school operations and logistics, Dr. Jeremiah Newell, Monique Baugh, Amy Owens, and Richard Perry have

successfully launched and managed high-performing charter and K-12 schools. They oversee technology, transportation, security, and school-wide systems, ensuring efficiency and student success.

Facilities Management

Facilities experts Dr. Jeremiah Newell, Richard Perry and Dr. Andi Kent have secured and developed educational school campuses (including charter schools) , overseeing lease negotiations, purchase and sale agreements, facility financing, construction, and compliance with safety standards. Their experience ensures Ignite Academy will have a state-of-the-art learning environment to support student success.

b) Describe the organization's capacity and experience in facilities acquisition and management, including managing build-out and/or renovations, as applicable.

The leadership team has substantial experience with acquiring and renovating charter school facilities. With ACCEL Academy, the team has negotiated long-term leases, purchase and sale agreements, and overseen over \$10 million in renovations and new construction efforts to support ACCEL's expansion. The team has experience in facilities management, ensuring that the physical space aligns with the needs of the educational program and student experience.

Facilities Management Experience

1. Strategic Oversight & Compliance

- The leadership team has managed educational facilities in alignment with state and local compliance requirements, ensuring adherence to safety, accessibility, and instructional space regulations.
- They have engaged in proactive maintenance planning, vendor contracting, and risk management to create an optimal learning environment.

2. Operations & Ongoing Maintenance

- The organization has implemented facility management protocols, including:
 - Regular safety inspections
 - Preventative maintenance schedules
 - Emergency response procedures
- The facilities management team ensures smooth day-to-day operations, managing utilities, security, and custodial services efficiently.

3. Past Experience with Build-Out & Renovations (if applicable)

- The team has experience overseeing facility modifications to enhance learning spaces, such as classroom reconfigurations, specialized labs, and arts or career-tech spaces.
- They have worked with contractors, architects, and educational facility planners to ensure renovations align with student-centered learning models.

4. Space Utilization for Educational Excellence

- The facilities are designed to support career-connected learning, arts integration, and real-world applications in education.
- The layout is optimized for small learning communities, collaborative spaces, and industry-aligned training environments.

Element Review

Reviews is not provided

13. Unique / Innovative Operational Aspects

Reviewer Instructions

Please rate this section using the provided rubric.

Status: **Not Reviewed**

Form Result

Provide details on innovative operational aspects that provide educational or environmental opportunities to students that may not be available in the traditional public-school setting.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Compelling evidence of how the school will offer unique or innovative operational aspects that are otherwise not offered by the local school system or not offered to the same extent.

Preference: The authorizer prefers applications that employ unique operational aspects that are not being offered or have not been offered by the local school system.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

Ignite Academy introduces a career-connected, personalized learning model that integrates rigorous academics, industry exposure, and competency-based progression, setting it apart from traditional offerings in the Mobile, Alabama region.

1. Career-Connected Pathways (Early Exposure to High-Demand Fields)

While Mobile County Public School System (MCPSS) offers Signature Academies that provide career exploration opportunities starting in the 10th grade, Ignite Academy distinguishes itself by embedding career exploration and hands-on industry training beginning in middle school. This early integration ensures scholars develop the technical and professional skills required for high-wage, high-demand careers in health sciences and advanced manufacturing. Additionally, the unique training certifications and industry partnerships available to high school students all them to graduate with an offer for employment from a high wage, high demand industry,

2. Competency-Based Learning (Mastery Over Seat Time)

Traditional schools in the region often rely on fixed grading periods and letter grades, which may not fully capture individual student mastery. Ignite Academy implements a competency-based education (CBE) model, where students advance upon demonstrated mastery rather than age or seat time. This approach utilizes digital portfolios, industry mentor evaluations, and competency-based rubrics to provide real-time insights into student progress.

3. Embedded Industry & College Partnerships (Bridging Education & Workforce Needs)

While MCPSS collaborates with local businesses and educational institutions, Ignite Academy has established direct partnerships with local industries, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), and technical colleges, providing scholars with authentic career experiences through co-op programs, job shadowing, and on-site training.

4. Personalized Support for Student Success

Traditional schools in the region may have larger class sizes, limiting personalized attention. Ignite fosters individualized learning by creating personalized learning spaces and mentorship opportunities through advisory where each scholar has a dedicated mentor who tracks their progress and personal growth throughout their academic journey.

b) Explain how the unique/innovative operational aspects are integral to the educational and student-development plans, the instructional design and/or the planning of curriculum.

Our operational model is intentionally designed to enable career-connected learning, competency-based progression, and personalized student support, ensuring seamless alignment between daily operations and instructional goals.

- **Scheduling & Learning Flexibility:** Our modular scheduling system integrates competency-based tracking and real-world learning placements, allowing scholars to move between classroom instruction, internships, and dual enrollment without academic disruption.
- **Staffing & Student Development:** A cross-functional staffing model, where educators also serve as career mentors and intervention specialists, provides continuous student support and seamless integration between academic instruction and career coaching.
- **Data-Driven Curriculum Planning:** Our student information system (SIS) tracks mastery-based progress, allowing educators to personalize instruction, adjust interventions in real-time, and align curriculum with industry standards.
- **Industry & Academic Partnerships:** A dedicated Industry & Partnerships Manager ensures that external apprenticeships, industry-aligned courses, and college partnerships are embedded into the curriculum, keeping learning relevant and applied.
- **Operational & Financial Sustainability:** By co-locating on an HBCU campus and leveraging shared services, private partnerships, and diversified funding, we ensure long-term access to high-quality facilities, career training spaces, and industry experts.

c) Explain how the unique / innovative operational aspects will integrate with state initiatives.

Our operational model is designed to align seamlessly with Alabama's workforce development goals, education reform initiatives, and dual enrollment expansion efforts, ensuring scholars are equipped for high-demand careers.

- **Alignment with Alabama's Workforce Development Priorities:** Our career-connected pathways directly support the state's "Success Plus" workforce initiative, preparing students for high-wage, high-demand careers in healthcare, advanced manufacturing, and STEM fields.
- **Dual Enrollment & College Readiness:** By co-locating on an HBCU campus, we expand access to dual enrollment and early college credits, aligning with Alabama's push to increase postsecondary attainment through the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) initiatives.
- **Competency-Based Learning & Personalized Pathways:** Our modular scheduling and mastery-based progression align with the state's Innovative Schools Initiative, ensuring students progress based on demonstrated skills rather than seat time.
- **Work-Based Learning & Industry Partnerships:** Our Industry & Partnerships Manager coordinates apprenticeships, industry certifications, and technical training, supporting Alabama's expansion of work-based learning through the AlabamaWorks! initiative.

d) Provide evidence that the unique/innovative operational aspects utilize proven methods for success or that they have actually proven to be successful.

Ignite Academy's innovative operational model is grounded in proven, research-backed strategies that enhance student achievement, workforce readiness, and financial sustainability. Our competency-based, career-connected learning approach, flexible scheduling, and industry partnerships align with successful national models that have demonstrated measurable impacts on graduation rates, college enrollment, and career placement.

For detailed evidence supporting these methods, including research studies and real-world examples, please refer to the attached Evidence of Proven Methods for Success document.

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4-13D Evidence of Innovative Operations.pdf

199.64 KB • Added 5 days ago

Element Review

Reviews is not provided

5. FINANCIAL PLAN AND CAPACITY

Founding a high-quality public charter school in the State of Alabama is complicated by the fact that state and federal funding sources are not available until after the school is open with students attending. Even at this point, certain funding sources require specific conditions to be met for access, meaning a potential delay in funding and/or not being eligible for funding through part of the opening year. This section evaluates the financial resources available to the applicant for successfully navigating the pre-opening period and launching a public charter school. By law, a draft budget for the first five years of operations is required. *Act. Ala. Code § 16-6F-7(a)(8)bb (2023)*.

1. Pre-opening Phase Funding Sources

Status: Evaluation Not Needed

Form Result

Provide evidence of revenue streams during the pre-opening period.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Compelling evidence of revenue sources sufficient to carry the organization through the pre-opening phase until school opening when state and federal funding sources become available

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

a) Describe the type and amounts of liquid assets that can be utilized to fund ongoing costs during the pre-opening phase. Please attach evidence of sufficient liquid assets.

Liquid Assets Narrative	Through MAEF, Ignite has secured \$300,000 in unrestricted liquid assets to support pre-opening operations and maintain financial stability before state and federal funding begins. • Secured funds include: ◦ \$302,155.37 in bank reserves for initial staffing, legal fees, and facilities design /acquisition costs. • Contingency Plan: ◦ If additional liquidity is required, Ignite will activate board-approved credit extensions, vendor financing, and deferred payment agreements.
File Upload	Balance Sheet Prev Year Comparison_Report_from_Mobile_Area_Education_Foundation_Inc..pdf 44.59 KB • Added 4 days ago

b) Describe all grants/loans applied for and/or awarded to fund the construction and/or renovation of the school building(s). Please attach evidence of any secured funds.

- Grants/Loans Narrative Through MAEF, Ignite is pursuing multiple funding sources to cover facilities and startup costs, with additional applications pending.
- **Secured funding:**
 - \$150,000 JL Bedsole Foundation (Awarded)
 - **Pending funding applications:**
 - \$900,000 Charter School Growth Fund (Pending)
 - \$500,000 New Schools Venture Fund (Pending)
 - **Future funding applications:**
 - \$1,500,000 U.S. Department of Education Charter Schools Program
 - \$500,000 New Schools Venture Fund
 - \$1,000,000 Blueforge Alliance
 - **Facilities Funding:**
 - \$5,000,000 - Mobile County Industrial Development Board (Requested)
 - \$50,00,000-\$75,000,000 U.S. Navy Maritime Industrial Base (Future Application)
 - \$10,000,000-\$30,000,000 State of Alabama (Requested)
 - **Contingency Plan:**
 - If any planned funding is not secured, Ignite will activate its lease agreement alternatives and additional fundraising mechanisms to close the gap.

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5-1B Bedsole.pdf

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c) Describe the fund-raising capacity of the organization during the pre-opening phase. Include information on the personnel involved.

Fund-raising Narrative The Mobile Area Education Foundation (MAEF) is a 501(c) 3 not-for-profit organization that was founded in 1992 as a countywide partnership of citizens, businesses, schools, and public agencies working together to ensure all children in Mobile County receive a high-quality public education that prepares them to thrive in adulthood. Our mission is to realize bold solutions that dramatically improve the success of youth in the Mobile area, and we achieve this mission by (1) engaging the community around the challenges and opportunities facing our youth from birth to adulthood and creating sustained community support to transform our systemic practices, (2) embracing innovations in curriculum, school models, as well as national and international best practices to foster positive change in our public schools, and (3) developing workforce solutions to locate, train, and provide ongoing wraparound supports to under skilled, disconnected young adults. For over 30 years, the Mobile Area Education Foundation has led a collective impact approach in deep partnerships with civic, business, K-12, higher-education, and workforce partners, and MAEF has invested over \$50 million in efforts to support the success of all youth in the Mobile area. These funding have come from both state, federal, and private funding sources. MAEF is in the singlary in its ability to raise funds that produce both scale and impact on public education in South Alabama.

As a parent organization of Ignite, this leadership team has a proven track record in securing multi-million-dollar funding for education initiatives.

- **Fundraising Team:**

- Dr. Jeremiah Newell (Chief Executive Officer) - Has raised over \$30 million to support public education improvements and transformations, including charters schools and has a strong reputation among state and national charter school funders.
- Monique Baugh (Chief Community Engagement Officer) – Led multi-million-dollar community school initiatives.
- Contina Woods (Board Member, EVP at Regions Bank) – Expertise in corporate philanthropy and nonprofit fundraising.
- Christy Taylor (CFO) – Experience in public-private partnerships and government funding.

d) What relationships have been established with local entities who may be able to fund special needs or programs? Describe and provide evidence of any pledges made to the school by

community members / businesses / organizations.

Local Pledges Narrative This founding team has significant relationships among local philanthropy and track record of raising local dollars to support charter school and broader MAEF partnerships
Ignite has built strong local financial support through business and community partnerships that contribute to pre-opening costs.

- Confirmed Local Contributions:
 - \$150,000 JL Bedsole Foundation Grant (Awarded)
- Targeted Local Funders for Ignite Academy Launch (funding received previously) :
 - Alabama Power - \$100,000
 - Hearin-Chandler - \$150,000
 - Crampton Trust - \$50,000
 - Hancock-Whitney Bank - \$15,000
 - Regions Bank - \$50,000
 - The Community Foundation of South Alabama - \$30,000
 - Hargrove Engineers - \$75,000
 - Austal USA
 - Airbus
 - AM/NS Calvert
 - Outokumpu
 - Cooper Group
 - Birdon
 - Masterboat
 - Ingalls Shipbuilding
 - Silver Ships
 - Mobile Infirmary
 - EBSCO
 - HAAS

- **Timeline:**
 - Additional local funding will be secured by Fall 2026 to support workforce and community engagement initiatives.

State/National
Organization Narrative

The leadership team of Ignite has extensive connections at the state and national level and are leveraging these relationships to ensure long-term financial sustainability for Ignite.

- **State-Level Support:**
 - State of Alabama - Through our legislative delegation and Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce, advocacy is currently underway for potential legislative appropriations or workforce development funds.
 - New Schools for Alabama - The leadership team of MAEF is working with New Schools for Alabama to identify state-wide philanthropic funds, including, but not limited to Charter Schools Program grants to support program start-up
- **National Partnerships:**
 - Ignite is engaged with national philanthropic organizations to request support in opening Ignite including, but not limited to:
 - Newschools Venture Fund
 - Charter School Growth Fund
 - Bloomberg Philanthropies
 - Blue Meridian
 - U.S. Navy Maritime Industrial Base
- **Funding Timeline:**
 - Funding expected by Summer of 2026

Donation Narrative

Private Donations Secured:

- MAEF has received \$150,000 in private funding for pre-opening operations, recruitment, and facilities improvements.

Foreign Contributions Disclosure:

- No foreign government or foreign legal entity contributions have been received.
- All funding sources are from domestic donors, businesses, or philanthropic entities.

Evidence:

- Signed donor agreements and contribution letters included in attachments.

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5-1F Bedsole.pdf

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Evaluation Rubrics

This application element is not evaluated

2. Pre-opening Phase Cost Estimates

Status: Evaluation Not Needed

Form Result

Give details of the anticipated costs during the pre-opening phase.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Compelling evidence of financial consideration of all major start-up expenses occurring during the pre-opening phase.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

a) Provide a cost estimate and supporting documentation for leasing/buying a facility to house the school. Attach any contingent agreement if available.

Facility Narrative

MAEF is in the initial stages of facility selection and acquisition for Ignite Academy. Given the importance of the launch of this school for the greater workforce region, MAEF is in partnership with the Industrial Development Board, Mobile Chamber of Commerce, Mobile County Public School System, and Bishop State Community College to pursue the development of a joint site where Ignite Academy, a new CTE center for Mobile County Public School System, and a new advanced manufacturing/maritime training facility for Bishop State would be co-located.

Why collaborate in this manner? A shared site will allow for significant national and state investment to support the broader workforce development efforts in South Alabama. This will make the feasibility of a new build construction much more attainable for all parties involved. It will allow for synergies between the programs and a reduction in the duplication of cost for highly expensive technical training equipment needed for advanced manufacturing. It will also foster collaboration between students, faculty, and staff to accelerate innovation among partners.

Option 1: Ignite Academy Building on Shared Campus with K-12 and Higher Education Partners

Estimated Land Purchase Cost:

- Total Facility Square Footage Needed: 130,000
- Land Costs: Donated through Industrial Development Board
- Evidence: Letter of Support Between Partners (IDB letter of support)

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5-2A Cost Estimates.pdf

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b) Estimate the cost to renovate the identified facility up to code to open a school. Provide evidence to support your analysis.

Renovation Estimate
Narrative

Estimated Facility Construction Cost:

- Total Facility Square Footage: 130,000 (desired); 90,000 needed
- Estimated Construction Cost for New Build: \$63,700,000 (\$490 per sq/f for 130,000 sq/f)
- Potential Funding Sources:
 - U.S. Navy Maritime Industrial Base
 - State of Alabama
 - Federal Appropriations
 - Local City of Mobile and Mobile County Appropriations
 - Remaining Lender Financed through Charter School Facility Lenders
- Evidence: Architect Estimates Attached
- **Contingency Plan:**
 - If additional funding is required, Ignite will scale the size of the construction down to the required 90,000 sq/ft. Additionally, the leadership team through its joint realtor has identified an alternative property that was a previous private school, which is owned by the City of Mobile. This facility could be used as a temporary location if construction runs longer than expected. Conversely, it could operate as an alternate permanent location with much more reduced construction costs.

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c) Describe the staff positions and estimated salaries and benefits of personnel hired during the pre-opening phase to assist in opening the school.

Pre-opening Staff Narrative

During the 2025-2026 year, the MAEF central office team will support are pre-opening activities. During the 2026-2027 school year, the School-Based leadership team will be hired. Ignite Academy will onboard a core team during the pre-opening phase (2026-2027) to ensure operational readiness and effective implementation of school programs. **Estimated Total Salaries and Benefits:** Approximately \$660,000. Attached are the projected positions, estimated salaries, and benefits.

Pre-Opening Staffing and Estimated Salaries & Benefits:

Staffing Position	Estimated Salary & Benefits
Superintendent/Head of School	\$230,000
High School Principal	\$150,000
Middle School Principal	\$130,000
Dean of Teaching and Learning (HS) .5 year	\$50,000
Dean of Teaching and Learning (MS) .5 year	\$50,000
Dean of Students & Operations .25 year	\$25,000
Dean of Students & Operations .25 year	\$25,000
Total	\$660,000

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- d) Estimate the start-up costs of the following
- i) Curriculum
 - ii) Furnishings
 - iii) Instructional Technology
 - iv) Insurance

- v) Community Outreach Programs
- vi) Student Recruitment
- vii) School Safety Requirements (i.e. nSides, storm shelter, if applicable)
- viii) Student Information System (PowerSchool)
- ix) School Compliance Platforms (Cognia, Anvilar)
- x) Child Nutrition Requirements
- xi) Transportation, if applicable
- xii) All other applicable costs

Start-up Costs Narrative Please see the attached document for start-up.

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Evaluation Rubrics

This application element is not evaluated

3. Pre-opening Financial Management

Status: Evaluation Not Needed

Form Result

Provide guidance on how the revenue sources are sufficient to meet the anticipated costs including verification of timeliness and financial safeguards.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Compelling evidence that the revenue streams are sufficient to meet the necessary outlays during the pre-opening phase. Compelling evidence of financial systems and processes with strong internal controls used during the pre-opening phase.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

a) Use the attached Pre-opening Cashflow Workbook to provide the anticipated timing of all revenues and costs during the pre-opening timeframe, making sure to retain a positive balance throughout the period. Use the identified liquid funds above as an initial balance.

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Names

The following individuals have authority to enter financial agreements, approve expenditures, and manage funds on behalf of Ignite Academy:

- 1. Rob McGinley (Board Chair) – Provides oversight on financial policies and ensures compliance with grant requirements.**
- 2. Mark Spivey (Board Treasurer) – Oversees financial reporting, approves budgetary adjustments, and manages investment strategies.**
- 3. Christy Taylor (Chief Financial Officer) – Manages daily financial operations, including procurement, payroll, and vendor payments.**
- 4. Dr. Jeremiah Newell (Chief Executive Officer) – Authorized for high-level financial decisions, including grants and contracts.**

c) Describe the internal controls used to ensure no unauthorized use of funds. This may include surety bonds, two signature rule, etc.

Financial Controls
Narrative

Ignite follows best practices from approved charter applications to ensure strong internal controls and transparency:

- Dual-Signature Rule: All transactions require approval from at least two authorized financial officers.**
- Vendor & Contract Review: All contracts exceeding \$100,000 are reviewed and approved by the Board Treasurer and Finance Committee.**
- Monthly Financial Reporting: The CFO presents detailed financial statements (balance sheet, income statement, cash flow report) to the Board Finance Committee.**
- Annual Independent Audit: Ignite will engage an external CPA firm to conduct an annual audit, ensuring compliance with state and federal financial regulations**

Restricted vs. Unrestricted Funds: Ignite separates restricted grant funds (e.g., CSP, workforce grants) from general operating funds to ensure compliance with spending requirements.

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2013 Financial & Accounting Policy-Approved-rev
2018.pdf

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Evaluation Rubrics

This application element is not evaluated

4. Pre-Opening Financial Capacity

Status: Evaluation Not Needed

Form Result

Provide evidence that the individuals tasked with opening the school have the relevant financial expertise and no conflict of interest.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Compelling evidence of individual and collective qualifications and capacity for implementing all aspects of the financial plan successfully.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

a) Identify organizational members with expertise in financial management, fundraising and development, and/or accounting and internal controls and describe the level of knowledge.

Organization Members Ignite Academy's leadership team has extensive expertise in financial management, fundraising, and accounting to ensure a strong financial foundation for the school's launch. The board and executive team bring decades of combined experience in corporate finance, charter school operations, grant management, and nonprofit development, ensuring that Ignite meets all financial obligations and compliance requirements.

Financial Management

- Christy Taylor – Chief Financial Officer (CFO)
 - Extensive experience in corporate finance, budget management, and financial sustainability within advanced manufacturing.
 - Expertise in navigating complex funding models, government contracting, and public-private partnerships.
 - Proven success in managing state and federal grants, securing industry funding, and ensuring fiscal compliance.
 - Oversaw multi-million-dollar budgets, ensuring strategic resource allocation for dual enrollment, workforce training, and career certification programs.
- Dr. Jeremiah Newell – Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
 - Founder and leader of ACCEL Academy, Alabama's first charter school, with direct experience in charter operations, compliance, and financial management.
 - Skilled in securing funding, managing grants, and forming strategic partnerships with state/local policymakers, school districts, and industry leaders.
 - Deep understanding of charter school budget structures, state funding mechanisms, and workforce-aligned financial planning.
- Shernita Taylor – Chief Workforce Development Officer
 - 10+ years of experience in workforce development and human resources.
 - Oversees industry-aligned training programs, internships, and apprenticeships, ensuring financial sustainability through corporate and workforce partnerships.

- Expertise in aligning career pathways with funding opportunities, including state and federal workforce grants.
- Richard Perry – Vice-Chair, MAEF Board of Directors
 - Retired Corporate Vice President for a Fortune 100 company, specializing in advanced manufacturing plant operations and financial planning.
 - Former Board Chair of MAEF Public Charter Schools, providing governance and financial oversight.
 - Extensive experience in strategic budgeting, corporate finance, and operational efficiency.
- Dr. Andi Kent – Board Member, Ignite Board of Directors
 - Provost and Executive Vice President at the University of South Alabama, responsible for budgetary oversight of academic and workforce development programs.
 - Expertise in higher education finance, state and federal grant management, and institutional budgeting.
 - Strong advocate for financial planning in career-connected learning and economic mobility initiatives.

Fundraising and Development

- Monique Baugh – Chief Community Engagement Officer
 - Directed multi-million-dollar community school initiatives, securing funding for mentorship programs, career pipelines, and student support services.
 - Experience in leveraging private, philanthropic, and corporate funding to support wraparound services.
 - Expertise in fiscal management of community partnerships and student success programs.
- Contina Woods – Board Member, Ignite Board of Directors
 - Executive Vice President at Regions Bank, with extensive experience in financial operations, banking regulations, and risk management.

- Skilled in nonprofit financial strategy, investment oversight, and financial compliance.
- Deep knowledge of charter school funding models and financial risk mitigation strategies.

Accounting and Internal Controls

- Christy Taylor – Chief Financial Officer (CFO)
 - Certified Public Accountant
 - Deep expertise in financial compliance, accounting standards, and internal financial controls.
 - Managed audit preparation, financial reporting, and risk assessment strategies to ensure transparency and accountability.
- Mark Spivey – Treasurer, Ignite Board of Directors
 - Senior Vice President, Hancock Whitney Bank, with 18+ years of experience in commercial banking and financial management.
 - Holds a Bachelor of Business Administration in Finance and Banking and an MBA from the University of South Alabama.
 - Served as Treasurer for MAEF Public Charter Schools, managing multimillion-dollar education budgets and ensuring fiscal oversight and compliance.
 - Active in financial literacy education and nonprofit financial strategy.

b) Disclose any relevant conflict of interest.

Conflict of Interest Narrative	No conflicts of interest exist that would impact Ignite’s financial decision-making or operations.
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Evaluation Rubrics

This application element is not evaluated

5. Financial Management Upon Opening

Status: Evaluation Not Needed

Form Result

The financial policies and procedures must adhere to those followed by traditional public schools once the school is receiving state and/or federal funds. Please provide evidence of the preparation for this known change in expectations.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Compelling evidence of effective, high-quality systems, policies and processes for financial planning, accounting, purchasing, and payroll, including establishment and maintenance of strong internal controls and competence for complying with all financial reporting requirements.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

Financial Management
Narrative

MAEF as Ignite Academy's fiscal sponsor will adhere to Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and maintain financial controls that ensure compliance with Alabama's charter school financial regulations.

- Accounting & Financial Planning:
 - Financial records will be maintained using an authorizer-compliant accounting system, aligned with a chart of accounts for transparent reporting
 - The CFO, CEO, and Board Finance Committee will oversee annual budgeting, multi-year financial projections, and financial risk management.
- Purchasing & Payroll:
 - All purchases over \$100,000 require board approval, and contracts over \$100,000 must be competitively bid
 - Payroll processing, benefits administration, and tax compliance will be managed through a third-party payroll provider for accuracy and compliance.
- Internal Financial Controls:
 - Segregation of duties ensures checks and balances in financial operations.
 - Bank reconciliations will be performed monthly by a staff member without disbursement access
 - Restricted vs. unrestricted funds will be managed separately to ensure compliance with grant agreements.
- Evidence: MAEF's Financial Policies & Procedures Manual will be included in attachments.
- Note: As Ignite becomes an operating school, the Ignite Board will update policies to ensure they are in line with state and federal requirements for an operating public charter school. MAEF will fully comply with these updated policies as applicable.

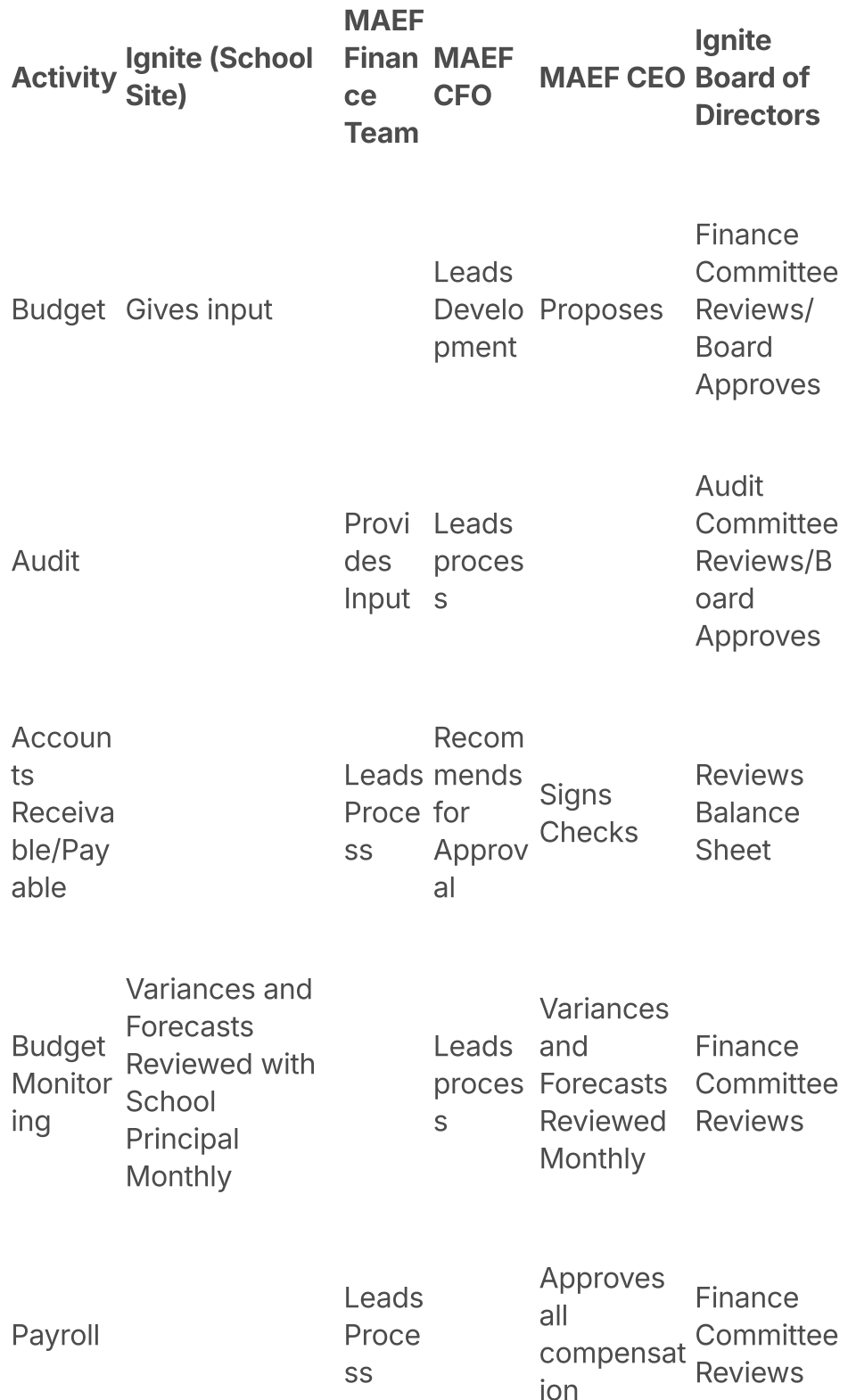
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Financial Oversight Roles Narrative The administration and governing board have distinct roles in financial oversight to ensure accountability and transparency.

The following pictorial summarizes the major financial responsibilities in the organization.



Cash Manage ment			Leads Proces s	Approves any loans
Authori zer Reporti ng	Provides Input	Provi de Input	Leads Proces s	Approves

- Governing Board Responsibilities:
 - Approves the annual budget, financial policies, and major expenditures.
 - Reviews monthly financial statements, ensuring compliance with regulations.
 - Selects an independent auditor and ensures audit findings are addressed.
- School Administration Responsibilities:
 - The CEO & CFO oversee daily financial operations, grant reporting, and compliance.
 - The Director of Operations manages payroll, vendor contracts, and procurement processes.
 - The Finance Committee collaborates with external financial service providers to ensure best practices.
- Evidence: Ignite's Board Finance Committee Charter will be included in attachments.

Audit Narrative

Ignite Academy will undergo an independent annual audit to ensure financial transparency and compliance with state and federal charter school regulations.

Audit Process:

- An independent CPA firm will conduct the annual financial audit.
- The Finance Committee will review audit results and address any findings.
- The full audit will be submitted to the Board of Directors for review and approval
- The audit report will be submitted to the authorizer and state agencies.

Compliance with Regulations:

- Ignite will comply with state and federally mandated financial reporting and transparency laws. The audit will be performed in compliance with generally accepted accounting principles as established by the Governmental Standards Accounting Board (GASB).
- The audit will follow the State of Alabama standards and shall include, but not be limited to:
 - An audit of the accuracy of the financial statements
 - An audit of the attendance accounting and revenue accuracy practices
 - An audit of the internal control practices

Transparency Narrative Ignite is committed to public financial transparency, ensuring all stakeholders have access to financial information

Annual Budget Adoption:

- The board will approve the budget in a public meeting, with notice given in advance. As a part of this budget approval process, the board will hold two public hearings as required by Alabama law to provide an opportunity for public comment before approving the budget.
- The approved budget will be posted on Ignite's website and submitted to the authorizer and the ALSDE LEA Accounting Division .

Public Reporting:

- Ignite will publish its annual audit report and IRS Form 990 online and submit it to the Alabama
- Monthly financial statements will be reviewed by the Board of Directors Committee and posted on the school's website.

Financial Services
Narrative

To ensure compliance and efficiency, Ignite will contract MAEF, its parent company, for business services with experienced financial service providers.

Accounting & Payroll Services:

- Ignite will outsource fiscal services to MAEF at an expense equal to or below market rate. MAEF has a track record of providing these services to Alabama public charter schools in South Alabama by supporting both ACCEL Academy and Floretta P. Carson Academy in the same role. This experience positions MAEF to ensure Ignite is prepared to operate with full compliance and best practices at inception. MAEF will provide support in the following areas:
 - FISCAL SERVICES:
 - MAEF shall administer a comprehensive accounting system, including all requisite fund accounting and general ledger and accounts payable/receivable modules. The system will be fully compliant with the State of Alabama school accounting laws and procedures and capable of producing standardized reports for financial reporting to the Authorizer and other public agencies as required. The system will be accessible to individuals authorized by the School, state and local entities for review and audit reconciliation. The School shall be responsible for the cost of the comprehensive accounting system and of establishing any local internet connections to access the web-based accounting system from the school site (if applicable).
 - MAEF shall provide ongoing regular reporting of fiscal status to the School's board and staff, including attendance at board meetings requiring MAEF participation. The School shall be responsible for timely notifying MAEF of scheduled board meetings at which MAEF attendance is requested, and absent circumstances warranting special/emergency board meetings, timely notification shall be one (1) week in advance.
 - MAEF shall coordinate and assist with the School's budgeting process, including, but not limited to, preparation of the original budget and all interim budgets, revising and discussing with School staff and/or Finance Committee members (if applicable), providing professional advice on actual and projected

line item revenues and expenditures, attending budget approval board meetings if needed, and preparation and filing of authorizer-required and State-required budget forms.

- MAEF shall provide advisory services in relation to the School's monthly cash flow needs, including computation of expected monthly revenues, coordination of expenditure timing to match revenue flow and other services as required.
- MAEF shall assist the School in developing and implementing a satisfactory system of financial controls to ensure financial stability. School staff is responsible for implementing the accounting and fiscal controls and procedures as outlined in the School's approved policies and procedures.
- MAEF shall assist the School in establishing and maintaining external bank accounts and will administer and reconcile all banking transactions through the external bank accounts. Accounts will be held in the School's name; MAEF will hold no School bank accounts.
- MAEF shall work directly with the School's chosen independent auditor regarding the School's annual audit to ensure all necessary financial information is provided in a full and timely manner.
- MAEF shall coordinate and maintain the financial transactions connected with the capital expansion of the school.

HUMAN RESOURCES/PAYROLL SERVICES/RISK MANAGEMENT:

- MAEF shall assist the School in its development and management of personnel functions, including recruitment and retention of teachers and staff, professional development, performance management, employee compensation and benefits programs, workplace safety standards and disciplinary procedures.
- MAEF shall provide the School with a comprehensive payroll system, including calculation and payment of all federal and state payroll tax liabilities, Alabama State Teachers' Retirement System and Public Employees' Retirement System contribution calculations and payments (if applicable), and other benefits calculations and payments directly related to payroll processing.

- MAEF shall assist the School in obtaining any necessary accounts for payroll tax payment and reporting, and shall coordinate payment of federal and state payroll taxes and filing of federal and state payroll tax reporting as the School's reporting agent. Legally, the School is still obligated to ensure timely filing of returns and payment of any taxes due, even if it uses a reporting agent.
- MAEF shall work with the School's bank to establish direct deposit of employee pay if the School's bank allows such electronic transactions.
- MAEF shall provide advice at the School's request regarding employee hiring, leave, and termination practices as related to payroll services, including recommending federal and state employment documents.
- MAEF shall assist the School in researching and obtaining appropriate employee benefits and insurance packages, including coordinating between staff and insurance plan providers, and will assist in soliciting alternative providers for better rates and/or services at the School's request. MAEF functions only as a facilitator/advocate on behalf of the School, is not an insurance provider or broker, and receives no commissions or referral fees from third party providers for this assistance to the School.
- MAEF shall assist the School in researching and obtaining appropriate insurance policies for liability, property, workers' compensation, and other insurance necessary for operation of the School and shall assist in soliciting alternative providers for better rates and/or services at the School's request. MAEF functions only as a facilitator/advocate on behalf of the School, is not an insurance provider or broker, and receives no commissions or referral fees from third party providers for this assistance to the School.

PURCHASING/PROCUREMENT:

- The School shall be responsible for initial creation and approvals of all purchase orders ("POs"), including inputting such orders into MAEF's purchasing system, using limited access security measures allowing for these functions only. The School is solely responsible for ensuring that all items ordered are suitable for public educational purposes (e.g. non-religious materials). Once POs are approved by the School's authorized staff, the School shall further be responsible for delivering approved

POs to vendors (i.e. placing the order). POs and direct bill invoices shall reflect MAEF as the billing address and the School location as the shipping/physical location address. Once the order is received by the School, School staff is responsible for marking items as received in MAEF's purchasing system. MAEF shall match all POs to invoices, prepare and submit all vendor payments, and integrate the accounts payable with Fiscal Services as described in this Scope of Services for payment timing optimization and coordination of purchasing activities to coincide with timing of revenue limit receipts.

- MAEF shall scan all invoices upon receipt into PDF format, and provide the School with password-protected access to these scanned documents, so that authorized School staff may review all current and prior invoices online (dating back to the first non-implementation month of MAEF provided services under this Agreement).
- On a monthly basis, and provided the School has adequate cash flow, MAEF shall prepare a payment voucher containing all currently payable invoices that have previously been approved via authorized PO, and shall print all checks (using a pre-set electronic signature image from an authorized signer on the School's main operating bank account built into the blank check stock) and deliver all payments to vendors.
- On a monthly basis, MAEF shall prepare and deliver a summary and detail warrant register to the School's Board for approval, showing all non-payroll-related payments made in the prior month. Payroll registers and evidence of payroll payments are available at any time for authorized School staff review and a payroll register detail is provided to the School staff with each pay run, but these are not part of the monthly summary and detail warrant register sent to the Board for review and approval.
- MAEF shall integrate purchasing activities with the School's external banking accounts. Accounts will be held in the School's name.
- MAEF shall assist the school in developing and approving a fixed asset capitalization policy, clarifying what items constitute fixed assets for accounting purposes. The School shall implement and maintain an updated inventory of fixed and non-capitalized assets based on the approved policy, and shall provide appropriate reporting to MAEF of such inventory in order to coordinate with Fiscal Services

as described in this Scope of Services. MAEF shall be responsible for maintaining the fixed asset register in MAEF's accounting system, computing depreciation and average life, and coordinating such fixed asset register with auditors during the School's annual audit.

- MAEF shall assist in coordinating any competitive bidding activities, when applicable and if requested.

COMPLIANCE/REPORTING:

- MAEF shall assist the School in preparing and submitting all state-required attendance reports.
- MAEF shall assist the School as needed in complying with all necessary federal and state program compliance tracking and reporting, including, without limitation, all free and reduced lunch eligibility and poverty tracking, any special education reporting and any State-mandated testing.
- MAEF shall assist the School as needed with submitting the tracking and reporting required of the School in the Contract. The School shall be responsible for forwarding any requests for information or submittals received from the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE), or other related agencies, to MAEF's offices immediately upon receipt.
- MAEF, in coordination with outside professionals, as necessary, shall be responsible for preparation or submittal of federal and state income tax forms relating to the School's tax-exempt status, including but not limited to IRS Form 1023, IRS Form 990, FTB Form 3500, and FTB Form 199. MAEF shall timely provide all financial information requested by the School, attorney, or independent auditor to timely complete these filings.
- MAEF shall prepare and deliver on behalf of the School all required acknowledgements to donors of tax-deductible contributions and all required funding source financial reports on or before their due date.

CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAM

- MAEF shall assist the school in meeting all requirements for the Federal Child Nutrition Program as established by the Alabama State Department of Education including, but not limited to, the establishment of an approved application,

completion of required CNP paperwork, and maintenance of records and documentation.

FEDERAL PROGRAMS

- MAEF shall assist the School in the oversight and delivery of all requirements for Federal Programs including Title I, Title II, Title IV, IDEA, and Perkins as established by the Alabama State Department of Education including but not limited to the development of annual federal plans, Alabama Continuous Improvement Plans, preparation of EGAP 2.0, and maintenance of records and documentation as prescribed by the Alabama State Department of Education.

Auditing Services:

- Ignite will issue an RFP for an independent auditor annually.
- The audit firm will report directly to the Board Finance Committee.

Vendor Selection Criteria:

- Vendors will be evaluated based on experience with charter schools, compliance history, and cost-effectiveness.

Evidence: Ignite's Vendor Selection Policy will be included in attachments.

Insurance Narrative

Ignite Academy will secure comprehensive liability insurance to protect students, staff, board members, and industry partners, with additional protections specific to its CTE programming. Given the work-based learning environments in health sciences and advanced manufacturing, Ignite's policy will include specialized coverage for career technical education risks. Insurance Coverage Includes:

1. General Liability Insurance – Covers accidents, property damage, and injuries, including risks associated with career labs, internships, and hands-on training environments.
2. Directors & Officers (D&O) Insurance – Protects board members and executive leadership from governance-related claims and financial mismanagement allegations.
3. Employment Practices Liability Insurance (EPLI) – Covers claims related to hiring, termination, workplace conduct, and discrimination.
4. Workers' Compensation & Student Injury Protection – Covers students and instructors in case of injuries sustained during hands-on technical training, including lab accidents and field-based internships.
5. Umbrella Coverage – Provides additional protection beyond general liability limits, ensuring financial safeguards for unexpected liabilities or litigation.
6. CTE-Specific Liability Insurance:
 - Work-Based Learning Coverage: Ensures students participating in internships, clinical rotations, and apprenticeships are covered under Ignite's insurance policy and employer liability agreements.
 - Equipment & Machinery Coverage: Protects against damage to specialized CTE lab equipment, including CNC machines, welding stations, medical mannequins, and robotics kits.
 - Professional Liability for Health Science Labs: Covers malpractice-related claims involving student-led clinical training exercises in hospital simulation settings.
 - Hazardous Materials & Safety Compliance Insurance: Covers chemical exposure, biohazard safety, and OSHA-regulated material handling, required for advanced manufacturing and health sciences labs.

- Tort Claim Indemnification: Ensures the school, board, and staff are legally protected against lawsuits related to negligence, student injury, employment disputes, or contractual liabilities.

Compliance & Legal Safeguards:

- All industry partners providing student internships must maintain employer liability insurance to ensure Ignite is not held responsible for third-party incidents.
- Indemnification clauses will be built into vendor contracts and workforce training agreements to mitigate legal exposure for the school.
- Ignite will annually review and adjust insurance coverage to align with state charter school risk management requirements and evolving CTE safety standards.

Evaluation Rubrics

This application element is not evaluated

6. Budgeting in Opening Year and Beyond

Status: Evaluation Not Needed

Form Result

By law, a start-up and five-year budget plan with clearly stated assumptions is required. *Act. Ala. Code § 16-6F-7(a)(8)bb (2023)*

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Compelling evidence of balanced revenue streams and cost estimates during the first year of operation with projections into the first five years of operations

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

a) Complete the Charter Application Budget Workbook provided in the attachment below. In developing your budget, please use the per-student revenue projections provided by the ALSDE. Complete budgeting for the minimum, anticipated & maximum enrollment projections.

File Upload

IgniteCharterProforma_03_11_25.xls

206.18 KB • Added 4 days ago

b) As an attachment, present a clearly stated budget narrative of assumptions and revenue estimates. Include the basis for revenue projections, staffing levels, and costs. The narrative should specifically address the degree to which the school budget will rely on variable income (e.g., grants, donations, fundraising). The narrative should include, but is not limited to, the following sections:

- i) **Anticipated Governmental Funding Sources:** Use the figures provided by ALSDE in developing your assumptions for per-student revenue. Include any governmental grants. Include site-based/fixed governmental funds.
- ii) **Anticipated Non-governmental Funding Sources:** Indicate the amount and sources of funds, property or other resources expected upon opening to be available through banks, lending institutions, corporations, foundations, grants, etc. Note which are secured and which are anticipated, and include evidence of commitment for any funds on which the school's core operation depends.
- iii) **Anticipated Major Expenses:** Describe the expected major expenses, which should include facility costs and personnel, and how to limit these expenses if revenue does not meet projections.
- iv) **Debt Service:** If any loans are anticipated during the pre-opening phase or the first few years of operations, describe the plans for repaying this debt including a description of the payment schedule.
- v) **Contingency Plan:** Discuss the school's contingency plan to meet financial needs if anticipated revenues are not received or are lower than estimated.

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Ignite Academy Budget Narrative.doc

17.6 KB • Added 4 days ago

Cashflow Plan

The five-year cash flow plan, attached as a supplemental document, outlines Ignite Academy's financial trajectory from start-up through full enrollment capacity. Key components include:

- **Year 1: Start-Up and First-Year Operations**
 - Revenue: ALSDE per-pupil funding, start-up grants, early-stage philanthropic contributions.
 - Expenses: Facility lease, initial staffing, technology infrastructure, student recruitment initiatives.
 - Cash Flow Strategy: Building to a 3-month operating reserve to cover unforeseen expenses.
- **Years 2-3: Growth Phase**
 - Revenue: Increased per-student funding as enrollment expands.
 - Expenses: Scaling instructional staff, expanding career-connected learning opportunities.
 - Cash Flow Strategy: Diversification of funding sources, including industry sponsorships.
- **Years 4-5: Full Enrollment and Stability**
 - Revenue: Stabilized state funding, strengthened industry partnerships.
 - Expenses: Sustaining quality programming, staff professional development, expanding dual-enrollment pathways.
 - Cash Flow Strategy: Establishing an operational endowment to support long-term sustainability.

The cash flow projections demonstrate Ignite Academy's financial sustainability, responsible fiscal management, and alignment with Alabama charter school funding policies.

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Evaluation Rubrics

This application element is not evaluated

7. Financial Management Capacity Upon Opening

Status: Evaluation Not Needed

Form Result

Provide evidence that the individuals, if known, tasked with handling the financial aspects of an open school have the relevant expertise.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Compelling evidence of individual and collective qualifications and capacity for implementing all aspects of the financial plan successfully.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

School Financial
Leadership Capacity
Narrative

Anticipated School Administration Members with Financial Expertise

Financial Management

- Christy Taylor – Chief Financial Officer (CFO)
 - Extensive experience in corporate finance, budget management, and financial sustainability within advanced manufacturing.
 - Expertise in navigating complex funding models, government contracting, and public-private partnerships.
 - Proven success in managing state and federal grants, securing industry funding, and ensuring fiscal compliance.
 - Oversaw multi-million-dollar budgets, ensuring strategic resource allocation for dual enrollment, workforce training, and career certification programs.
- Dr. Jeremiah Newell – Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
 - Founder and leader of ACCEL Academy, Alabama's first charter school, with direct experience in charter operations, compliance, and financial management.
 - Skilled in securing funding, managing grants, and forming strategic partnerships with state/local policymakers, school districts, and industry leaders.
 - Deep understanding of charter school budget structures, state funding mechanisms, and workforce-aligned financial planning.
- Shernita Taylor – Chief Workforce Development Officer
 - 10+ years of experience in workforce development and human resources.
 - Oversees industry-aligned training programs, internships, and apprenticeships, ensuring financial sustainability through corporate and workforce partnerships.
 - Expertise in aligning career pathways with funding opportunities, including state and federal workforce

grants.

Fundraising and Development

- Monique Baugh – Chief Program Officer
 - Directed multi-million-dollar community school initiatives, securing funding for mentorship programs, career pipelines, and student support services.
 - Experience in leveraging private, philanthropic, and corporate funding to support wraparound services.
 - Expertise in fiscal management of community partnerships and student success programs.

Accounting and Internal Controls

- Christy Taylor – Chief Financial Officer (CFO)
 - Deep expertise in financial compliance, accounting standards, and internal financial controls.
 - Managed audit preparation, financial reporting, and risk assessment strategies to ensure transparency and accountability.

Board Financial
Leadership Capacity
Narrative

Board Members Overseeing Financial Governance

Financial Management

- Richard Perry – Vice-Chair, MAEF Board of Directors
 - Retired Corporate Vice President for a Fortune 100 company, specializing in advanced manufacturing plant operations and financial planning.
 - Former Board Chair of MAEF Public Charter Schools, providing governance and financial oversight.
 - Extensive experience in strategic budgeting, corporate finance, and operational efficiency.
- Dr. Andi Kent – Board Member, Ignite Board of Directors
 - Provost and Executive Vice President at the University of South Alabama, responsible for budgetary oversight of academic and workforce development programs.
 - Expertise in higher education finance, state and federal grant management, and institutional budgeting.
 - Strong advocate for financial planning in career-connected learning and economic mobility initiatives.

Fundraising and Development

- Contina Woods – Board Member, Ignite Board of Directors
 - Executive Vice President at Regions Bank, with extensive experience in financial operations, banking regulations, and risk management.
 - Skilled in nonprofit financial strategy, investment oversight, and financial compliance.
 - Deep knowledge of charter school funding models and financial risk mitigation strategies.

Accounting and Internal Controls

- Mark Spivey – Treasurer, Ignite Board of Directors
 - Senior Vice President, Hancock Whitney Bank, with 18+ years of experience in commercial banking and

financial management.

- Holds a Bachelor of Business Administration in Finance and Banking and an MBA from the University of South Alabama.
- Served as Treasurer for MAEF Public Charter Schools, managing multimillion-dollar education budgets and ensuring fiscal oversight and compliance.
- Active in financial literacy education and nonprofit financial strategy.

Evaluation Rubrics

This application element is not evaluated

6. EXISTING OPERATORS

Reviewer Instructions

Please rate this section using the provided rubric.

Status: Not Reviewed

Form Result

By law, additional expectations and evidence are required for those applicants who are **existing operators**, defined as representing a nonprofit organization which currently:

- Have one or more schools in operation nationwide which have been in operation for more than one full school year; or
- Intend to employ an educational service provider with one or more schools in operation for more than one full school year.

For applicants meeting this definition please provide the following supplementary information regarding the performance of the existing schools in the portfolio. *Ala. Code § 16-6F-7(a)(10)* and *Ala. Code § 16-6F-7(a)(11)*.

All Charter Management Organizations (CMOs) and Educational Management Organizations (EMOs) are considered existing operators.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Compelling evidence of other successful schools serving the same proposed student population.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

1) Provide a detailed description of the organization's growth plans and capacity to successfully support and execute that plan including business plans to support anticipated growth.

N/A

2. Provide, as an attachment, evidence of a track record of success serving a similar student population by completing the Portfolio Summary. Discuss portfolio performance on the whole, relative to performance on the relevant authorizer, district, or state accountability plan(s) and/or state assessments. Performance on State Test or ACT/SAT is also acceptable.

Evidence of Track Record

3. Disclose information on any schools that have been closed or non-renewed or charters that have been revoked.

N/A

Element Review

Reviews is not provided