



EDUCATION ONE
AT TRINE UNIVERSITY

Initial Proposal

*Providing high-quality educational opportunities
for students in the state of Indiana*

Trine University
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Angola, Indiana 46703
Telephone: 260-665-4600

The initial proposal questions are organized to solicit information efficiently and to aid quality review and decision making by Education One, L.L.C. **Education One staff reserves the right to reject initial proposals that do not adhere to the application specifications.**

Throughout the application review process, Education One staff will communicate important information to the charter school applicant designee via email.

Notice of Disclosure

All information submitted as part of the initial proposal (including financial information) is subject to the Indiana Access to Public Records Act (IC § 5-14-3) and subject to disclosure to the public there-under, including disclosure to the media. **In the event that it is the applicant's position that certain information submitted as part of the initial proposal falls within an exception to disclosure under the Public Records Act, the applicant must obtain an advisory opinion from the State of Indiana's Public Access Counselor prior to submitting any initial proposal materials.** If the Public Access Counselor's opinion supports the applicant's position, then any such information contained in the initial proposal that is considered non-disclosable must be clearly identified in the initial proposal as confidential. The initial proposal must further be accompanied by (a) a written statement specifying the particular exception or exceptions to disclosure under the Public Records Act applicable to the information sought to be exempted from disclosure, and (b) the written opinion from the Public Access Counselor that supports the applicant's position that the information is exempt from disclosure under the Public Records Act.

The applicant acknowledges that if the foregoing procedure is not followed, and an initial proposal is submitted, all information shall be subject to disclosure to the public unless Education One, L.L.C. determines that it must withhold from disclosure certain information in the application pursuant to the Public Records Act. Each applicant, by the submission of an initial proposal, acknowledges its understanding that all initial proposal materials are subject to disclosure under the Public Records Act and may be subject to review and copying by the public. Each applicant and its representatives, employees and agents acknowledges and agrees that Education One, L.L.C. Board members and staff, Trine University, the Indiana Department of Education, and any official, agent, employee or representative of the State of Indiana shall not be held liable or legally responsible in any way for any such disclosure pursuant to the Public Records Act, and such parties hereby waive any rights to redress or claims of action pursuant to any such disclosure.

Specifications

- The proposal must be typed and single-spaced, on white, 8.5"x 11" paper, with a minimum of 11-point font.
- If a particular question does not apply to your team or proposal, simply respond "Not Applicable."
- Do not exceed 15 pages for the narrative. Attachments do not count toward the page limit. Applicants completing the optional section on innovations may use an additional five pages, in which case the total narrative should not exceed 20 pages total.
- Complete all pages of the 5-Year Budget.
- Review your initial proposal for completeness before submitting.

Submission Instructions

- Send one electronic copy of the application as one PDF to lindsay@education1.org.

Education One, L.L.C utilized resources found from the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) to create this comprehensive charter school initial proposal Information regarding NACSA and its resources can be found at www.qualitycharters.org.

OVERVIEW AND ENROLLMENT PROJECTION

Please provide information for the applicant group's designated representative. This individual will serve as the contact for all communications, interviews, and notices from Education One, L.L.C. regarding the submitted proposal.

Legal name of group applying for charter(s):	Innova Academy L.L.C
Primary contact person:	Anteria Gross
Office phone number:	765-215-5419
Cell phone number:	765-215-5419
Email address:	anteriacevans@gmail.com

Names, roles, and current employment of all persons on applicant team (*you may add lines as needed*):

Full Name	Current Job Title and Employer	Position with Proposed School
Anteria Gross	Director of Strategic Planning and School Leadership - Maya Angelou Public Charter Schools & See Forever Foundation	School Leader/ Principal
Alex Stowers	Interim Principal - Christel House Doors	Assistant Principal of Student Supports
Josie Achenbach	Special Education Program Director - Indianapolis Public Schools	Assistant Principal of Academics
Katie Brown	Elementary School Teacher - Village Christian School	Curriculum Developer

Provide school opening information (*you may add lines as needed*):

Proposed School Name	Opening Year	New Start or Phase-in/Takeover	*Geographic Community	Opening Grades	Grade Levels at Full Enrollment
Innova Academy	2025 or 2026	New Start	Butler - Tarkington (Indianapolis IN)	6	6,7,8

*Please indicate the city/town and, if known, the potential address or neighborhood of location. Virtual operators should indicate the relevant geographies the operator intends to serve.

Provide the following information for each charter school included in this proposal. Specify the planned year of opening, the grade levels served, and both the planned and maximum number of enrolled students by grade level for each year. The table may be duplicated as needed.

Proposed School Name		Innova Academy	
Academic Year	Grade Levels	Planned Student Enrollment	Maximum Student Enrollment
Year 1 (specify starting year)	6	80	100
Year 2	6,7	160	200
Year 3	6,7,8	240	300
Year 4	6,7,8	320	380
Year 5	6,7,8	400	500

At Capacity			
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Does the school intend to contract with a third party education service provider (ESP) to manage the educational program and operations of the school but not hold the charter directly? Yes No

If yes, identify the ESP or other partner organization: _____

Does the school intend to partner or be affiliated with an existing or planned charter management organization (CMO) through which a single governing board governs or will govern multiple schools? Yes No

If yes, identify the CMO or other partner organization: _____

Will an application for the same charter school(s) be submitted to another authorizer in the near future?

Yes No

If yes, complete the table below, adding lines as needed.

Authorizer	Proposed School Name	Planned Submission Date	Decision Date

Please list the number of previous submissions for request to authorize this(ese) charter school(s) over the past five years, as required under IC § 20-24-3-4. Include the following information:

Authorizer	Proposed School Name	Submission Date

PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Executive Summary should provide a concise overview of the school design being proposed and the applicant's goals and organizational capacity to execute the plan successfully.

Mission and Vision

1. State the mission and vision of the proposed school. The mission is a statement of the fundamental purpose of the school, describing why it exists. The vision statement outlines how the school will operate and what it will achieve in the long term. The mission and vision statement provide the foundation for the entire proposal.

The mission and vision statements, taken together, should:

- Identify the students and community to be served;
- Illustrate what success will look like; and
- Align with the purposes of the state charter school law and authorizer's stated priorities for new schools.

Vision: Innova Academy envisions a future where every individual is a lifelong learner, equipped with the skills and mindset to thrive in an ever-evolving world.

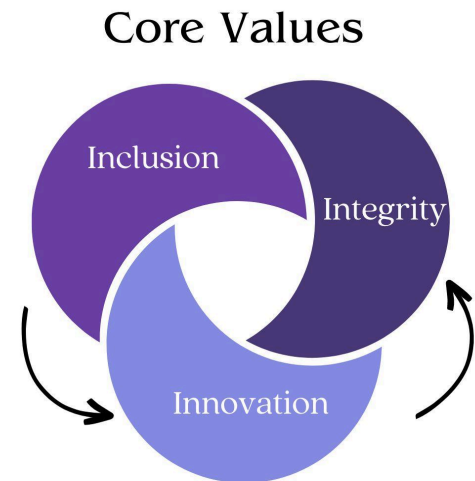
Mission: At Innova Academy, our mission is to create a vibrant learning environment that goes beyond traditional education. We are dedicated to creating meaningful learning experiences that extend beyond the classroom. By embracing the power of play, we empower our community to discover the joy in learning. Our commitment is to nurture creative minds, foster collaboration, and instill a love for knowledge. Through this mission, we aim to shape individuals who not only excel academically but are also equipped with the skills, values, and enthusiasm needed to contribute meaningfully to their community.

Core Values: Innova Academy values inclusion, integrity, and innovation. We believe that these values are not just words on a wall but principles that guide our actions and shape our vibrant learning community.

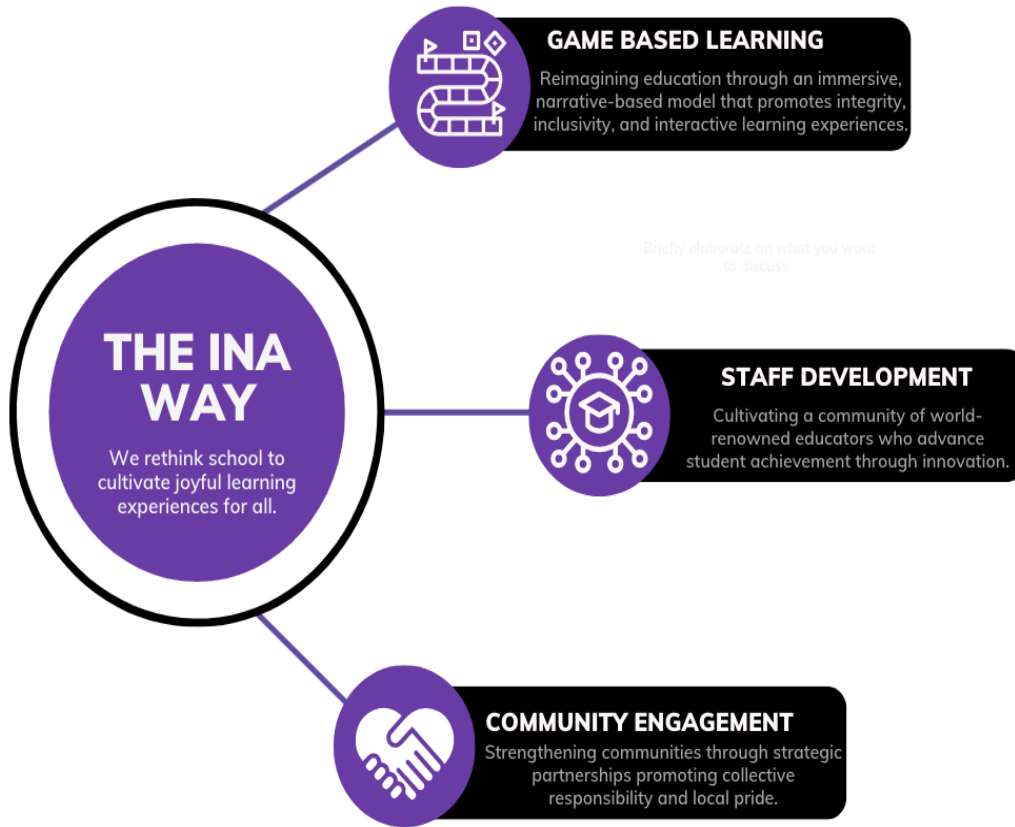
Inclusion lies at the heart of everything we do. We celebrate and honor the rich diversity of our student body, ensuring that every student feels welcomed, respected, and valued. In addition to honoring our student body, we also embrace the rich diversity of our community.

Integrity is instilled in our students from day one. We foster a culture of honesty, responsibility, and ethical decision-making. Our students understand the importance of integrity in their academic and personal pursuits, preparing them to become principled leaders and contributors to society.

Innovation is a cornerstone of our educational approach. We believe meaningful learning happens through collaboration, active engagement, and effective communication. Our classrooms are dynamic spaces where students are encouraged to ask questions, share new ideas, and connect with their peers. Through a game-based curriculum, we empower students to become confident, articulate, and empathetic in taking risks in using innovative thinking styles for their learning



Innova Academy (INA) provides an alternative educational experience through game-based learning, staff development, and community engagement. Our innovation is providing an environment where students are learning through play. We utilize game based learning because research supports its effectiveness in engaging and motivating students while empowering them with crucial 21st century skills.



We believe the community plays a crucial role in the learning process. Families, teachers, and students work together to create a supportive and inclusive environment where everyone's unique strengths and talents are valued. The school recognizes that the community's involvement and collaboration are essential for nurturing the holistic development of each student.

Equally important is the development of staff, ensuring that educators are equipped with the skills and knowledge to foster an enriching educational experience. To sustainably implement this innovative approach, we prioritize empowering our staff through intentional and continuous development.

By embracing play as a means of empowerment, Innova Academy strives to create a vibrant and dynamic educational experience. Through the combination of alternative learning opportunities through Game Based Learning, dedicated staff development, and a strong community, the school aims to prepare its students for a future where they can thrive and make a positive impact

Educational Need and Anticipated Student Population

1. Describe the anticipated student population; students' anticipated educational needs; and non-academic challenges the school is likely to encounter.

Innova Academy is an alternative school dedicated to serving 6th, 7th, and 8th-grade students as a middle school located in Indianapolis, Indiana. Our emphasis lies in addressing various learning styles and exceptionalities. The middle school years present an incredible opportunity to reset and reignite students' passion for learning, setting a positive foundation before they transition to high school.

Our decision to apply for a new charter stems from the commitment to autonomy, tailoring education to meet students' and the community's unique needs. Statewide statistics reveal a proficiency gap between our African American and White students in English and math (28.6% for grades 3-8), with particular disparities in the Butler-Tarkington Neighborhood. Our research shows that there is a need for a neighborhood middle school to serve the families of this particular community.

Higher rates of special education services and a predominantly Black/African American population underscore systemic biases affecting academic and social outcomes. This overrepresentation can perpetuate stereotypes and limit opportunities for

academic and social advancement which hinders educational outcomes, leading to lower graduation rates and reduced access to higher education and career opportunities. These disparities also contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline, as African American boys in special education face a higher risk of disciplinary actions and involvement in the criminal justice system. Addressing these disparities is crucial for creating an equitable society that values the potential and success of all individuals. Focusing on the Butler-Tarkington neighborhood, INA aims to provide middle school students with the alternative, opportunities, and the quality education they deserve. Our specific north-side location allows us to address the community needs, offering a meaningful middle school experience for 6th-8th-grade students close to home.

INA is committed to values of inclusion, integrity, and innovation. These principles guide our actions, fostering a culture of trust, respect, and collaboration. With an unwavering commitment to continuous improvement aligned with our values, INA strives to fulfill its mission and vision, making a positive impact on its community and beyond.

Innova Academy will provide an alternative education opportunity for students who may not have been able to demonstrate success in a traditional school setting. Our model aims to re-engage students and provide motivation for their educational journey. Strategic and preventive measures are in place that will prepare students for any high school setting our students seek.

The data from School Insights reveals the presence of 11 schools spread across three neighborhoods: Butler Tarkington, Meridian, and Wynnedale Hills. ([School Insights, 2020](#)). These schools cater to students from pre-kindergarten to 8th grade. Notably, out of the 11 schools, 8 are private, 2 have a choice enrollment policy, leaving only one school in the three neighborhoods designated as a community boundary school. While there are middle schools in the area, our students lack access to these institutions.

The opening of Broad Ripple Middle School in the upcoming academic year will undoubtedly influence the student enrollment process at Innova Academy. While precise data is not available yet, it is anticipated that Broad Ripple Middle School will offer another middle school option for families in the broader community. Given its location farther away from the neighborhoods served by Innova Academy, and the current K-8 building, James Whitcomb Riley, transitioning to a K-5 school - it is expected that the impact on student population will be minimal. Innova Academy remains committed to serving its immediate community and providing a quality education option for students in the Butler-Tarkington, Meridian Hills, and Wynnedale neighborhoods. Despite the presence of additional options, the unique offerings as an alternative school option alongside the personalized approach of Innova Academy will continue to attract families seeking a tailored educational experience for their children.

2. Describe the rationale for selecting the location and the student body.

By incorporating our game-based curriculum, INA's innovative approach aligns with our commitment to nurturing the whole child, addressing academic growth, and fostering social and emotional development. This model not only sparks curiosity and fosters creativity but also transforms learning into an exciting adventure, providing a dynamic and engaging educational experience.

Overwhelmed by the pressures of academic and social success, middle school students are growing increasingly disengaged from their education. As a result, more students are being removed from school due to behavior issues, missing crucial middle school years needed for future success. This unfortunate trend creates a negative impact on their mental and social well-being, furthering the gaps that leave them unprepared for high school and beyond.

We envision an alternative school that operates beyond physical space and embodies all individuals, including students, staff, families, and community members. Our school will purposefully design and implement instruction that revolves around the idea of cultivating a lifelong joy for learning, which aligns with our vision of education. Emphasizing a profound connection to the world and appreciating the dedication of both our students and staff to their individual passions. We aspire to create an educational environment within our school that sets high standards for excellence, encouraging students to explore new and captivating perspectives.

Through our embedded restorative practices, our proactive approach to education will ensure that students remain not only in the school building but fully engaged within their learning environments.

The Butler-Tarkington community has expressed a desire for a new middle school to reignite students' love of learning through motivating and relevant experiences that prepare them for high school and beyond. Because 22% of students in the

Butler-Tarkington neighborhood have been identified as eligible for special education services compared to 18% of students in the surrounding district. Our approach is designed to provide rigorous, yet engaging learning experiences for students who might be overlooked or overidentified for special education. We recognize that African American males in special education have higher suspension and incarceration rates ([US Department of Justice, 2021](#)). Additionally, African American students are twice as likely to be labeled as emotionally disturbed and given an IEP ([National Center for Learning Disabilities, 2020](#)). INA aims to change this narrative by providing a high-interest curriculum implemented through culturally responsive pedagogy addressing our population's unique needs. Given the systemic biases affecting academic and social outcomes, especially among the predominantly Black/African American population, our game-based curriculum aims to break stereotypes, reduce disparities, and offer a meaningful alternative for middle school students in the neighborhood.

Education Plan/School Design

1. 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.

Innova Academy's education model is centered on empowering its community through play. Our school recognizes the power of play as a tool for education and development. By incorporating play into the learning process, Innova Academy aims to engage students in a way that ignites their curiosity, enhances their creativity, and fosters a love for learning.

IMAGINE A SCHOOL WHERE...

KIDS LOVE LEARNING

Students are engaged and challenged through interactive lessons allowing them role-play through real life scenarios and develop essential 21st century skills.

TEACHERS EMPOWER THROUGH PLAY

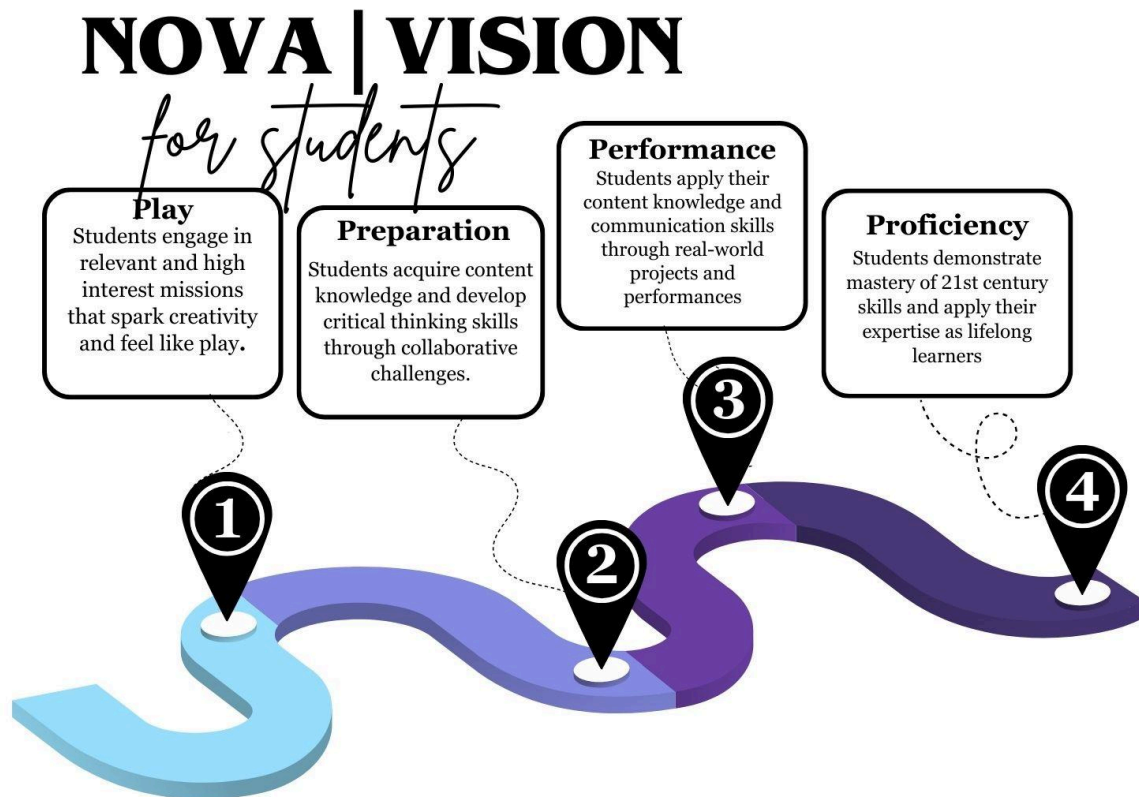
Teachers cultivate exceptional learning experiences by fostering inclusive environments supporting students academic, and interpersonal development through play.

COMMUNITY MEMBERS ARE WELCOMED

Doors are open to community members through game nights, open door professional development, and continuous volunteer opportunities.

A student's educational journey at Innova Academy begins with engaging in play, where students undertake relevant and high-interest missions that spark creativity and feel like fun. Students are prepared to acquire content knowledge and develop critical thinking skills through collaborative challenges. As students continue to grow and progress into performance, they apply their content knowledge and communication skills in real-world projects and presentations. Students ultimately reach proficiency and demonstrate mastery of 21st-century skills as well as apply their expertise as lifelong learners. Through a

combination of innovative teaching methods and interactive educational resources, this education continuum ensures that each stage builds upon the previous one, creating a cohesive and comprehensive educational experience.



Innova Academy places a strong emphasis on tailoring its educational practices to meet the diverse needs and interests of our students. When learning is enjoyable and meaningful, students are more likely to be motivated, actively participate, and retain knowledge for the long term. By incorporating interactive and hands-on learning experiences, INA strives to make the learning process exciting and engaging.

Game-Based Learning

We define “games” as intentionally designed, student-driven systems that are simulation-based, structured, interactive, and inclusive. Games cultivate powerful learning experiences and improve student achievement for both general and special education students according to the latest educational research (Adipat Et al, 2021). They motivate students by situating them within a narrative and providing a low-stakes opportunity to leverage their creativity and problem-solving skills (Musselman, 2014).

A game-based learning model brings the strategies, rules and social experiences of playing a game into the classroom. It allows teachers to target certain activities that will benefit the real-world application of concepts leading to more immersive and collaborative learning opportunities. ([GCU, 2021](#))

GAME-BASED PEDAGOGY

IS

Narrative-based "missions" posing broad questions addressed through short-term quests where students assume roles (ie detectives, scientists, journalists) to solve complex problems

Utilizing a variety of instructional strategies and tools including role playing games, experiments, thinking maps, and debates to provide a robust educational experience.

Leveraging the power of play through sneak peeks for future material, introductions to new material, practice spaces for skill-building, review opportunities, and assessments

IS NOT

Playing traditional board and card games without an instructional purpose or goal

Solely relying on video games, digital simulations, or virtual reality activities to provide instruction

Using games in isolation, devoid of connection to overarching missions and learning objectives

The Pedagogy of game-based learning involves integrating the principles of effective teaching and learning with unique features of games, such as interactive storytelling, problem- solving challenges, and immersive environments, to create engaging and compelling learning experiences. ([GCU, 2021](#))

WHAT THE BRAIN CRAVES TO EXCEL

Game based learning provides a stimulating and supportive environment addressing the unique needs of the adolescent brain promoting cognitive, emotional, and social development.



ENGAGEMENT

Games naturally capture attention and foster intrinsic motivation by situating students within a narrative and providing a sense of immersion

CHALLENGE

Games are designed with structured challenges that require students to think critically, problem-solve, and make decisions within the game's context.



FEEDBACK

Students receive feedback on their actions and decisions within the game, allowing them to assess the the impact of their decisions, identify areas for improvement, and make adjustments accordingly.

REFLECTION

Students are encouraged to analyze their strategies and identify areas for growth enabling students to become more self-aware of their learning processes and set goals accordingly.



Jackson (2011)

Brains are hard-wired to achieve; however, certain conditions must be present to allow the brain to excel. These specific conditions are: engagement, challenge, feedback and reflection (Jackson, 2011). Game based learning provides rich learning experiences that meet these conditions empowering every student to excel.

Innova Academy's curriculum and instruction is grounded in game-based learning and was initially developed in partnership with Institute of Play, the MacArthur Foundation, curriculum developers, and game designers. This pedagogy borrows heavily from Zygotsky's Theory of Sociocultural development, which recommends students work collaboratively to build collective understanding from one another (Jaramillo, 1996). Game-based learning is also centered around Piaget's constructivist theory, (Von Glasserfield, 1982) which states that learners actively construct their own knowledge and understanding through experiences and interactions with their environment.

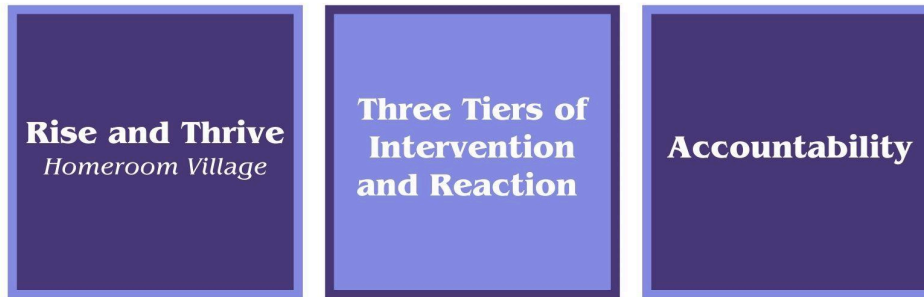
Based on our research, we have identified an achievement gap in the implementation of the curriculum. We recognize the need for more rigor and higher-order thinking to close the student achievement gap and enhance their experience while still maintaining the positive and engaging climate fostered by the existing curriculum.

When researching game-based learning (GBL), we found that schools implementing the curriculum, such as Quest to Learn (which has been using the program for several years), thrived in a positive and engaging culture. Our research showed that students with IEPs and those who typically exhibited negative behavior patterns excelled in this environment. However, there was a misalignment between the positive classroom culture and the overall performance on standardized state tests.

In response, we reconstructed the curriculum to align with Indiana State Standards, combining the GBL model with increased rigor and higher-level thinking. This ensures that students not only benefit from a positive culture and improved behaviors but also excel in assessments and performance criteria.

Restorative Practices

Innova Academy defines **restorative practices** as strategies and tools used to respond to conflict and harm in a way that prioritizes healing and community repair.



At Innova Academy, we understand that a thriving educational environment requires more than just academic excellence. Games provide a low-stakes environment where everyone is encouraged to take risks, recognizing that failure is part of the process. Rather than describing it as an undesirable outcome, failure is by design an expected and sometimes even necessary step in the learning process (Kapur, 2008; Kapur & Bielaczyc, 2012; Kapur & Kinzer, 2009; Plass, Perlin, et al., 2010). The lowered consequences of failure in games encourage risk-taking, conflict resolution, and exploration (Hoffman & Nadelson, 2010).

Our commitment to restorative practices ensures that when conflicts arise, they are addressed in a way that prioritizes healing and strengthens community bonds. This holistic approach, which emphasizes relationship-building and accountability, complements our academic strategies, creating a supportive and dynamic learning atmosphere for all students.

INA utilizes a proactive discipline model to equip students with strong conflict resolution and emotional intelligence skills. While restoration is a crucial component of discipline procedures, its principles are embedded within staff development, curriculum design, and community engagement. INA takes proactive steps to empower all students with the necessary tools and resources to excel beyond graduation.

Our goal is to create an inclusive and supportive environment where students feel empowered to take responsibility for their actions and uphold integrity. Restorative practices help students understand the impact of their actions and provide teachers with effective communication tools to redirect students. Implementing restorative practices will aid students in overcoming barriers to maximizing their learning outcomes in the game-based curriculum.

Rise and Thrive and Homeroom Village: Research shows that elephants provide a supportive environment for their young, helping calves grow and develop essential social and survival skills for adulthood. Elephants not only take care of their own but also help pave the way for others in their habitat. Similarly, at Innova, we embody the spirit of this communal care through our "Homeroom Village" and "Rise and Thrive" class periods.

In our Homeroom Villages, students come together as a close-knit community, fostering a sense of belonging and support. Each student is assigned to a Homeroom where the teacher oversees attendance, shares important school information, and creates a safe space for social interaction and development. During the Rise and Thrive period, we focus on social-emotional learning, goal setting, and mindfulness. Teachers guide their village in developing skills and strategies to manage emotions and solve problems, ensuring that every student is equipped to thrive both academically and personally. This holistic approach helps us build a strong, supportive community where every member can rise and thrive together

Three Tiers :Innova Academy uses logical consequences to redirect students, as defined by Responsive Classrooms ([Responsive Classroom, 2007](#)). This approach calls for all adult staff members to involve children in practicing appropriate attitudes and behaviors rather than focusing on negative behaviors. Logical consequences are categorized as "Loss of



Privilege,” “Time and Space,” and “Break It, Fix It.” Our fundamental expectation is that our students present integrity, respectful behavior, and inclusive language during interactions with themselves and others. Behaviors outside of Innova’s fundamental expectations are rated on a three-tier structure. Staff use rational decision-making to align action with a consequence to maximize the possibility of restoration ([University of San Diego, 2018](#))([Monash University, 2019](#)).

Teachers and administrators follow a comprehensive Three-Tiered system: Preventative and Proactive Strategies, Responsive Strategies, and Intensive Interventions and Supports. This approach ensures a versatile and adaptive framework tailored to each student’s unique needs. These tiers are implemented both laterally and as a continuum, allowing us to respond effectively to student behaviors. By operating flexibly, we can restore and repair relationships, promote positive behavior, and provide the necessary support to foster student growth and success. This holistic approach is designed to create a nurturing and

supportive educational environment for all students.

Innova’s Pledge of Accountability: By committing to restorative practices, teachers will maximize learning and create a safe and nurturing community for all. All individuals representing Innova Academy abide by the five pledges of accountability. As a member of the Innova Academy community:

- I pledge to embrace restorative practices in all aspects of my life, including my interactions with fellow students, teachers, administrators, and families.
- I will prioritize healing and community repair by building relationships, developing self-awareness, and promoting accountability for injustices.
- I understand that every action I take has a positive or negative consequence, and I will strive to make choices that positively contribute to our supportive and inclusive environment.
- I will use constructive and responsive language when interacting with others
- I will hold myself and others accountable for our actions

This comprehensive approach at Innova Academy combines restorative practices, proactive discipline models, and game-based learning to create a nurturing and effective educational environment. By fostering strong community bonds and providing a holistic support system, we ensure that every student is equipped with the skills and resilience needed to succeed academically and personally. This commitment to both emotional and academic growth underscores our dedication to developing well-rounded individuals ready to thrive in all aspects of their lives.

2. Describe the evidence that demonstrates the school model will be successful in improving academic achievement for the targeted student population.

The description should include, at a minimum, the following items:

- Basic learning environment (e.g., classroom-based, independent study, virtual),
- Class size and structure,
- Overview of the curriculum,
- Use of technology in delivering instruction (if applicable),
- Plans for ensuring the school is staffed with highly effective teachers, and
- Evidence-based support.

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Game-Based Learning is an evidence-based school model designed to significantly improve academic achievement for our targeted student population. By integrating proven educational strategies, leveraging comprehensive data analysis, and incorporating innovative teaching methods through GBL, we ensure that our approach is both effective and adaptable to the unique needs of our students. Our commitment to fostering a supportive and engaging learning environment, combined with a strong emphasis on individualized instruction and community involvement, lays a solid foundation for academic success.

In the Game Based curriculum all learning units are divided into long term “missions,” spanning an entire semester. When a mission is introduced, students are faced with an immediate “need to know” that engages them in solving a mission’s complex challenge. Students are also often given roles to play during missions, such as being designers, entrepreneurs, or journalists. At the beginning, students don’t know how to solve the discovery mission’s complex challenge; they must solve a series of “quests” that help them build essential knowledge and skills needed to complete the discovery mission challenge. During quests, students use games and other project-based learning experiences to build their understanding of content and practice new skills. Teachers also creatively evaluate student learning through assessments that are technology-based, game-based, and/or have a connection to the real world.

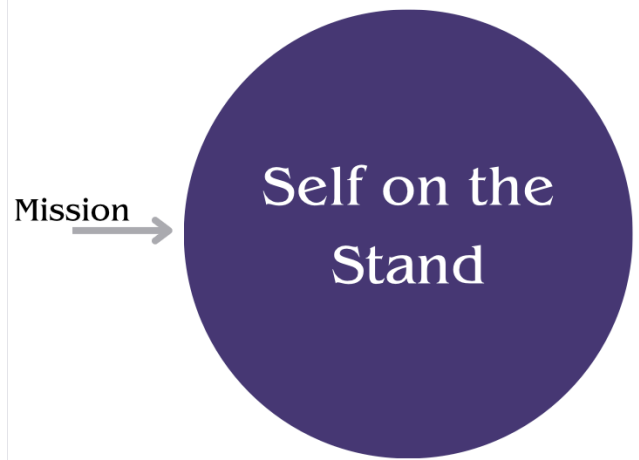
Mission: Self on the Stand

In 6th grade English Language Arts, students will complete a semester-long mission, “Self on the Stand,” where they will explore various understandings of identity and the factors that impact its formation. To explore identity, students become aspiring authors and radio actors. Students are recruited by TeenInk, a real-life teen literary magazine and website, to help in their efforts to create a Discovering Identity series.

Through a video, they learn that TeenInk wants to publish a collection of personal narratives of real young people. They want true stories written from students’ point of view that express their identity using descriptive language, imagery, symbolism, and dialogue. As part of the Discovering Identity series, TeenInk also asks students to develop podcasts that bring other people’s identities, specifically literary characters’ identities, to life. Students read two novels, Jason Reynolds’

Look Both Ways and Kelly Yang’s *Front Desk*, as well as a range of short stories and poems that get at the question of what makes up one’s identity. Students begin by examining themselves and their own identities and then move to examining the identities of others as expressed through literature.

Informed and inspired by their investigations, students write their own personal narratives and submit them to TeenInk to be possibly published online or in TeenInk magazine. They also perform and record dramatic monologues for a series of Discovering Identity podcasts and submit their finished podcasts to TeenInk. In addition, students share their work at a public exhibition attended by teachers, peers, family, friends, and invited guests, such as local publishers and authors.



Essential Questions	Enduring Understandings
<p>How can another person’s story be my story?</p> <p>To what extent do our differences define us?</p> <p>Whose needs are more important: individual or societal?</p>	<p>Our identity affects how we read and interpret texts.</p> <p>Reading another person’s experience can change our identity.</p> <p>We are expected to think and act in ways that are predetermined by our society.</p> <p>Empathy is necessary for overcoming differences and the injustices associated with them</p> <p>The individual’s story benefits the larger community.</p>

Each mission will be divided into smaller units, called quests.

Mission Overview (Semester)

Quest	Timeline	Standards	Description
The Real Me	2 Weeks	6.RC.7 6.RC.9, 6.RC.10, 6.W.3 6.CC.1 6.CC.2 6.CC.3	Students are challenged to explore point of view as the first step in their study of identity. Students work to share their interests, important memories, and other aspects of their identities using storytelling and art as their means of communication, as they begin to read <i>Look Both Ways</i> by Jason Reynolds.
Tricks of the Trade	4 Weeks	6.RC.1 6.RC.2, 6RC.6, 6.RC.10, 6.W.3 6.CC.1 6.CC.2 6.CC.3	Students continue reading <i>Look Both Ways</i> and explore how Reynolds uses descriptive language, imagery, symbolism, and dialogue to convey his characters' identities. Students are challenged to draft a personal narrative using "tricks of the trade" that will be published in print and possibly online by TeenInk.
Publish or Perish	2 Weeks	6.RC.1 6.RC.2, 6RC.6, 6.RC.10, 6.W.3 6.W.4, 6.W.6, 6.W.7, 6.CC.1 6.CC.2 6.CC.3, 6.CC.7	Students gather peer and teacher feedback, revise, and refine their personal narratives. When students have completed their final drafts, each class's collection of personal narratives are sent to be published into print books using Createspace or Lulu.
Difference	2 Weeks	6.RC.1, 6.RC.2, 6.RC.4, 6.RC.5, 6.W.4, 6.W.6, 6.W.7, 6.CC.1, 6.CC.2, 6.CC.3, 6.CC.6, 6.CC.8	Students start to explore difference, what creates difference, and how difference shapes identity by reading short stories and poems and studying photographs and other art objects. Students start reading <i>Front Desk</i> at the end of the quest.
The Empathy Project	4 Weeks	6.RC.1, 6.RC.2, 6.RC.3, 6.RC.7, 6.W.4, 6.W.6, 6.W.7, 6.CC.1, 6.CC.2, 6.CC.3, 6.CC.6, 6.CC.8	Students are challenged to join the Empathy Project and create podcasts. As part of the Empathy Project, students first learn about empathy and analyze their empathy for characters from <i>Front Desk</i> . Next, students write and perform different characters' monologues, experiment with ways to increase empathy for their characters, gather peer feedback, and revise monologues. Then each class of students records their monologues to create Discovering Identity podcasts.
Submit and Share	2 Weeks	6.RC.1, 6.RC.2, 6.RC.4, 6.RC.5, 6.W.3, 6.W.4, 6.W.6 6.W.7, 6.CC.1, 6.CC.2, 6.CC.3, 6.CC.6, 6.CC.7	Students support their peers in preparing to share monologues at the public exhibition. In addition, students revisit and refine their identity collages and informational texts about identity from Quest #1 to share with the exhibition audience.

Final Mission Assessment

For the final assessment, students go through final rounds of revision and refinement of their podcasts created for TeenInk. Then they submit their personal narratives (previously revised and refined) and podcasts to TeenInk.

Students then begin to prepare for the public exhibition of their work. In each class, students perform their monologues and vote to choose one student who will perform his/her monologue at the public exhibition. During the next two weeks, in each class, students work in groups to help the student performing the monologue to hone and practice his/her piece. In addition, students revisit their identity collages and written text from Quest #1 and refine these student work products to ready them to publicly share at the exhibition.

School and outside community members, including local authors and publishers, are invited to the public exhibition. During the first part of the exhibition, each chosen student performs his/her monologue in front of the audience. The monologues are

recorded on video and are later posted on the school’s website. Then, after the performance, audience members learn more about identity by visiting different student tables, talking with students about their colleges, audience members learn more about identity by visiting different student tables and talking with students about their colleges and informational texts. Print copies of self-published collections of students’ personal narratives are also available for purchase by the exhibition audience.

Quest Details (Units)

All assessments used at Innova evaluate not only subject matter knowledge and skills of students (aligned to 2023 Indiana Academic Standards), but also assess 21st century skills. These skills include collaboration, empathy, problem-solving, systems thinking and design thinking. Innova’s assessments range from embedded and formative (happening while students are learning to help teachers guide instruction) to traditional (quizzes/ tests) to performance-based (tasks similar to those in the real world) to self-assessments. We want to prepare students to be successful in college, career, and life in the 21st century, and we believe students need support in building knowledge and skills beyond those measured on standardized tests.



Additionally, when students play games to learn, there are numerous ways that teachers assess learning through game play. Some examples are:

- Circulate around the room to check for student understanding rubric by observing student game choices, listening to student conversations, and asking questions to students.
- Ask students to create a strategy to help new players win the game.
- Ask students to change the game to help players learn different content and/or skills.
- Create game play scenarios and ask students about possible next game moves.

Examples of rubrics and specific assessments are attached in the appendix.

Quest 1: The Real Me

Topics & Skills Covered	Indiana Academic Standards	Essential Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrative writing • Point of view • Oral storytelling • Discovering identity 	6.RC.7, 6.W.3 6.CC.1 6.CC.2 6.CC.3	What is identity? How does culture and experience shape identity? What is my identity?

Students begin the discovery mission with a challenge—to use storytelling and art to express who they are as individuals. To support student use of storytelling in the mission, the teacher shares a story from his/her own life, and students listen to several other examples from The Moth podcast. The Moth is a non-profit centered on the art of storytelling.

Students then complete a personal survey about their backgrounds and interests. After analyzing their survey responses, students identify a personal story that helps to share who they are with others. They write their stories, and then in groups, share their stories, provide peer feedback and revise. Students then record and submit their stories to their class website for the teacher to review.

With sharing who they are through art as a next step, students revisit their personal survey data to help them create a collage, either digital or physical, that defines identity visually. As they work on their collages, they read a handful of non-fiction texts about identity (see side bar with examples). They then write their own informational text defining identity to accompany their collages.

Lastly, the teacher tells the students about TeenInk’s request for their participation in efforts to create resources for a Discovering Identity series that includes personal narratives and possible other resources to be discussed at a later point. The

teacher suggests that the class should begin reading *Look Both Ways* by Jason Reynolds to explore identity and how authors convey characters' identity through their writing.

Game-Like Learning Experience	Assessment Type	Description
Core Memories	Card game and reflection	One student acts as the judge and reads an “emotion” card while other players submit Core Memory cards to match the emotion. The judge picks the core memory that best matches the emotion. Players receive “experience points” when their core memory card is chosen. At the conclusion of the game, students reflect on the different Core Memory with their team.
Yes I Have in Fact	Movement game	This game helps activate memories and experiences for students to use in their personal narrative. Each player sits in a chair in a circle facing the center. One player stands in the center to start the game. The player in the center makes a statement that applies to him or her and follows the format "Yes I have in fact _____." For instance, I might say "Yes I have in fact swam in a pool" Anyone around the circle who can identify with the statement (anyone who has swam in a pool) gets up and moves to a new chair. The last one left standing makes the next statement.
Who am I?	Personal survey data and written response (analysis)	Students take a personal survey with questions asking about their backgrounds, interests, and significant events in their lives that shaped their identity. They analyze their responses and choose one significant event to use as the focus of their story. Students also listen to examples of stories about people's lives from The Moth website.
Mini Moth	Oral story	Students draft a 3-5 minute oral story and, in small groups, share their stories, receive peer feedback, and make revisions. They then record their stories and upload them to the class website for the teacher to evaluate and provide feedback. Next, after refining their stories, they record stories one more time. Each classes' set of recordings is uploaded as a podcast to the school's website.
Identity Collage	Collage and description	Students create collages using canva.com with images that they believe convey their identities. They also write an accompanying description to their collages explaining the connection between their collages and identities.

Quest 2: Tricks of the Trade

Topics & Skills Covered	Indiana Academic Standards	Essential Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Narrative writing ● Point of view ● Oral storytelling ● Discovering identity 	6.RC.7, 6.W.3 6.CC.1 6.CC.2 6.CC.3	What is identity? How does culture and experience shape identity? What is my identity? How can imagery

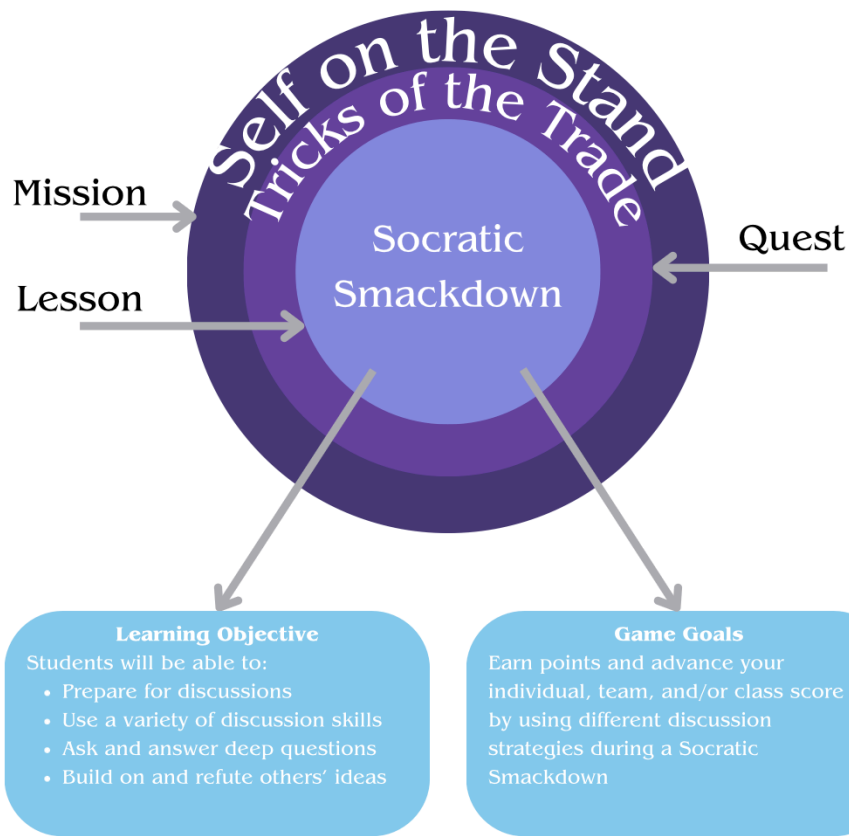
As students continue reading *Look Both Ways*, they are challenged by TeenInk to explore point of view, descriptive language, imagery, symbolism, and dialogue used by the author, Jason Reynolds, to give identities to his characters. After exploring those writing techniques, TeenInk communicates that it is time for students to start writing their personal narratives. Each personal narrative must include 4 vignettes from students' lives. Students revisit their stories from Quest #1 and decide whether they want to include the story as part of their personal narratives.

Their personal narratives must:

- Include 4 vignettes from their lives.
- Establish a clear point of view.
- Use descriptive language and well chosen details to enhance the narrative.
- Use imagery to convey a vivid picture of events and characters.
- Use dialogue to enhance an event, advance the narrative, and/or establish character traits.
- Use symbolism to express a feeling, idea, thought or emotion.

By the end of the quest, students produce the first drafts of their personal narratives using google docs.

Game-Like Learning Experience	Assessment Type	Description
What am I?	Card Game	Students play What Am I?, to help students use point of view and descriptive language. Students choose a card with an object on it, like a swingset, and narrates a story from the point of view of the object without saying the name of the object. Then, other students try to guess the object.
What am I? (revisited)	Card Game	Students play <i>What Am I Revisited</i> . In this version of the Institute of Play game, students add imagery to their stories from the point of view of objects.
Guess what I am	Written Assignment	Students choose an important object in their lives, such as a basketball, and write a story from the point of view of that object. The stories are shared on walls throughout the school as part of a school-wide contest to guess as many of the objects correctly as possible.
Socratic Smackdown	Discussion Game	When students finish reading <i>Look Both Ways</i> , they discuss important themes in the book by playing Socratic Smackdown to help students learn how to discuss texts using text dependent questions. They then use textual evidence to make connections and ask thought- provoking questions about factors that impact identity.



Individual lesson plans and activities are included within each quest. Game-like learning experiences provide both teachers and students with opportunities for formative and summative assessment. In this lesson, students play Socratic Smackdown to apply their understanding of imagery, characterization, and identity through *Look Both Ways*. Teams receive points for their contributions to the discussion and lose points for distracting or insulting the opposing team.

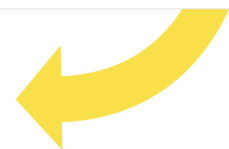
GAME PLAY

DISCUSSION STRATEGIES

The point value can vary according to the skill that is presently being learned and practiced by students.

- Agree** +1 "I agree... and..." to build on an argument.
- Disagree** +1 "I disagree because..." to refute an argument.
- Question** +1 Ask a probing question to get more details about someone's argument.
- Use Evidence** +2 Use a quote from the text to support an argument.
- Devil's Advocate** +2 Pose a question or situation that is counter to a person's argument.
- Connect** +2 Link a person's argument with another person's previous statement.
- Distract** -1 Distract team or class from discussion.
- Insult** -1 Be disrespectful to another person during the discussion.
- Interrupt** -1 Speak while another person is speaking.

SOCRATIC SMACKDOWN SCORE CARD



		PLAYER 1	PLAYER 2	PLAYER 3
STRATEGY	POINTS			
AGREE				
DISAGREE				
QUESTION				
USE EVIDENCE				
INTERRUPT				
TOTAL SCORE				

The curriculum will be developed for all subjects in Year 0 and will be fully prepared by June 31, 2025 for staff development in July.

Developing the curriculum is a methodical four step process:

1. Understanding the Standards: breaking down the standards into vertically aligned student expectations and success criteria. Developing essential questions, enduring understandings, and final mission assessment necessary to demonstrate mastery)
2. Storyboarding: developing the overarching narrative, detailing specific roles students will assume in accordance with the learning objectives developed in stage 1. Segmenting content into quests to allow students to construct new understanding necessary to master the final mission assessment.
3. Content Development: Developing individual lesson plans, games, assessments, videos necessary for seamless implementation. Procuring any additional resources needed (technology, applications, physical supplies, etc)
4. Playtest, Revise, and Publish: Submitting mission drafts to other middle school teachers to review and playtest in their classrooms. Review feedback from teachers and students. Games and activities go through two rounds of playtesting and revision prior to publication.

The curriculum for 7th and 8th grade will be developed during year 1 and year 2 respectively and will incorporate feedback from teachers, students, administrators, and assessment data. A complete week-by-week timeline for the complete curriculum development plan spanning three years is provided in the appendix.

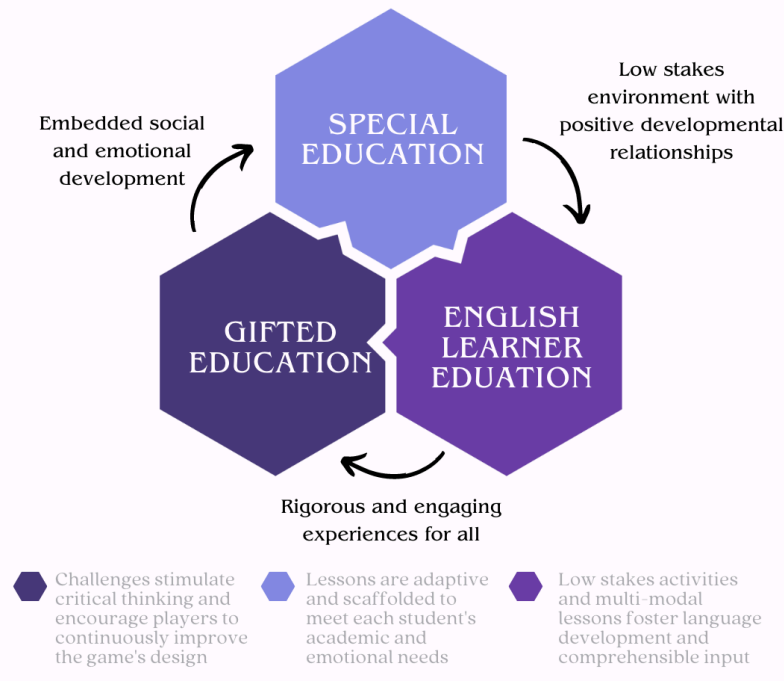
All staff members will receive a month of training on implementation in July and will continue to be supported by all administrators in addition to the instructional coach and curriculum designer throughout the school year. The formal plan to evaluate the curriculum is listed below.

Date	School Action
June	Administration will receive training on the curriculum. The administration will schedule benchmark assessments and set goals to measure curriculum effectiveness throughout the year.
July	Train teachers/new teachers on curriculum and finish first quarter lesson plans
August	Gather initial feedback from teachers during PLC, administration will complete walkthroughs and give feedback on curriculum implementation
October	Analyze first common assessment results, make incremental curriculum changes as needed, finish second quarter lesson plans, Gather feedback from teachers during PLC, administration will complete walkthroughs and give feedback on curriculum implementation
December	Analyze second common assessment results, make incremental curriculum changes as needed, finish third quarter lesson plans, Gather feedback from teachers during PLC, administration will complete walkthroughs and give feedback on curriculum implementation
March	Analyze third common assessment results, make incremental curriculum changes as needed, finish third quarter lesson plans, Gather feedback from teachers during PLC, administration will complete walkthroughs and give feedback on curriculum implementation
May	Analyze fourth common assessment results, make incremental curriculum changes as needed, finish third quarter lesson plans, Gather feedback from teachers during PLC, administration will complete walkthroughs and give feedback on curriculum implementation

Teachers will be responsible for implementing the curriculum and providing feedback for continued improvement; however, they will not be expected to create new content. Because Innova’s pedagogical approach is unique, the teachers’ priority should be on the implementation and use in the classroom, rather than on developing new content. Teachers will receive implementation training and support during the summer academy in July, professional development days throughout the year, and weekly PLC meetings.

All Innova teachers will receive professional development on educating English Language Learners during the July summer development (Summer Academy). This PD will train teachers using resources from the [National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition](#). Innova will utilize the sheltered instruction model to integrate language and content support to provide all students with comprehensible input. Teachers will model and scaffold the use of academic vocabulary through visuals,

SUPPORTING ALL LEARNERS



physical responses, games, graphic organizers, scaffolded notes, and more. Additionally, ELL students will receive accommodations such as oral administration, extra time, graphic organizers, and content and language support. These accommodations are determined on an individual basis according to student performance. Teachers will monitor students informally through classwork and formally through summative assessments. Innova will also utilize the WIDA ACCESS assessments to monitor language proficiency at the beginning and end of the school year. A committee composed of the Assistant Principal of Student Supports, a teacher, and a parent will meet annually to review the student's progress both toward English language proficiency and academically. If a student is not making satisfactory progress, the committee will develop an intervention plan and identify additional accommodations to support the student's learning journey.

Currently, 5% of students at Innova Academy are identified as English Language Learners. These current enrollment parameters allow our Assistant Principal of Student Supports to

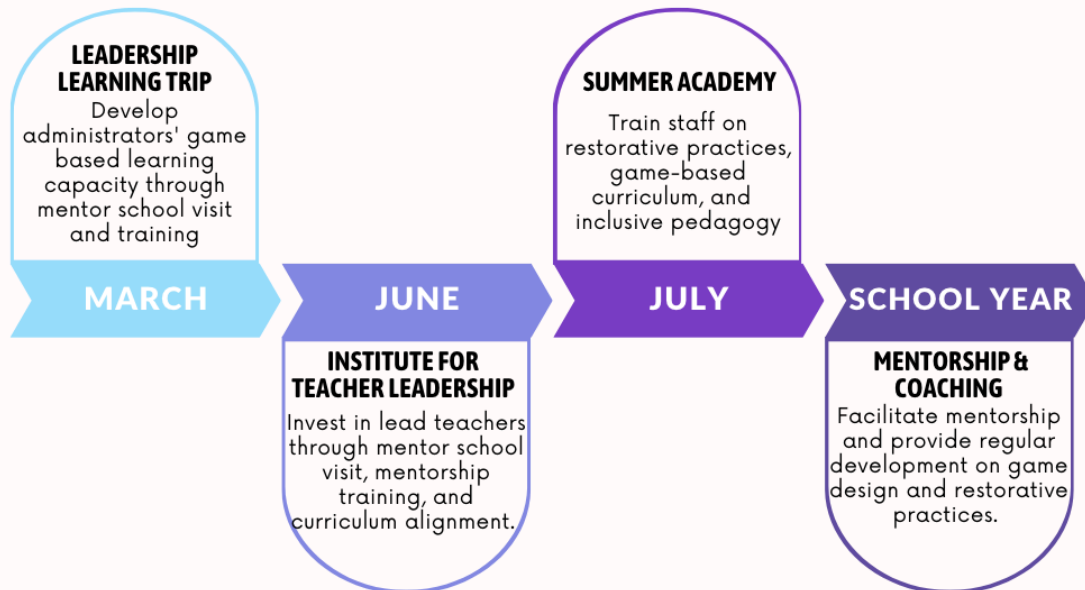
oversee the services provided to our students and will provide training and support for teachers. If the ELL student population increases to over 20%, we will hire a designated staff member to oversee the program and provide additional support for both students and teachers.

Equipping faculty and staff with knowledge, skills, and resources to provide excellent educational experiences is crucial. INA invests in staff development throughout the school year to develop and retain world-class educators. Through a month-long summer institute, teachers will be introduced to the principles of game-based instruction and will learn how to play, implement, and design superb instruction. INA will contract educational game developers from ThinkFun to train staff on systems thinking and effective design.

Additionally, INA will train four lead teachers in each core content area (math, science, reading, social studies) in June prior to all staff development. This more intensive training will include the following:

- Site visit to Quest to Learn
- Restorative Practices Learning
- Principles of Inclusion
- Mentorship/Teacher Leadership Training
- Curriculum Alignment

Staff Development



Starting July 1, all staff will return to campus for professional development where they will learn more about game design, curriculum alignment, and restorative practices. Through a partnership with Quest to Learn, teachers will receive peer mentorship and support from experienced game-based instructors throughout the school year. This mentorship ensures teachers are equipped to implement the curriculum in ways that create powerful learning experiences driving student growth and academic achievement. Additionally, lead teachers will mentor and support faculty in weekly PLC meetings.

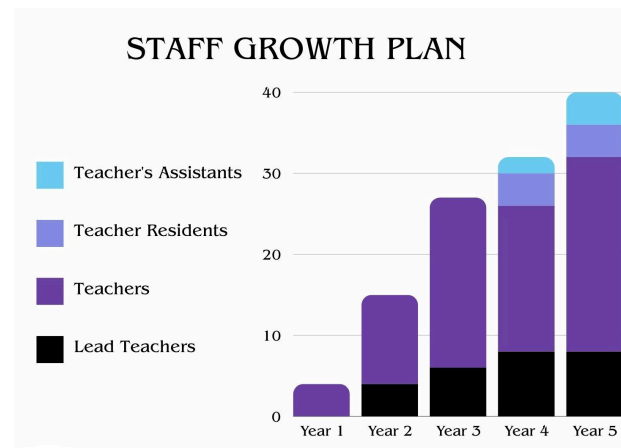
INA will provide staff with a design lab where they can collaboratively develop innovative games that enhance instruction through joyful learning experiences. Specifically, the design lab will be fully equipped with a 3D printer, whiteboard walls, poster printer, laminator, and an assortment of meeples, dice, and cards.

During the school year, staff members will participate in consistent professional development sessions where they will hone their pedagogical and restorative practice skills. Once a week, each administrator will co-teach with a novice teacher in one class period to support teachers' growth and ensure alignment between the school leaders' expectations and the realities of implementation. This also keeps administrators aware of specific areas staff members require additional support and can provide professional development accordingly. Innova Academy will meet with mentor teachers from Quest to Learn quarterly via video call. In January, two mentor teachers from Quest to Learn will visit Innova to provide demonstration lessons and additional support.

All teachers must be degreed. Special Education teachers, Bilingual teachers, and teachers of English as a second language must also be certified in the fields in which they are assigned to teach, as required in state and/or federal law. Paraprofessionals must be certified as required to meet state and/or federal law.

Initial Teacher Recruitment

1. Attend education job fairs and post job listings on relevant websites.
2. Reach out to local universities and education programs to advertise open positions.
3. Utilize social media and professional networks to spread the word about the school and its mission.



4. Offer incentives such as competitive salaries and benefits, opportunities for professional growth, and a supportive work environment.

Continuous Teacher Recruitment

1. Host a game-based learning conference for teachers and invite them to learn about the school's approach to education.
2. Use social media to showcase the school's game-based learning activities and encourage teachers to join the team.
3. Partner with universities and education programs to recruit recent graduates who are interested in game-based learning.
4. Host workshops or webinars to teach teachers how to incorporate game-based learning into their curriculum.
5. Offer mentorship programs for new teachers and provide opportunities for ongoing professional development in game-based learning.

Qualifications:

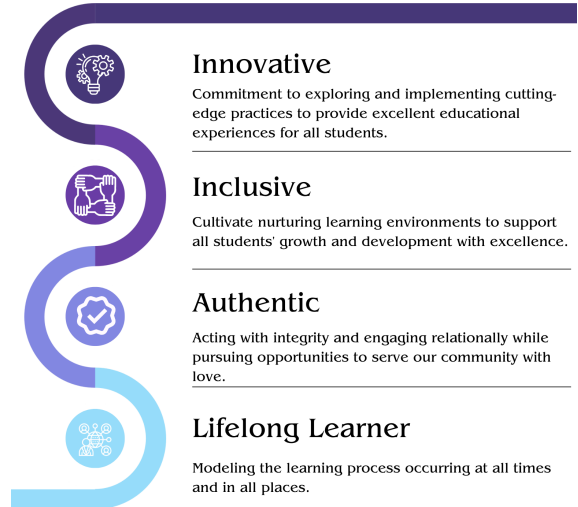
1. A valid teaching certificate and relevant experience in their field.
2. Knowledge of innovative teaching practices and a willingness to experiment with new methods.
3. Strong communication and collaboration skills, as well as the ability to work in a team environment.
4. A commitment to ongoing professional development and a growth mindset.

The application process will be as follow:

1. Submit an online application
2. Round 1 interview with instructional leadership team (consisting of teacher leaders, and support staff within the building)
3. Round 2 interview with the Administration team (complete 2 performance tasks to show skill in necessary areas)
4. Round 3 Recommendation to HR for hire (background checks etc will be completed to confirm applicant can be hired)

We will leverage our educational partnerships to promote Innova Academy among new teachers. Collaborating with local universities such as IUPUI, Butler, and Marian University's education department, INA will facilitate opportunities for hosting student teachers, fostering immersive learning experiences. We will also aim to collaborate with teaching organizations such as Teach INDY and Teach For America (TFA). This initiative will also contribute to preventing unforeseen staff shortages. Taking a proactive approach.

Staff Profile



RECRUITMENT INITIATIVES



3. Summarize what the proposed school would do more effectively than the schools that are now serving the targeted population and how the school would achieve its goals.


Why INA

Innova Academy utilizes game based learning because it provides a rich learning environment supporting adolescent brain development. Middle school years are pivotal learning years for students and a unique opportunity for creating long lasting experiences that will influence their futures and last a lifetime. During this formative period, students not only acquire essential academic skills but also develop critical social and emotional foundations. helping guide them through our ever changing world.

Teaching 21st Century Skills


Why Games?

Games are a powerful learning tools because they provide motivating and engaging experiences that place players in the center of the narrative. Stakes are low and risk taking is encouraged, empowering each player to leverage their creativity and problem solving skills to develop innovative solutions to each challenge.



SUPPORTING ALL LEARNERS

Games are adaptive and customizable to meet each player's needs and goals. They foster a community where everyone can play and provide opportunities to utilize restorative practices in a nurturing environment.



- 1 CREATIVITY**
Players role play through simulations where thinking outside of the box is part of the design and failure is welcomed.
- 2 COLLABORATION**
Players work together, utilizing the strengths of every team member to accomplish a shared goal. Everyone plays a role in helping the team accomplish the mission.
- 3 COMMUNICATION**
Players express ideas, strategize processes, resolve conflict, and propose solutions using multiple modalities.
- 4 CRITICAL THINKING**
Challenges are constant and adaptive to each player. Problem solving and systems thinking are embedded in each task. Games are in perpetual beta to challenge players to continuously modify and improve the game's design.

Instead of only relying on traditional lecture-based pedagogy, INA invites students to learn by doing in a way that feels like play. Because instruction, practice, and assessment are delivered through multiple modalities, students with diverse learning styles are primed for success. At INA, inclusion means everyone is a participant and has a stake in the game. Students with diverse backgrounds and abilities leverage each other's strengths to help the team accomplish the mission. Game Based Learning (GBL) provides a framework to teach intangible 21st-century skills such as creativity, collaboration, communication, and critical thinking.

Game-based learning takes a variety of forms at INA. For example, sixth-grade students explore identity through narrative vignettes to produce a Discovering Identity series for TeenInk, an online magazine for teen authors. Students produce collages, podcasts, poetry, and short stories and share their work at a public exhibition attended by teachers, peers, family, friends, and invited guests, such as local publishers and authors. Meanwhile, seventh graders find themselves shrunk inside the notorious Dr. Smallz who suffers from peculiar ailments. Students take on the role of doctors, mathematicians, scientists, and engineers as they explore cellular biology and human anatomy. Eighth graders apply their knowledge of systems thinking and game development through a Design Lab course where they create their own games. Instructional games are collaboratively designed with a team of teachers, INA's instructional coach and curriculum designer, with resources from the Institute for Play.

Throughout the process, students learn and apply restorative practices allowing them to develop conflict management, self-regulation, and good sportsmanship. Restorative practices aim to equip students with a growth-mindset mentality where failure is re-framed as a learning opportunity and everyone can improve. This framework is more than a discipline philosophy, but a core component of our curriculum and culture. Games provide a low-stakes environment where everyone is encouraged to take risks, recognizing that failure is part of the process.

A research study conducted by Harvard in 2015 discovered that the restorative justice approach to dealing with misbehavior views it as a violation of interpersonal and community connections. As such, this approach utilizes constructive methods such as peer mediation, community service, and restitution in order to restore the harm caused. It has been shown that these preferred restorative justice practices positively impact community satisfaction among students. Additionally, previous studies have explored the racial threat hypothesis, which suggests that individuals that identify as Black/African American in a

particular area are linked to harsher punitive policies. Specifically, in the case of public schools, research has revealed that the racial makeup of the student body is associated with the use of punitive disciplinary techniques ([Payne & Welch, 2015](#)).

By incorporating our game-based curriculum, INA's innovative approach aligns with our commitment to nurturing the whole child, addressing academic growth, and fostering social and emotional development. This model not only sparks curiosity and fosters creativity but also transforms learning into an exciting adventure, providing a dynamic and engaging educational experience.

We envision a school that operates beyond physical space and embodies all people, including students, staff, families, and community members. Our school will purposefully design and implement instruction that revolves around the idea of cultivating a lifelong joy for learning, which aligns with our vision of education that emphasizes a profound connection to the world and appreciating the dedication of both our students and staff to their individual passions. We aspire to create an educational environment within our school that sets high standards for excellence, encouraging students to explore new and captivating perspectives.

4. For Blended Learning Operators Only: As described in IC § 20-24-7-13, Indiana statute defines a virtual charter school in the following manner: a virtual charter school “means any charter school, including a conversion charter school, that provides for the delivery of more than fifty percent (50%) of instruction to students through: (1) virtual distance learning; (2) online technologies; or (3) computer based instruction.” Describe the number of hours per day that instruction at your proposed school will be delivered through virtual distance learning, online technologies, and/or computer based instruction. Does your proposed education model meet the definition of a virtual charter school as defined under Indiana law? If yes, please ensure your budget assumptions reflect Indiana’s funding formula for virtual charter schools.

Insert Text Here - N/A

Community Engagement

1. Describe the relationships that you have established to generate community engagement in and support for the proposed school.

Community Engagement

To generate community engagement and support for our proposed school, INA has begun to establish several key relationships and initiatives. Our goal is to create strong partnerships that provide meaningful and engaging opportunities for both students and community members, fostering a sense of shared responsibility and pride in our communities education system.

The implementation of our primary initiative, Community Game nights, has resulted in positive feedback and the sharing of valuable information. These events were opportunities for the community to come together through the power of play. INA's Game Nights offer joyous play and engaging experiences for all participants. Attendance numbers have grown with each of the three events held so far, demonstrating the community's enthusiasm and support.

Building on this momentum, we are now working towards hosting future game nights at the neighborhood community center. This shift will increase accessibility for more families and provide a centralized location that is convenient for everyone. By

keeping the game nights consistent and hosting them on a monthly basis, we will create a reliable and anticipated event for the community.

Our next initiative is to transform our community game night into a Back-to-School Community Game Night. This event will widen our scope and further build community connections. Our vision is to not only provide a fun and engaging evening for families but to work in collaboration with local community partners to equip our families with essential resources for the upcoming school year.

During this event, we will distribute school supplies and collaborate with local businesses to provide various services and resources, such as financial advice, nutritional guidance, and community programs. We plan to also partner with local health and dental organizations to offer free medical and dental health check-ups and wellness information, promoting the overall well-being of our students and their families.

By bringing together these valuable resources, our Back-to-School Community Game Night aims to support families holistically, ensuring that students are ready to thrive in the new school year. This collaborative approach fosters a sense of unity within the community and also exemplifies INA's commitment to fostering genuine partnerships between schools and the community.

With that commitment and recognizing the importance of community engagement for a successful school launch, our team will continue to strategically and intentionally plan initiatives to strengthen these relationships.

By engaging the community in volunteer opportunities, students can benefit from mentorship, real-world learning experiences, and a network of support that reinforces their educational journey. Inclusive community events foster a sense of belonging and encourage diverse interactions, enhancing students' social skills and cultural awareness. Educational programs tailored to community needs provide students with additional resources and learning opportunities, complementing their school curriculum and addressing any gaps in their education.

INA will continue to focus on providing volunteer opportunities, organizing inclusive community events, offering educational programs, and upholding partnerships and collaborations to ensure meaningful and sustained engagement with the community. This approach is impactful for student success as it creates a supportive and enriching environment that extends beyond the classroom. Through these initiatives, we will continue to strengthen our foundation of community engagement and support, ensuring it grows alongside INA's development.

2. Describe how you have assessed demand and/or solicited support for the school and summarize their results.

To assess demand and solicit support for our school, we have implemented a comprehensive outreach and engagement strategy. Our team walked through neighborhoods, distributing flyers and engaging in conversations with individual community members and local businesses. The response was overwhelmingly positive and encouraging, with many expressing excitement about a new space for positive community gatherings and the idea of a school where students are able to learn through games.

During our neighborhood outreach, we also connected with Tamika Catchings, former Indiana Fever basketball team member, a local shop owner and influential community advocate. We believe that building relationships with key community members and business owners will significantly enhance our outreach and strengthen our school's presence in the community.

Additionally, we conducted a community feedback survey to gain deeper insights into the community's needs and preferences. This survey provided invaluable feedback, which we have used to tailor our events and shape the development of our school launch. The enthusiastic response and constructive feedback from the community have confirmed a strong demand for our school and have helped us align our initiatives to better serve and engage with the community.

Moving forward, we will continue to solicit the support of the community through our ongoing engagement initiatives and by maintaining a presence at local events. We aim to build authentic relationships rather than transactional partnerships, ensuring that our interactions are meaningful and reciprocal. We believe it is crucial for our community to know that we can count on their support just as much as they can count on ours. By fostering these genuine connections, we strive to create a supportive and collaborative environment that benefits both our school and the broader community.

How the Community & INA will engage:

1. Volunteer Opportunities

Such as:

- Organize volunteering opportunities for community members to engage with INA, such as tutoring, mentoring, or helping with school events.
- INA will host a career day or speaker series to inspire and engage students with local professionals.
- Collaborate with the school to organize a community service project that benefits both the school and the wider community.

2. Community Events

Such as:

- Open invitation to community events, such as a neighborhood festival or block party, and invite INA's students to participate by showcasing their student work/games or performances.
- INA will host a community game night or movie night at the school to encourage community members to spend time with the students and their families.
- Organize a community fundraiser to support the middle school and its programs.

3. Educational Opportunities

Such as:

- Host a workshop or seminar for community members to learn about topics related to education, such as student achievement, game-based learning, college readiness, and education policy.
- Invite community members to attend school events, such as game quests, plays or concerts, to showcase the students' talents and achievements.
- Organize a book drive or supply drive to benefit the middle school and its students.

4. Partnerships and Collaborations

Such as:

- INA will partner with other community/state groups to organize joint initiatives, such as a community garden or sports league.
- Establish relationships and partnerships with local businesses to support INA by donating supplies, equipment, or resources.
- INA will collaborate with community partners to identify and address common concerns and interests, such as community safety or environmental sustainability.

Ways to Engage with INA

The goal of engagement is to establish strong partnerships and collaborations between the community and INA, to provide meaningful and engaging opportunities for students and community members, and to foster a sense of shared responsibility and pride in the community's education system.



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

COMMUNITY EVENTS

SERVICE LEARNING

**PARTNERSHIPS AND
COLLABORATIONS**

INA Community Active Engagement Plan to Connect with the Community:

- Host regular parent-teacher conferences and town halls to provide updates and answer questions from parents, students, and community members.
- Develop and maintain relationships with local businesses and organizations to secure sponsorships, donations, and volunteer support.
- Engage with local media outlets to promote the school's achievements, events, and programs, and to address any concerns or issues.
- Collaborate with community leaders and elected officials to identify and address common concerns and interests.
- Organize and participate in community events, such as festivals, fairs, and parades, to showcase the school's activities and accomplishments.
- Foster relationships with alumni to encourage them to stay involved with the school and to serve as ambassadors to the broader community.
- Establish a social media presence to share updates and news about the school and to engage with parents, students, and community members.
- Create and distribute a regular newsletter to keep parents, students, and community members informed about the school's activities and accomplishments.
- Offer tours and open houses to prospective families to showcase the school's facilities, programs, and culture.
- Seek out and participate in community service opportunities to demonstrate the school's commitment to giving back to the community.

"It's not what the community offers INA, it's more about what INA can offer the community"

"Engaging the community through joyous play!"

Leadership and Governance

1. Provide an overview of the proposed network governance, management structure, and leadership team.

Research demonstrates that level(s) of diversity among School Boards is a significant contributor to success and the viability of school governance and operations. Data suggests that diversity should be contextualized across multiple domains including, but not limited to: *Age, Experience, Gender, Race, and Sex*.

Overview

The governing board of Innova Academy is composed of 5 professionally and broadly diverse community members who are committed to the mission and vision. The Board's ultimate goal will be to ensure that Innova Academy fulfills its duties and responsibilities to the students and community of Indianapolis, IN.

Function and Business Structure

The Board will have the duties whereas permitted by law to oversee the business, facility, and general school matters. The Board will assume judiciary responsibility for the institution. The Board is responsible for creating policy, ensuring mission alignment, maintaining public relations, and implementing the organizational action plan. The Board will consist of the following committees: Governance, Finance, Development, and Academic Excellence. The Board will meet at least quarterly. During this meeting, the Principal will provide a report on the school's academic, school culture, and operational/financial performance. The Board shall conduct a full financial audit at least once a year, in accordance with IN and national nonprofit law. Each year, the Board shall provide the Principal a performance assessment review. Goals and progress will be reviewed formally at least quarterly. Actionable next steps will be developed during this review.,

Composition

The Board will consist of no more than 10 members (9 voting, 1 non voting) and no fewer than 5 members. Board members will be selected on the basis of their commitment to Innova Academy's mission and vision, community involvement, and diversity. In order to ensure community input, student representation, and equity of voice, the Board will reserve two positions

for the parent/guardian of a child attending Innova and a committed Indianapolis community member. The Board will also reserve one non-voting slot for a current Innova student or recent alumni (less than 5 years).

Board Rotation

One-third of all initial Board members will be assigned terms of two years with renewal for one year up to two times, for a total of four years. One-third of all initial Board members will be assigned terms of three years with renewal for one year up to two times, for a total of five years. Moving forward, all other Board members will be elected for a three year term that can be renewed for two years up to two times, for a total of seven years.

Relation to Innova Academy

The Principal will be the primary liaison with the school's governing board and keep the Board well-informed about the implementation of the program described in the application and the school's performance. The Principal will support strong communication and transparent decision-making structures, build consensus among teachers, staff, families and the Board to support the school's mission and vision. The Principal will be proactive in identifying potential issues and proposing recommendations where appropriate. The Principal will be accountable for the achievement results of all students at Innova Academy.

System/tools/metrics that will be used to assess Board effectiveness

The governing board will engage in annual self evaluation based on the annual school goals. This evaluation will be a strengths-based assessment, seeking to determine areas where expertise already exists and areas where expertise needs to be developed and added. This self-evaluation will examine multiple areas, including, but not limited:

- Attendance of board members
- Policies and Procedures
- Legal Compliance
- Legal Literacy
- Academic Performance
- Stakeholder Complaints
- Authorizer Renewal and Review

Based on the results of this self-evaluation, an annual mandatory professional development plan will be developed for the Board and each member. All board members shall participate in at least three school-based events per school year, besides the regular Board meetings.

Pursuant to Indiana Charter School Law and relevant Indiana statutes, the governing board of Innova Academy will oversee and ensure that school complies with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) and all relevant Indiana statutes to provide an accurate accounting of the school's nances. In order to mitigate waste, fraud, and abuse, Innova Academy will:

- Confirm adequate segregation of duties between staff and outsourced consultants (should Innova Academy outsource its financial management);
- Establish and follow financial policies and procedures (FPP);
- Regularly educate staff on the school's FPP manual, and revise when needed;
- Create "cheat sheet" flowcharts to summarize major processes from the FPP manual;
- Secure financial and human resource records in double-locked cabinets; and
- Store funds to be deposited, stock of blank checks, and credit/debit cards when not being used in a locked safe

School Leadership Team

School Principal

Performance Description:

The School Principal serves as the educational leader and chief administrator of the school, responsible for providing visionary leadership, fostering a positive school culture, and ensuring academic excellence and student success. They oversee all aspects of school operations, including curriculum and instruction, personnel management, student services, budgeting, and community relations. The School Principal collaborates with staff, students, families, and community partners to create a safe, supportive, and inclusive learning environment where every student can thrive.

Specific Responsibilities:

Educational Leadership:
Instructional Leadership:
Personnel Management:
Student Services and Support:
Budget and Resource Management:
Community Relations and Partnerships:
Other Duties Assigned

Assistant Principal of Academics

Performance Description:

The Assistant Principal of Academics plays a key role in supporting the instructional leadership and academic success of the school. They collaborate with the Principal and instructional staff to ensure the implementation of high-quality curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices that support student learning and achievement. The Assistant Principal of Academics also provides leadership in areas such as curriculum development, teacher professional development, and data analysis to drive continuous improvement in instructional practices and student outcomes.

Specific Responsibilities:

Curriculum Development and Implementation:
Instructional Leadership:
Assessment and Data Analysis:
Professional Learning Communities (PLCs):
Special Education Services:
Teacher Evaluation and Support:
Parent and Community Engagement:
Other Duties Assigned

Assistant Principal of Students Support

Performance Description:

The Assistant Principal of Student Supports plays a crucial role in ensuring the holistic well-being and academic success of all students. They are responsible for developing and implementing programs and initiatives that address the social, emotional, and behavioral needs of students, as well as providing leadership in areas related to student discipline, attendance, and special education services. The Assistant Principal of Student Supports collaborates closely with teachers, staff, families, and community partners to create a positive and inclusive school environment where every student can thrive.

Specific Responsibilities: (specific details listed on job description)

Student Support Programs and Initiatives:
Discipline and Behavior Management:
Attendance and Truancy Prevention:
Family and Community Engagement:
Professional Development and Leadership:
Other Duties Assigned

Operations Manager

Performance Description:

The Operations Manager plays a vital role in ensuring the efficient and effective operation of the school's facilities, resources, and support services. They oversee a wide range of administrative and operational functions, including facilities management, transportation, safety and security, technology, procurement, and budget management. The Operations Manager collaborates closely with school leadership, staff, students, families, and external stakeholders to create a safe, supportive, and conducive learning environment for all members of the school community.

Specific Responsibilities:(specific details listed on job description)

Facilities Management:
Transportation Services:
Safety and Security:
Technology Support:

Procurement and Inventory Management:
Budget Management:
Collaboration and Communication:
Other Duties Assigned

Curriculum Designer

Performance Description:

The Curriculum Designer plays a pivotal role in developing and implementing a comprehensive and innovative curriculum that aligns with the school's educational goals, standards, and philosophies. They are responsible for designing, evaluating, and revising curriculum materials, instructional resources, and assessments to support student learning and achievement across all grade levels and subject areas. The Curriculum Designer collaborates closely with teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders to ensure that the curriculum is engaging, relevant, and responsive to the needs of diverse learners.

Specific Responsibilities:(specific details listed on job description)

Curriculum Development:
Instructional Materials and Resources:
Assessment and Evaluation:
Curriculum Integration and Alignment:
Professional Learning Communities (PLCs):
Other Duties Assigned

2. Identify the strengths of the proposed governing board and leadership team.

Anteria Gross contributes her extensive 12-year background in various educational settings across elementary, middle, and high school levels, both in charter and public schools. She has successfully led numerous school wide initiatives aimed at enhancing the learning environment, both academically and behaviorally. Her various roles have included coaching teachers, implementing restorative practices, and developing behavior management strategies that promote a positive school culture. Anteria's deep commitment to the Indianapolis community is evident in her leadership efforts to build strong relationships with students, families, and local organizations. Her graduate work through Columbia University's School Leadership Program, combined with her expertise in curriculum and instruction, allows her to design and implement programs that address diverse learning needs, fostering an inclusive and supportive educational environment. With a proven track record of improving student outcomes through data-driven instruction, personalized learning plans, and professional development for teachers, her leadership has been instrumental in creating an atmosphere where students and staff will feel valued and motivated to succeed, making her a vital asset to Innova Academy.

Josie Achenbach offers a strong foundation in special education and leadership, gained through her roles as a Teach for America Corps Member and her current position as a Special Education Program Director. Her dedication to supporting students with diverse needs and her recent graduate work from Columbia University's Summer Principals Academy make her a valuable asset in fostering an inclusive and supportive educational environment.

Alex Stowers brings strategic initiatives and a data-driven approach to our team. His extensive experience as a middle school math teacher, Dean of Students, and Assistant Principal at Christel House South Academy has equipped him with a deep understanding of the challenges and opportunities within urban education. Alex's active involvement with the 100 Black Men organization underscores his commitment to serving our Black boys and connecting with them beyond the walls of the school. He is dedicated to dismantling the barriers they face and fostering an environment where they can thrive. His holistic approach emphasizes not only academic success but also social and emotional development, ensuring that students are equipped with the skills and support they need to excel in all areas of life. Through mentorship, community engagement, and targeted support programs, Alex strives to create a nurturing and empowering atmosphere for all students, making him an invaluable asset to Innova Academy

As our team mentor and coach Dr. Mendoza Davis brings a wealth of experience in urban education and leadership, having served as Chief of Schools for the Maya Angelou Schools network and held multiple roles within District of Columbia Public Schools. Her recognition in the "40 Under 40" Class for exceptional leadership underscores her ability to drive significant organizational achievements and inspire educational excellence.

As our board chair Dr. Tenika Holden-Flynn brings over 15 years of distinguished educational experience and a proven track record in elevating student proficiency in English language arts and Math. Beginning her career as a high school social studies teacher, she has advanced into leadership roles across various educational levels, demonstrating exceptional skills in curriculum development and instructional leadership. Dr. Holden-Flynn holds degrees from Youngstown State University, Johns Hopkins University, and Howard University, culminating in an Education Doctorate in Educational Administration and Policy. Her commitment to closing the achievement gap is evident in her successful history of improving student outcomes and her reputation for transformative leadership in education.

Beyond her academic achievements, Dr. Holden-Flynn has hands-on experience in launching and leading schools, making her uniquely qualified to serve as Board Chair for Innova Academy. Her strategic vision and deep community connections ensure that Innova Academy will provide high-quality, equitable education for all students. Holden-Flynn's leadership is characterized by her dedication to fostering a supportive and inclusive learning environment where every student can thrive academically and socially. As Innova Academy prepares to launch, Dr. Holden-Flynn's expertise and passion will be instrumental in guiding the school toward its goals of excellence and equity

Yessica Rufino- Perez brings a wealth of experience and expertise to the Innova Academy board. With over 16 years of experience in the education sector, she has a proven track record of managing and scaling innovative and high-performing charter schools, networks, and programs across Chicago and beyond. She has developed and executed strategic plans, policies, and partnerships that have enhanced the quality, diversity, and sustainability of their educational offerings and outcomes. While working as the New School Development Partner at Chicago International Charter School (CICS), Yesica led the organization's expansion strategy in creating a thriving charter school community. Yesica has demonstrated her ability to lead efforts in ensuring compliance with local, state, and federal mandates.

Yesica's previous role as Director of Operations, where she led school operations and compliance, further showcases her capability in managing the complexities of school administration. Her key skills and competencies include staff development, fundraising, nonprofit management, operations, and advocacy. Her experience with the Chicago Public Schools' Office of Innovation and Incubation, supporting new charter and alternative schools through their first year of operation, will be instrumental in guiding Innova Academy through our critical launch period. Additionally, Yesica's membership in the Illinois Advisory Council on Bilingual Education and her B.A. in international studies from Loyola University Chicago reflect her deep commitment to education and her understanding of diverse student needs. Her passion for supporting students underscores her dedication to equity and access.

Jarvis Joiner, an Indianapolis native, holds a Civil Engineering Degree from Purdue University and brings a wealth of experience in various roles within the field, including Construction Administration, Site Engineering, Transportation Engineering, and Environmental Engineering. His career has been marked by significant achievements, having led companies to substantial growth in both local and national markets, demonstrating his expertise and leadership in the engineering sector. As a pivotal member of the community, Jarvis actively encourages our youth to explore the field of engineering, highlighting the importance of STEM education and its real-world applications.

Jarvis's background in civil engineering is particularly beneficial for a new school launch team. His knowledge and experience are crucial for overseeing the school's infrastructural and operational excellence, ensuring that the physical environment supports the educational mission. His leadership and strategic vision in engineering projects position him as a critical figure in the development and maintenance of the school's facilities, making him an invaluable asset to Innova Academy board of directors.

Shirley Williams brings invaluable expertise in financial management and payroll to the Board, backed by 17 years of dedicated service and a track record of ensuring compliance and accuracy in financial operations. Her role in providing personalized financial guidance has earned her numerous accolades, underscoring her commitment to maintaining fiscal health and operational efficiency. Shirley's deep understanding of financial regulations and her ability to navigate complex financial landscapes will be crucial in steering Innova Academy towards financial sustainability and success. Her strategic insights and meticulous approach to financial management make her an invaluable addition to the INA Board of Directors.

Victoria Dinkins brings a wealth of expertise in instructional leadership through her successful implementation of coaching standards and impactful professional development programs at Indianapolis Public Schools. Her diverse experience as a District Culture and Climate Coach, an Assistant School Leader, and a Language Arts Teacher underscores her commitment to fostering a positive and effective educational environment. Her role in facilitating collaborative planning and driving student growth at both the district and school levels highlights her strategic vision and leadership in enhancing educational

outcomes.

Victoria consistently places students at the center of her work, ensuring that their needs and aspirations guide all strategic planning and development efforts. Her approach aligns seamlessly with the mission and vision of Innova Academy, where student success and well-being are foundational priorities. Victoria's strategic plans are meticulously crafted to enhance educational experiences, promote equitable opportunities, and foster a supportive learning environment. Her commitment to student-centered leadership drives decisions aimed at empowering students to achieve their highest potential academically, socially, and emotionally. Victoria's unwavering dedication to educational excellence, deep understanding of instructional strategies and her focus on student outcomes position her as an invaluable asset to our board member team, poised to steer Innova Academy toward fulfilling its mission of providing a transformative educational experience for all students at every development level.

The leadership team and governing board at Innova Academy bring a diverse and robust set of skills and experiences, ensuring a well-rounded and strategic approach to education and community engagement. Their combined expertise and dedication to student success create a strong foundation for the successful launch and implementation of Innova Academy, ensuring that every student is equipped to thrive beyond the classroom.

3. Explain how the governance and management structure will provide for stable, effective governance and leadership for the proposed school long term.

Pursuant to Indiana Charter School Law and relevant Indiana statutes, the governing board of Innova Academy will oversee and ensure that school complies with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) and all relevant Indiana statutes to provide an accurate accounting of the school's finances. In order to mitigate waste, fraud, and abuse, Innova Academy will:

- Confirm adequate segregation of duties between staff and outsourced consultants (should Innova Academy outsource its financial management);
- Establish and follow financial policies and procedures (FPP);
- Regularly educate staff on the school's FPP manual, and revise when needed;
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- Secure financial and human resource records in double-locked cabinets; and
- Store funds to be deposited, stock of blank checks, and credit/debit cards when not being used in a locked safe

4. Describe how the school will be contracting with the chosen ESP (if applicable).

N/A

Facility Plan (Applicant is in the Process of Identifying a Facility)

1. Describe, with as much detail, the plan for identifying a target location for the proposed school(s). Include the following:
 - Brokers and/or consultants employed to navigate the real estate market,
 - Plans for renovations,
 - Timelines, and
 - Financing

Innova Academy is actively seeking a suitable facility for its middle school students within the Butler-Tarkington, Meridian Hills, and Wynnedale neighborhoods. Our aim for the preferred location is to be centrally located within the community to maximize accessibility for students and families.

Innova Academy is exploring various options for facility partnerships, including potential collaborations with local churches or other community organizations to share spaces during the initial startup phase. Additionally, the school is considering commercial spaces that meet the specific needs of the students and families.

The process for selecting a facility involves thorough research, site visits, and negotiations with real estate agents and property owners. Innova Academy is working closely with a local real estate broker Gordon Hendry from HRE Advisors

in Indianapolis IN. Our partnership with Gordon will assist us in identifying available commercial spaces that align with the school's requirements. Gordon's extensive experience working with charter schools and local community organizations for over 10 years uniquely positions him to share his expertise and ensure that our process and school plan for determining the most suitable facility will meet all requirements. His knowledge will help secure the best deal for our school team and the families we serve. Gordon's deep understanding of facility planning and community needs will be invaluable in creating an optimal learning environment.

The timeline for facility selection and acquisition is as follows:

Research and Exploration (Month 1-2): Innova Academy will conduct thorough research on available commercial spaces within the target neighborhoods. Site visits will be scheduled to assess the suitability of each potential facility.

Partnership Development (Month 2-3): The school will reach out to local churches and community organizations to explore potential partnerships for sharing spaces during the startup phase.

Negotiation and Decision-Making (Month 3-4): Negotiations with property owners and potential partners will take place to finalize agreements and terms. Innova Academy will carefully evaluate each option before making a decision.

Facility Acquisition (Month 4-5): Once a suitable facility or partnership agreement is secured, the necessary paperwork and contracts will be finalized to acquire the space.

Preparation and Setup (Month 5-6): Prior to the start of the academic year, the facility will undergo any necessary preparations and setup to ensure it meets the needs of the school and its students.

Throughout this process, Innova Academy will maintain transparency and communication with stakeholders, including staff, students, families, and community members, to ensure that the selected facility aligns with the school's mission and values. Any updates or developments regarding facility selection will be shared promptly with the school community.

2. Describe the organizations capacity and experience managing the state and local health and safety requirements as described in IC § 20-26-7, 20-24 for facilities.

Innova Academy (INA) is committed to ensuring full compliance with the state and local health and safety requirements as described in IC § 20-26-7 and 20-24 for facilities. To achieve this, we will partner with a third-party organization specializing in school health and safety compliance, as well as our current realtor, Gordon Hendry, who has extensive experience in educational facilities management. This collaborative approach will enable us to meet and exceed all necessary regulations, ensuring a safe and healthy environment for our students, staff, and community.

We will engage a third-party organization with a proven track record in managing school health and safety compliance. This organization will provide expert consultation on all aspects of state and local health and safety requirements, ensuring that INA's policies and procedures are up-to-date and fully compliant. They will conduct comprehensive assessments of our facilities to identify any areas that need improvement. These assessments will include evaluations of sanitary facilities, ventilation systems, fire safety measures, and overall building safety. Understanding the importance of true collaboration when partnering with an organization, we will utilize their support to implement any necessary changes or upgrades to our facilities. This includes providing guidance on best practices, sourcing compliant equipment and materials, and overseeing construction or renovation projects to ensure they meet all regulatory standards.

Gordon Hendry, our current realtor, brings extensive experience in educational facilities management. He will play a crucial role in acquiring and developing our school facilities, ensuring that all properties meet the stringent requirements outlined in IC § 20-26-7 and 20-24. He will work closely with the third-party organization to ensure that all facilities are fully compliant with state and local health and safety standards from the outset. Hendry will also oversee the ongoing maintenance and necessary upgrades of our facilities. His experience in managing educational properties ensures that our school environment remains safe, healthy, and conducive to learning.

To maintain regular compliance, we will conduct regular audits and inspections, provide comprehensive staff training, develop emergency response plans, and commit to continuous improvement. Regular audits and inspections will be conducted to ensure ongoing compliance with all health and safety regulations, identifying potential issues early so we can address them promptly. Comprehensive training programs will be provided to all staff members, ensuring they are

well-versed in health and safety protocols, with regular updates reflecting any changes in regulations or best practices. We will develop detailed emergency response plans in collaboration with the third-party organization and local health authorities, conducting regular drills to ensure that staff and students are prepared for any emergency situation. INA is dedicated to continuous improvement in our health and safety practices, regularly reviewing our policies and procedures to incorporate new research, feedback from our community, and updates to state and local regulations.

By partnering with a specialized third-party organization and leveraging the expertise of our realtor, Gordon Hendry, Innova Academy is well-equipped to manage all state and local health and safety requirements effectively. This collaborative approach ensures that our facilities are safe, compliant, and conducive to a high-quality educational experience, supporting the overall mission and vision of Innova Academy.

3. Detail the specific interactions the applicant group has had with state and local agencies to determine whether the identified facilities are suitable and affordable.

Insert Text Here N/A

4. Explain the inputs, including specific sources of information, the applicant group has used to project all facility related costs. *These inputs should be reflected in the facility related expenses included in the 5-Year Budget.*

To project all facility-related costs accurately, the applicant group at Innova Academy employed a multi-faceted approach, incorporating various inputs from reliable sources. We compared local school facility costs within both our network and the community we plan to serve. Additionally, we analyzed costs from other school facilities that are similar to our educational model to gauge a realistic estimate of potential expenses. These inputs were reflected in the facility-related expenses included in our 5-Year Budget. We also examined costs associated with schools who had facilities serving similar student populations. This provided a baseline understanding of current market rates for facility-related expenses, ensuring our projections are aligned with local economic conditions.

The specific facility-related inputs we considered include facility rental, maintenance and repair, utilities, janitorial contracts, waste removal, and safety and compliance. These costs encompass leasing or renting a suitable building, regular and emergency maintenance to ensure the facility remains in good condition, monthly expenses for electricity, water, gas, and other necessary utilities, costs for cleaning services to maintain a hygienic learning environment, expenses for waste management services to ensure proper disposal of garbage and recyclables, and costs related to adhering to state and local health and safety regulations, including necessary upgrades and safety equipment.

By leveraging these inputs, we have ensured that our facility-related expenses in the 5-Year Budget are realistic and comprehensive, aligning with the operational needs and financial sustainability of Innova Academy. This thorough analysis allows us to plan effectively for the successful launch and ongoing operation of our school.

While we know these numbers are just estimates, we believe it is important and valuable to be proactive in our budget planning for a cost like facilities that can be the majority of our operational cost and will impact the successful implementation of our school launch. By anticipating these expenses and incorporating them into our 5-Year Budget, we ensure that Innova Academy is well-prepared to manage its financial responsibilities and maintain a high-quality learning environment from the outset. This thorough analysis allows us to plan effectively for the successful launch and ongoing operation of our school.

Facility Plan (Applicant has Identified a Facility)

1. Indicate the street address and applicable school district:

Insert Text Here - N/A

2. Describe the facility, including whether it is new construction, part of an existing public or private school building, or part of another type of facility.

Insert Text Here - N/A

3. Explain in detail any anticipated construction or renovation costs. *These should be described in the budget narrative and reflected in the 5-Year Budget.*

Insert Text Here - N/A

4. If possible, provide a layout and description of the proposed facility, including the number of classrooms, common areas, recreational space, any community facilities, and any residential facilities.

Insert Text Here - N/A

5. Explain how the facility will meet the needs of the targeted student population and any students who are physically challenged.

Insert Text Here - N/A

Financial Plan

1. Present a detailed budget narrative that provides a high-level summary of the budget and how the budget aligns with the 5-Year business plan. The budget narrative should detail the assumptions and revenue estimates, including but not limited to 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).
 - Per-Pupil Revenue
 - Anticipated Funding Sources: Indicate the amount and sources of funds, property or other resources expected 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.
 - Discuss the school's contingency plan to meet financial needs if anticipated revenues are not received or are lower than estimated.

Innova Academy has formulated a budget projection for the next five years, acknowledging that we anticipate a deficit in our inaugural year. In response, we have developed a strategic plan to secure ample funding to cover all operational costs. While additional funding sources are anticipated upon receiving authorization and achieving our 501(c)(3) status, we have opted not to include these projections in the budget to accommodate any potential timeline adjustments. This decision is grounded in our commitment to establishing a clear and productive plan before assuming a substantial portion of funding. Additionally, we have outlined our contingency plans for addressing potential shortfalls in anticipated revenues

Innova Academy's 5-year budget aligns with our strategic business plan to ensure financial sustainability and support the successful implementation of our educational model. Innova Academy's enrollment projections are based on enrollment at surrounding elementary schools. With being located in a neighborhood with few public middle school options, we anticipate accepting rising sixth graders from the local elementary schools.

Assumptions and Revenue Estimates

- **Number of Students:** INA projects starting with 80 students in FY2025, growing to 400 students by FY2029. This growth is based on community interest and strategic recruitment efforts.
- **Per-Pupil Revenue:** We anticipate receiving \$9,734 per pupil annually from state and local sources. This estimate is based on current funding formulas and projections for our district.
- **Federal Funding:** INA will use federal Title 1 funding to provide equitable education services to all students. Additionally, state special education per-pupil funding will support students who qualify for special education services. We assumed 15% of our student body would qualify for funding allocated for mild-moderate disabilities, a conservative estimate considering 20% of students in the anticipated neighborhood qualify for special education services.
- **Staffing Levels:** Staffing will expand from 8 full-time employees (FTEs) in the planning year to 29 FTEs by FY2029. This includes administrators, teachers, instructional staff, clerical staff, and student service staff. In the first three years, we have budgeted for one special education teacher, with plans to add an additional special education teacher in year four to support the growing student body.
- **Average Teacher Salary:** Competitive average teacher salaries are set at \$58,958 to attract and retain high-quality educators. Salaries will adjust based on experience and credentials. We also have included our teacher stipends that will be used during our inaugural years with our piloting teacher team due to the robust nature of our curriculum and expected professional development. With these generous stipends in place, teachers will not be placed on the pay percentage increase until after year 5.

High-Level Budget Summary The budget supports INA's core operations, including instructional programs, facility costs, and administrative functions. Major expense categories include:

- **Salaries and Benefits:** Teacher and staff salaries are the largest expense, reflecting our commitment to quality education. Benefits and professional development costs are included to support staff growth and retention.
- **Facility Costs:** Facility-related expenses such as rent, maintenance, utilities, janitorial services, waste removal, and safety compliance are significant budget items, ensuring a safe and conducive learning environment.
- **Instructional Materials and Supplies:** Investments in curriculum materials, technology, and classroom supplies are critical to our game-based learning model.
- **Operational Costs:** This includes administrative expenses, insurance, and other operational necessities. Bookkeeping software and an operations manager are included for financial management and reporting, with quarterly financial status reports to the board.

Anticipated Funding Sources INA's funding strategy includes secured and anticipated revenue streams:

- **State and Local Funding:** Our primary funding source is \$9,734 per pupil annually, based on current state funding formulas.
- **Federal Title 1 and Special Education Funding:** Federal funds will support equitable education services, with special education funding allocated based on a conservative estimate of 15% of our student body qualifying for mild-moderate disabilities.
- **Grants and Donations:** We anticipate securing grants and donations from foundations, corporations, and individual donors. Evidence of commitment for secured funds will be provided to demonstrate financial stability.
- **Bank Loans and Lending Institutions:** Loans may be explored for initial capital expenditures or cash flow management, ensuring favorable terms that do not compromise our financial health.

Reliance on Variable Income While core operations are primarily funded through per-pupil revenue, grants, donations, and fundraising efforts are essential for additional programs and capital projects. INA aims to balance reliance on variable income with secured funding to mitigate financial risks.

Contingency Plan If anticipated revenues are not received or are lower than estimated, INA has a robust contingency plan:

- **Expense Management:** Implementing cost-saving measures, prioritizing essential expenses, and delaying non-critical expenditures.
- **Reserve Funds:** Establishing and maintaining a reserve fund to provide a financial cushion for unforeseen shortfalls.

- **Alternative Funding:** Actively seeking alternative funding sources, including additional grants, partnerships, and fundraising initiatives.
- **Enrollment Adjustments:** Adjusting enrollment targets and associated staffing levels to manage expenses in alignment with actual revenue.
- **Administrative Reductions:** In the event of significant revenue shortfalls, one potential decision could involve cutting one of the administrative positions, redistributing responsibilities among the remaining administrators to ensure essential functions are maintained.

Strategic Plan for Years of Deficit Understanding that initial years may present financial challenges, INA has developed a strategic plan to manage potential deficits effectively. During the early years, we will build strong relationships with potential donors and grant-making organizations to secure additional funding. Regular financial reviews and adjustments will ensure we remain on track. By proactively planning for deficit years, we aim to maintain financial stability and ensure the successful implementation of our school launch. In the event that revenue projections are not met, one potential decision could involve cutting one of the administrative positions, as it is a significant portion of INA's budget. In this case, the responsibilities of the eliminated administrative position would need to be absorbed by the remaining two administrators in the building. This would require careful reallocation of tasks and duties to ensure that essential administrative functions are still carried out effectively, albeit with fewer dedicated personnel. The remaining administrators would need to collaborate closely, delegate responsibilities efficiently, and potentially adjust their roles to ensure the smooth functioning of the school. It would be crucial for the administrators to maintain open lines of communication, coordinate efforts, and adapt to the increased workload to mitigate any negative impacts on the overall functioning and student experience within the middle school.

Supporting our students and meeting them where they are at is core in our school model. With this in mind, we understand the importance of having student supports in house and on campus. For our first start up years, the budget does not allow space for us to hire a School counselor or social worker. In alignment with our mission, we will contract a third party with local community services such as Community health Network or Cummins to provide social and emotional support services for our students on a consistent basis. This partnership will be lead by our Assistant Principal of Student Supports ensuring that all activities and services remain at the best interest of our students and in alignment with the INA way

We anticipate a majority of our student population will live in the surrounding neighborhood and expect many students will walk to school. However, to increase access to our campus, we aim to provide transportation starting in year 3. Our vision is to contract with a third party vendor to provide transportation services if that expense becomes a priority to serve the need in our community. With our student body being only 80 in year 1 and 180 students respectively in year 2, we will not be providing transportation initially.

By incorporating realistic revenue projections, comprehensive cost estimates, and a proactive contingency plan, we are well-positioned to achieve our mission of providing a high-quality, engaging educational experience for all students.

INNOVATION

Education One is particularly interested in applicants that propose school models with strong potential to accelerate student success through dramatically different school designs, instructional strategies, use of technology, staffing models, governance arrangements, family and community engagement strategies, and other approaches.

Summarize the innovation(s) embodied in the proposed school design. The summary should include, at a minimum, the following:

- An explanation of how the proposed model is fundamentally different than typical school models, specifically those found in the district in which the charter school will be located
- Any available evidentiary basis for the efficacy of the model or for the ideas underlying the model
- An explanation of how the model will still permit Education One to hold the operator to the same high accountability

Our Innovation

Game-Based Learning Model

Our proposed school design innovates by centering on a game-based learning model, fostering student engagement and deep learning through play. Students are learning through games. Typically school models often rely on traditional instructional methods, our approach transforms learning into immersive "missions" that integrate inquiry-based challenges aligned with Indiana Academic Standards. This model not only enhances student motivation and interest but also cultivates critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving skills essential for future success.

The efficacy of our game-based learning model is supported by research indicating that gamification in education increases student engagement and motivation, leading to improved learning outcomes. Studies have shown that such approaches enhance retention of information, promote active participation, and cater to diverse learning styles, thereby enriching the educational experience for all students.

Central to our model is the recognition of the crucial role of teachers in implementing this robust curriculum effectively. We have strategically and intentionally developed a comprehensive plan for teacher development, prioritizing the mastery of our innovative instructional methods. This includes targeted professional development sessions, ongoing coaching and support, and opportunities for collaborative planning and peer learning

The investment in staff development at Innova Academy is an investment in student achievement and well-being. By empowering teachers with the knowledge, skills, and support they need to excel, we create a nurturing and stimulating learning environment where every student can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. Through continuous professional growth, our educators are not only prepared to deliver high-quality instruction but also to inspire curiosity, foster resilience, and ignite a passion for lifelong learning among their students. This holistic approach to staff development underscores our commitment to educational excellence and ensures that our innovative model remains at the forefront of transforming educational outcomes for all students at Innova Academy

Our model ensures accountability through rigorous assessment frameworks aligned with state standards. By embedding Indiana Academic Standards within the missions and assessing student progress through targeted learning outcomes, we maintain high academic expectations and accountability measures. We are committed to assessing student progress through targeted learning outcomes and multiple modalities of performance metrics, ensuring transparency and accountability in achieving educational excellence. Continuous monitoring and evaluation of student performance against these standards allows Education One to uphold us to high standards of academic rigor and accountability.

In summary, our innovative school design leverages game-based learning in combination with staff development to create a dynamic educational environment that fosters deep engagement, critical skill development, and academic achievement aligned with state standards. This approach not only breaks away from traditional educational paradigms but also ensures robust accountability mechanisms to support student success and educational excellence.