

Scaling *The New Orleans Charter Restart Model*

Table of Contents – Project Narrative		
Section	Description	Page Number
A	Need for the Project and Quality of the Project Design	1
B	Strength of Research, Significance of Effect, and Magnitude of Effect	10
C	Experience of the Eligible Applicant	15
D	Quality of the Project Evaluation	22
E	Strategy and Capacity to Bring to Scale	28
F	Sustainability	37
G	Quality of the Management Plan	41

SECTION A: NEED FOR THE PROJECT AND QUALITY OF THE PROJECT DESIGN

Exceptional Approach: *The New Orleans Charter Restart Model*

New Schools for New Orleans (NSNO), the Louisiana Recovery School District (RSD), and the Tennessee Achievement School District (TASD)¹ are pleased to submit a proposal for a Validation Grant through the Investing in Innovation Fund. We are seeking \$28,303,909 in federal i3 funds to drive dramatic school improvement in New Orleans by building the permanent capacity of successful charter operators to *annually turn around the bottom 5% of persistently lowest performing schools* through the charter restart model – and then to scale this exceptional model by implementing it in Tennessee and other urban districts across the country.

Specifically, federal i3 funds will be used: to invest in charter school start-up and expansion in New Orleans and Tennessee; to develop district-level performance management systems and stakeholder engagement processes to monitor and support turnaround efforts; and to disseminate *The New Orleans Charter Restart Model* to LEAs, SEAs, and reform minded non-profits across the country. In submitting this application, we aim to execute a model that can be scaled across the country so that our nation can begin to develop the permanent infrastructure to annually turn around the bottom 5% of its lowest-performing schools that serve high-need students.

Our Approach: Key Elements of *The New Orleans Charter Restart Model*

¹ The Louisiana Recovery School District is a special statewide school district administered by the LDOE. Created by legislation passed in 2003, the RSD is designed to take underperforming schools and transform them into successful schools. The Tennessee Achievement School District was recently created by TN state legislation to fill much the same purpose – for further details on the RSD and TASD, please see Section C and Appendix H.

The New Orleans Charter Restart Model is based on the successful experience of charter expansion in New Orleans to date. Of the twenty-five highest performing open-enrollment schools operating in New Orleans, 68% of these schools opened as “Type 5”² turnaround charter schools – clearly demonstrating the dramatic impact the model has had in turning around the New Orleans system.³ The key elements of *The New Orleans Charter Restart Model* are:

- *Government, Non-Profit, and Charter Collaboration:* No single entity alone can build a system with the capacity to annually turn around its bottom 5% of schools; rather, the following is needed: a government entity with the legislative authority to turn around failing schools, a non-profit that can incubate new charter operators, and the development of a mature charter market that can consistently execute high-quality turnarounds.
- *Evidenced-Based Charter Restart Expansion and Incubation:* Charter school expansion must be based on rigorous, reliable data (quasi-experimental or experimental) that is collected and analyzed on an annual basis. In order to build the permanent infrastructure for regular, effective school turnarounds, the system must replicate *only those charter operators with a proven track record of success in serving high-need students.*
- *Permanent Turnaround Infrastructure: The New Orleans Charter Restart Model* relies on charter operators – which receive public funding – to execute school

² Type 5 charter schools are preexisting public schools transferred to the Recovery School District pursuant to R.S. 17:10.5; within such Type 5 charter school, only pupils who would have been eligible to enroll in or attend the preexisting school under the jurisdiction of the city, parish, or other local public school board or other public school entity prior to its transfer to the Recovery School District may attend.

³ See SPS Rankings in Appendix H

turnarounds. By building the capacity of a set of operators each centrally managing a network of schools, economies of scale are created and operating costs significantly reduced. Therefore, by the end of the grant period *the system will be able to execute additional turnarounds utilizing only per-pupil revenue and existing federal charter school programs*. As such, a one-time investment can build the sustainable infrastructure and capacity to restart the bottom 5% of schools annually.

- *Bold Restart Turnarounds*: Every turnaround executed under the model will involve a change of school operator, and this policy will be legislated and actively supported by the government entity. As such, a failing operator – be it charter or district – *will not be able to turn around a school that the operator itself has allowed to fail*. Too often, systems are unwilling to take the bold but uncomfortable step to replace operators. As a result, dramatic improvement in failing schools is rare.
- *Constantly Raising Expectations*: We will fall tragically short if we replace failing schools with only marginally better schools. As such, we will raise the standard of what is deemed failing as our performance improves. In this manner, we will create a culture in which parents, students, and educators refuse to accept mediocrity. Instead, we will use the charter restart model to drive constant performance increases in the system until *every school in the system prepares all of its children for college and beyond*.

Meeting an Unmet Need: A Replicable Model to Drive Large-Scale Turnaround Efforts

This project will fill a national need for executing a well-documented, replicable model for large-scale turnaround efforts. While individual schools have been successfully turned around using the charter restart model, and existing programs such as School Improvement Grants will likely increase the number of individual charter restarts, there remains a significant unmet need for the nation to understand how to *structure a system of schools* that can continually utilize the charter restart model to annually turn around 5% of its lowest performing schools. By codifying, disseminating, and scaling *The New Orleans Charter Restart Model*, we will greatly enhance the education community’s understanding of effective turnaround practices.

Meeting Unmet Needs: Serving At-Risk Students

New Orleans has among the highest percentage of at-risk students of any school district in the nation, with free and reduced lunch rates that exceed most other urban systems – as well a student population whose education was severely disrupted by one of the worst natural disasters in our nation’s history.

*New Orleans Public School Demographics*⁴

Demographic	10/1/2008
Number of students	36,000
% African-American	90%
% Free and Reduced Lunch	84%

*Comparison Demographics for other Urban Centers*⁵

City	2008 Free and Reduced Lunch Percentage
New Orleans	84%
Chicago	84%

⁴ 2010 State of Education in New Orleans Report, Scott S. Cowen Institute for Public Education Initiatives, Tulane University, 2010 <http://www.coweninstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/SPENO-2010-Book-WEB-22710.pdf>

⁵ National Center for Education Statistics <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/sdds/ed/index.asp>

New York	73%
Denver	66%
Washington DC	64%
Houston	62%

Louisiana evaluates its schools based on student performance on standards-based end-of-year tests, which, combined with attendance data, yield a School Performance Score (SPS). Despite substantial progress, there remains a significant lack of high performing, college preparatory schools in the city – indeed, 42% of New Orleans schools were considered “Academically Unacceptable” in 2009, as the table below demonstrates. The city’s district performance score is 70.6, which indicates that the vast majority of students are not receiving a college preparatory education (a score of 75 indicates readiness to enter into a two-year community college and a score of 100 indicates readiness to enter into a four-year regional university).

School Performance Score: 42% of New Orleans Public Schools are Failing⁶

Rating (SPS Score)	2005 (n=118)	2009 (n=88)
Five Stars (140 and above)	2%	1%
Four Stars (120.0 – 139.9)	2%	3%
Three Stars (100.0-119.9)	6%	8%
Two Stars (80.0 – 99.9)	6%	16%
One Star (60.0 – 79.9)	20%	30%
Academically Unacceptable (Below 60)	64%	42%



School Performance Score: New Orleans Average vs. Louisiana Average

	2005	2009
Louisiana	87.4	91.0
New Orleans	56.9	70.6

⁶ 2010 State of Education in New Orleans Report, Scott S. Cowen Institute for Public Education Initiatives, Tulane University, 2010 <http://www.coweninstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/SPENO-2010-Book-WEB-22710.pdf>

Tennessee (with a focus on Nashville and Memphis), the first site for scaling *The New Orleans Charter Restart Model*, likewise has a large percentage of high-need children who are living in poverty, members of minority groups, and educationally underserved:⁷

	% Free and Reduced Lunch	% African American	% Failing Schools
TN Statewide	76%	47%	5%
Memphis	86%	86%	22%
Nashville	76%	47%	8%

The need is unequivocally clear. To ensure that every child in New Orleans, Memphis, Nashville, and other urban school districts across the country has access to a great education, we must accelerate the pace at which we turn around our failing schools.

Meeting an Unmet Need: *The New Orleans Charter Restart Model* Not Yet Widely Adopted

Nationally, school turnaround efforts have a poor track record of success. This poor track record is in large part due to the fact that school districts most often select the least comprehensive form of turnaround intervention when executing turnarounds. In SY 2006-07, more than half of the schools in their second year of restructuring reported that they had planned to restructure, yet very few schools reported any of the named *No Child Left Behind* interventions, including:

- Replacing all or most of the school staff (17%)
- State takeover of the school (3%)
- Contracting with a private entity to manage the school (1%)

⁷ Memphis City Schools and Metropolitan Nashville Schools Websites, Tennessee Race to the Top Application

- **Reopening the school as a public charter school (1%)⁸**

As this data illustrates, the charter restart model has not been widely adopted, and yet, as is outlined in Section B, many charter schools in New Orleans and other large urban centers have been successful at serving high-need students. Furthermore, the interventions in wide adoption are not proving effective, given the overall lack of progress with schools in restructuring (ED has found that the performance of most schools in restructuring has not improved significantly, with schools entering restructuring at a much higher rate than they exit).⁹ The scaling of *The New Orleans Charter Restart Model* will clearly meet one of our nation's most pressing unmet needs by scaling an effective model for executing turnarounds of persistently low performing schools.

Executing and Scaling *The New Orleans Charter Restart Model*: A Clear Set Of Goals and An Explicit Strategy

Project Strategy

The project strategy is to develop the permanent infrastructure and capacity to annually turn around the bottom 5% of persistently low performing schools in New Orleans, and replicate this model in Memphis and Nashville. Through rigorous performance management, we aim to foster cultures of high expectations in New Orleans, Memphis, and Nashville wherein communities do not accept marginal progress in student achievement as good enough, and the benchmark for what constitutes a failing school is continuously rising.

⁸ ED, *State and Local Implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act, Volume IX— Accountability Under NCLB: Final Report*, 2009.

⁹ ED Facts data, as analyzed by Office of Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development

Selecting Charter Operators for Turnaround

To ensure that turnarounds in New Orleans make dramatic gains in student achievement, NSNO and RSD, in collaboration with community stakeholders, will run a competitive process to select charter partners to replicate with the best track record of producing significant gains in student performance as measured by quasi-experimental school-level data (see Section B). All schools with a statistical effect size of at least 0.1 and above in math or reading scores *and* a positive effect in the other subject (as described in Section B), will be invited to apply to be an official partner, with preference for those operators that have achieved the most significant effects. In addition to a proven track record of success, partners must demonstrate a commitment and capacity to scale. The list of school effect sizes, along with the operator selection rubric, can be found in Appendix H.

The TASD, in collaboration with local education stakeholders, will use the same process based on quasi-experimental school-level performance data to select charter restart operators in Memphis and Nashville that have demonstrated success in producing significant gains in student outcomes.

Selecting Failing Schools for Turnaround in New Orleans and Tennessee

In New Orleans, NSNO and RSD will use a fair, transparent and well-defined process for identifying failing schools for turnaround. All schools will be selected from the *list of Tier 1 and Tier 3 schools identified for SIG funding* (see Appendix H).

Tennessee will use the same process to select schools for turnaround (see Appendix H for a list of Tier 1 and Tier 3 schools in Tennessee). In both New Orleans and Tennessee, the RSD / TASD, the charter school and nonprofit community, and the parent community

will work collaboratively to ensure that families, teachers, school leaders and other key stakeholders are informed and engaged, and that turnaround decisions are data-driven, yet fair and inclusive.

Alignment of Project Goals, Activities, and Outcomes

Over a five-year grant period, our project will pursue the following goals through specific activities conducted by each partner, generating a desired set of outcomes:

Goal #1: Build the capacity to incubate and expand charter restart operators	
<i>Activity aligned with goal</i>	<i>Partner(s) responsible</i>
Enable partner charter operators in New Orleans, Memphis, and Nashville to launch new schools by augmenting their central infrastructure for executing school turnarounds and providing incubation support leading up to school launch	NSNO via subgrants to charter operators
Incubate 2 new charter restart operators in New Orleans and 1 in Tennessee via the process established by NSNO (pay founder salaries, provide office space, bring on additional staff midway through incubation year, sponsor site visits to successful schools, provide coaching by successful turnaround leaders)	NSNO and TASD
Outcome: 27 schools turned around (19 in New Orleans, 8 in Nashville and Memphis) and 15,281 students reached during the life of the grant, and permanent capacity established (including 3 new CMOs) to continue executing turnarounds beyond the life of the grant	

Goal #2: Provide infrastructure to sustain charter restart schools	
<i>Activity aligned with goal</i>	<i>Partner(s) responsible</i>
Collect and analyze school performance data to identify failing schools and monitor turnarounds	RSD and TASD
Build community support (among parents, teachers, and community members) and facilitate the takeover process through community liaisons	RSD and TASD
Conduct twice annual reviews of turnaround schools to monitor quality and performance outcomes	NSNO and TASD
Increase parent awareness of school performance data to support them in making well-informed school choices	RSD and TASD
Convene turnaround community to collectively problem solve and share best practices	NSNO and TASD
Outcome: RSD and TASD have full-time, dedicated personnel and systems in place to monitor charter restart performance, identify schools for turnaround, and build stakeholder engagement	

Goal #3: Scale strategy by codifying and replicating <i>The New Orleans Charter Restart Model</i>	
<i>Activity aligned with goal</i>	<i>Partner(s) responsible</i>
Provide technical assistance to RSD-like take-over arms in other districts	RSD
Provide technical assistance and strategic planning support to NSNO-like non-profits in other districts	NSNO
Document <i>The New Orleans Charter Restart Model</i> and produce instructional guide for other districts	NSNO
Outcome: T ASD is successfully launched in Tennessee with RSD assistance; NSNO assists with the launch of an already-emerging NSNO-like non-profit in Tennessee; blueprint developed for the New Orleans model and disseminated broadly, sparking interest among other districts to adopt the reform model.	

Project Consistency with Evidence Base

The proposed project is consistent with moderate research evidence. As described in detail in Section B, experimental and quasi-experimental research shows that charter schools, both in New Orleans and in other geographies around the country, have a significantly positive impact on student outcomes. The charter restart turnaround model in particular has been proven highly effective at raising student achievement and turning around failing schools, as evidenced by a quasi-experimental study of New Orleans charter schools. See Section B for more details on the link between the evidence and the proposed project.

SECTION B: Strength of Research, Significance of Effect, and Magnitude of Effect

Overview

The New Orleans Charter Restart Model is designed to expand the most effective charter operators. The research base for this proposed intervention lies in a set of rigorous

studies – (1) a quasi-experimental study (moderate internal validity and high external validity) of charter schools in Louisiana, with a deep-dive analysis on New Orleans, and (2) experimental studies (high internal validity and moderate external validity) about the effectiveness of charter schools in Boston and New York City. Of these rigorous studies, the quasi-experimental study of New Orleans charter schools, described below, is the primary evidence base given its direct relation to the project.

The Evidence: Charter School Performance In New Orleans (CREDO, 2010)

Study Approach: Quasi-Experimental Study

This report supplements the CREDO National Charter School Study *Multiple Choice: Charter School Performance in 16 States* with an in-depth examination of the results for charter schools in New Orleans. This quasi-experimental study involved an analysis of longitudinal student-level achievement for just the students in New Orleans and yielded results that have moderate internal validity and moderate (but purposefully limited) external validity. The researchers created a pooled dataset of all student records in New Orleans from which they could do the analysis of the impact of charter schooling on student learning gains. For each charter school student, a virtual “twin” was created based on students who match the charter student’s demographics, English language proficiency, and participation in special education or subsidized lunch programs. The resulting matched longitudinal comparison is used to test whether students who attend charter schools fare better than if they had instead attended traditional public schools in their community. The outcome of interest is academic learning gains in reading and math, measured in standard deviation units. Using a school fixed effects regression model,

indicators for each of the charter schools were used to determine each charter school's average performance against the entire traditional public school group.

Validity of the Evidence

The study covers all the students in open-enrollment charter schools in New Orleans using a longitudinal matching method that provides highly valid external validity. The use of matched pairs offers as rigorous a control condition as is feasible without experimental design, providing second-best internal validity. With match rates that exceed 80%, the study has exceptional generalizability. The population is the same as would be affected by the proposed project and demonstrates a statistically significant effect. This study design has been used in 15 states and the District of Columbia, and has been validated through comparison with parallel studies using student fixed effects; the results in each community were nearly identical in significance and effect size, so there is confidence that the design is robust and valid.

Sample

This study examined data from 4 years of schooling, beginning with the 2005-2006 school year and concluding with 2008-2009. A total of 10,164 charter school students from 35 charter schools are followed for the years noted. The students are drawn from Grades 3 - 9, as these are the grades that are covered by the state achievement-testing program. An identical number of virtual comparison students are included in the analysis. The composite virtual student is based on students in competitor traditional public schools, known as the charter school's feeder pool. In New Orleans, it was possible to create virtual matches for 88% of the charter schools students in reading and 88% in math. This proportion assures that the results reported here can be considered

as indicative of the overall performance of charter schools in the city. The total number of observations is large enough to be confident that the tests of effect will be sensitive enough to detect real differences between charter school and traditional school students at the $p < .05$ level.

Magnitude of Effect on Student Achievement

The effect sizes observed in the high-performing New Orleans charter schools have a dramatic material impact on the academic welfare of their enrolled students. Specifically, in the study, an effect size of 0.1 indicates that an average student at the 50th percentile one year will have learning gains that place her in the 54th percentile the next year, and an effect size of 0.2 would place that same student at the 58th percentile the next year. Additionally, the CREDO analysis shows that across *all* charter schools, continued enrollment increases the effect over time – we can therefore be confident that these gains serve as a minimum bound for the high-performing schools.

In the turnaround environment, we expect that students will be achieving at levels far below state and national averages. As such, executing *The New Orleans Charter Restart Model* will have a dramatic impact on raising the achievement of students who were previously enrolled in failing schools. For example, a student attending a failing school that currently scores at the 35th percentile on state tests will in four years be expected to perform above the 50th percentile after attending a school with a 0.1 effect. Moreover, in a school with a 0.2 effect size, a student beginning at the 35th percentile will be expected to perform above the 67th percentile in four years. *In these cases, students who enter the charter restart school near the bottom third of performance will leave the school in the top third of performance.*

The magnitude of the effects is profound. The difference in performance between failing schools and successful charter restart schools will have direct and important implications for student readiness for advancement to higher grade-spans. Most importantly, these effects will dramatically increase likelihood of students completing high school with the knowledge and skills needed to engage successfully in post-secondary endeavors.

Connection of Evidence Base to Proposed Project

The evidence base directly ties to the proposed project in that the *evidence base includes school level quasi-experimental data on the schools that will expand through this program.*

- **Only Effective Schools will Replicate:** Our project will only scale charter schools with positive effect sizes of over 0.1 in reading or math *and* positive effects in the other subject, with preference given to those with the greatest effect (see Appendix H for effect sizes for all schools in the study). Therefore, there will *always be a direct linkage* between the evidence base and the scaling of charter schools.
- **Only Schools Serving Target Demographics Will Replicate:** As part of this program, schools will only expand if their current results of 0.1 effect size, both positive and significant, were achieved with a student population that is over 65% low-income and minority, embracing the high-need student population that is the target of our project.

CREDO Study of Tennessee Charter Schools

CREDO has not yet conducted a study of charter school performance in Tennessee. However, before subgrants are made to charter operators in Tennessee, CREDO will be commissioned to conduct a statewide analysis using the same methodology described above. This study will be completed before grant awards are announced, and charter partners in Tennessee will be selected based on the results of this analysis. Using a similar process to New Orleans, all charter schools with effect sizes of 0.1 in reading or math *and* positive effects in the other subject will be invited to apply, with preference given to those schools achieving the greatest effects.

Additional Research

Beyond the CREDO New Orleans study, a growing body of quasi-experimental and experimental research shows that charter schools have a significantly positive impact on student outcomes, particularly for students in poverty. These studies include: CREDO National Charter School Study, 2009; The NYC Charter Schools Evaluation Project led by Caroline Hoxby, 2009; and Informing the Debate, a study of Boston charter schools by Atila Abdulkadiroglu et al, 2009.

SECTION C: EXPERIENCE OF THE ELIGIBLE APPLICANT

Introduction

Over the past three years, New Orleans has undergone one of the greatest educational transformations in this country's history. Throughout this transformation, New Schools for New Orleans (NSNO), the Recovery School District (RSD), and the New Orleans charter school community have all worked relentlessly to achieve our collective vision: excellent schools for every child in New Orleans.

Working together, the applicants have developed an innovative, scalable, and highly effective model of turning around persistently failing schools. *The New Orleans Charter Restart Model* is predicated on an unprecedented collaboration between government, non-profit support providers, and charter schools – and it has proven successful in New Orleans only because each partner has the experience and expertise to perform at the very highest levels.

New Schools for New Orleans

In New Orleans, open enrollment charter schools are the driving force of student achievement gains: 19 of the 20 highest-performing open-enrollment schools in the city are charter schools.¹⁰ New Schools for New Orleans, which formed after Hurricane Katrina to accelerate the educational transformation of New Orleans, has been an integral driver of this growth by working directly with human capital providers, charter school developers/managers, and education reform organizations. Specifically, NSNO has driven student achievement gains in three key ways: recruiting and placing quality teachers and principals by partnering with proven providers like Teach for America, The New Teacher Project, and New Leaders for New Schools; launching and supporting new open enrollment charters through incubating new operators and working in partnership with service providers; and informing and collaborating with the community to support a performance driven system of schools

NSNO's Record of Improving Student Outcomes Through Work With LEAs

NSNO acts as a direct provider to LEAs by incubating and supporting high-performing charter schools, as well as serving as a local intermediary – investing in organizations such as The New Teacher Project, New Leaders for New Schools, and the

¹⁰ See SPS Rankings in Appendix H.

Achievement Network. Of these initiatives, NSNO’s incubation and support of charter schools most directly demonstrates its track record of dramatically increasing student achievement and implementing complex projects.

To increase the city’s capacity to conduct high quality turnarounds, NSNO has incubated *and* supported eight new Type 5 restart charter schools between 2007 and 2009.¹¹ Of these eight schools, four have currently entered the State’s accountability system and received School Performance Scores (SPS). An analysis of this data demonstrates that:

- The average SPS score of NSNO incubated and supported schools is 70, which places the NSNO school average in the *top quartile* of all RSD schools, with only eight RSD schools in the city outscoring this average.
- NSNO’s highest achieving school, New Orleans Science and Math Academy, ranks as the highest-performing high school in the district in its first year of operation. In a city plagued by failing high schools, New Orleans Science and Math Academy’s SPS score even surpassed high schools with selective admission criteria.
- In the CREDO quasi-experimental analysis of New Orleans charter schools, *two of the top five charter schools* in the city in terms of overall effect on student achievement were NSNO incubated and supported schools.

The following chart summarizes the current NSNO-incubated and supported charter schools that have received SPS scores.

School Name	Year Opened	2008-09 SPS
Langston Hughes	2007	64.7
N.O. College Prep	2007	67.0

¹¹ NSNO has launched nine schools in total; however, it withdrew support of one of its incubated schools, Sojourner Truth Academy, after experiencing irreconcilable differences with the school leader.

N.O. Charter Science and Math Academy	2008	81.6
Miller McCoy	2008	67.7
NSNO Average		70.3
RSD Average		57.3

Additionally, the two schools with more than one year of performance data available have shown significant year-to-year growth in the Achievement Index (AI) score, which is a composite score based on only state test data (SPS also includes attendance):

School Name	Year Opened	2007-08 AI	2008-09 AI	Growth
N.O. College Prep	2007	63.4	74.4	17%
Langston Hughes	2007	61.9	66.7	8%

In addition to incubating and supporting charter schools, NSNO has also invested directly in both school operators and support providers to increase student achievement. Specifically, NSNO investments have yielded the following results:

- **Lafayette Academy:** NSNO invested in a turnaround of Lafayette Academy by replacing the school leaders; this investment led to a 21.9 increase in the school’s Achievement Index (AI), which was the third highest growth recorded in the district.
- **teachNOLA:** NSNO’s investment in teachNOLA, a teaching fellows program operated by The New Teacher Project, has led to the recruitment of 213 teachers who serve in 96% of New Orleans’ open-enrollment charter schools. These teachNOLA teachers have been certified by the Louisiana Practitioner Teacher

Program, which ranked as one of the most effective teacher certification programs in Louisiana’s groundbreaking teacher certification value-add study.

Taken together, NSNO’s direct work in incubating and supporting charter schools, coupled with its successes in making strategic investments, demonstrate that NSNO has significantly improved student achievement in its work with New Orleans schools.

NSNO’s Record of Implementing Complex Projects

NSNO has implemented numerous highly complex projects, working with multiple partners and constituencies in the rapidly changing landscape of New Orleans education. These complex projects have been characterized by: high-levels of collaboration and coordination across education reform organizations; multiple levels of political and community interactions; and large budgets requiring careful fiscal management. It is precisely this set of capabilities that NSNO will bring to bear in its scale-up of *The New Orleans Charter Restart Model* to facilitate the project’s success. NSNO’s new school incubation program is one robust example of its ability to execute complex projects.

New School Incubation Program. Over the past three years, NSNO has launched and supported eight new charter restart schools through its incubation program – a growth trajectory that outpaced all other charter operators in the city. Specific elements of this multi-faceted program include:

- **National Recruitment:** NSNO operated an intensive interview process including resume reviews, interviews, in-school observations, and partnerships with national human capital organizations such as Teach For America and New Leaders for New Schools.

- **School Design:** To enable school leaders to effectively design their school organizations, NSNO provided expert training in four key areas: leadership and organizational design, teaching and learning, operations and finance, and charter board governance. Each area consisted of a training module led by some of our nation’s greatest education practitioners, including leaders from KIPP, Uncommon, and YES College Prep schools.
- **Charter Development:** NSNO supported each leader in building a board of directors, engaging parents and the community, filing for articles of incorporation, attaining non-profit status, and developing and defending charter applications (100% of NSNO incubated schools were approved for charters). Comprehensive start-up support also included teacher recruitment, student recruitment, and supply procurement.
- **Post-Opening Support:** NSNO provided intensive post-opening support for two years in the four key areas outlined in school design (above).

Recovery School District

Record of Improving Student Achievement

Nine percent of all Louisiana public schools have been entrusted to RSD, including schools in New Orleans, Baton Rouge, and Shreveport. These represent the lowest performing schools across the state. The results to date have been significant: the RSD has achieved *double-digit student achievement gains* across its schools. In New Orleans, where the RSD governs 80% of schools, the student achievement gains have been significant, with New Orleans doubling and tripling the percentage gains in students

scoring Basic+ statewide from 2007 through 2009. RSD student achievement scores on statewide tests have improved in every grade and subject for the last two consecutive years, and have exceeded growth of the state in 25 of 30 categories (for more outcomes data, see Appendix H).

RSD Record of Implementing Complex Projects

Perhaps no other single education organization in America has been tasked with as complex a project as the Louisiana RSD. After Hurricane Katrina, the RSD rebuilt an entire urban school district in less than a year, operating with high levels of uncertainty. In 2005, the Louisiana legislature placed 102 chronically failing schools in the RSD. The complexities facing the RSD following Hurricane Katrina included:

- Lack of clarity around how many students would return to New Orleans, or when
- Nearly 100% of school buildings were damaged and unfit to occupy
- Educators had also left, and it was uncertain how many would return, or when
- Student records data had been largely lost or destroyed by the storm
- Emergency relief funding was erratic
- The political landscape was shifting as all constituencies struggled to recover.

The RSD quickly built an education system that is dynamic and rapidly improving. With an annual budget of \$180M, the RSD authorizes charters (37 charter schools run by independent entities), operates 33 schools directly, manages federal and state level accountability requirements, and engages in one of the most contentious activities in education – the closure of persistently low performing schools. In doing so,

the RSD manages multiple constituencies: charter operators, educators on its own staff, parents and community members, and local and state level politicians.

Tennessee Achievement School District (TASD) Partner Overview

NSNO and RSD are excited to be partnering with the state of Tennessee, and specifically, with the newly created Tennessee Achievement School District (TASD). Tennessee’s commitment to education and increasing student achievement resulted in Tennessee receiving one of the first Race to the Top (RTTT) awards. Part of their RTTT application focused on their creation of a new statewide district, the TASD, designed to turn around the persistently lowest achieving schools. Under RTTT, the TASD represents the most intensive arm of the state’s accountability structure.

Charter School and CMO Partners

NSNO, the RSD, and the TASD will select charter school and CMO partners using the selection process outlined in Section A, with further details in Section B and Appendix H. Charter schools eligible to receive i3 funds include only those schools that have generated student academic gains that are statistically significantly higher than those gains generated by the control group and those who serve high need students, as evidenced by the CREDO analysis described in Section B.

SECTION D: QUALITY OF THE PROJECT EVALUATION

Use of a Quasi-Experimental Study to Determine the Impact of the Project

The evaluation will provide a deep and broad analysis of the proposed project activities and their effects on charter school students in New Orleans, Memphis, and Nashville. At the center is a quasi-experimental analysis using a longitudinal matched

sample to develop rigorous evidence of project results. The research design will parallel the study discussed in Section B, and thus will have the same strong degree of internal validity and exceptional external validity.

Four elements will form the foundation for the impact evaluation: student performance, effectiveness of government and non-profit actors, effectiveness of charter school organizational development, and effectiveness of project expansion. Each is described below.

Student Performance

The evaluation will measure the charter restart schools' ability to create high quality learning outcomes for the students they enroll. The evaluation will be *a quasi-experimental pre- and post-test design using a matched sample to determine the impact of the project*. A multi-measure quasi-experimental design, using both a set of comparison conditions and a time series analysis will be used to analyze the impact of charter restarts on student learning gains on state achievement tests. The results will be compared to four comparison conditions: 1) the enrolled students' prior learning gains (interrupted time series), 2) student growth in the flagship charter schools prior to replication (interrupted time series), 3) other first-year charter schools in the same city or state (comparison group design), and 4) typical New Orleans School District student results (comparison group design). When expansion occurs, these same comparisons will be developed and then compared across sites to test the success of expansion. The matched comparisons will use a Virtual Control Record approach. VCRs are synthesized control records developed for each charter school student made up of the composite outcomes of public school students from the New Orleans public schools with identical

attributes. The VCR approach includes the majority of charter students and provides a wide angle of analysis; the VCR approach has been rated highly by the What Works Clearinghouse of IES at their second highest level, second only to random control trials.

This portion of the evaluation design will employ econometric models in a variety of estimations. Growth and attainment will be estimated with econometric models, conditioned on student attributes and eligibility for Free or Reduced Price Lunch, English Language Learner designation or Special Education services. We plan to examine the effects of the project on overall student outcomes as measured by state achievement test results, as well as for specific student subgroups, which will allow a controlled estimation of gaps in student progress by various student attributes. Once expansion of the project begins in Tennessee, we will copy the approach using the same type of data obtained from the Tennessee Department of Education.

Governmental and Non-Profit Actors

The evaluation will study the effects of key agencies with responsibilities for accountability, oversight and support, and institutional re-alignment. This system-level change has both contextual and pragmatic features that bear on the success of the project. To evaluate this element, a mixed-measure qualitative study will be conducted of the institutional policies and practices in the Louisiana Department of Education, the Recovery School District, New Schools for New Orleans, and the Tennessee Achievement School District. Tests of statistical significance require large numbers of cases and are thus infeasible for this portion of the evaluation; instead, change will be assessed against targets that are set by professional judgment of the project team prior to implementation.

Charter School Development

The evaluation will measure the ability of high performing charter schools to launch the charter restarts in a manner that successfully expands their organizational capacity to provide high quality education outcomes for their students. The evaluation will employ a market share analysis to report the number of high performing schools and number of students in high performing schools in the entire community. The evaluator will also synthesize an Education Value Index from the State Achievement Tests to reflect the cumulative production of knowledge and progress toward graduation in each of the sectors. These market measures will provide a simple way to track the overall impact of the project related to the first GPRA performance measure¹², as well as the outcomes targeted in this project such as student attendance, graduation rates, and measures of student safety.

In addition, the evaluation calls for annual administrations of a school-level Performance Management rubric to provide independent assessment of the structure and operations of charter school teams. The Performance Management Organization rubric will measure more than 20 areas of school operations and leadership that have been empirically associated with improved student outcomes. Examples include school leaders making student learning the center of school operations, and fostering a cohesive teacher commitment to that mission. A similar rubric has been in use with charter schools in New York and New Mexico since 2005. To date, the rubric results have correlated significantly with overall student academic performance in both absolute achievement and in growth; as such, it serves as a helpful map of school-based practice to guide continuous improvement.

¹² Refers to the Government Performance and Results Act

Project Expansion

The fourth element is the meta-level project expansion to other communities. Successful expansion will involve both implementation fidelity and equivalent impact across communities.

The Methods of Evaluation Will Provide High-Quality Implementation Data and Performance Feedback, and Permit Periodic Assessment of Progress Toward Achieving Intended Outcomes

Within the overall evaluation plan, there are mechanisms that will allow the project team to learn about the progress of the project roll-out, the context for implementation, and feedback about school-level performance. Specifically, this evaluation will begin with an analysis of the context and conditions that exist in New Orleans, which will allow for an expanded understanding of the conditions necessary to enable the expansion of high quality charter operators and schools. This information will be used as the project expands to other states/districts. In addition, the evaluation calls for annual administrations of school-level quasi-experimental data, as well as a Performance Management rubric that explores school operations and leadership. This rubric will be used to provide both the project team and individual charter school leadership with actionable information about the areas of effective practice in each school.

The Evaluation Will Provide Sufficient Information About the Key Elements and Approach of the Project to Facilitate Further Development, Replication, or Testing in Other Settings

The evaluation has been designed to identify and analyze the key features of the project: the effectiveness of government agencies in facilitating turnarounds, the effectiveness of non-profits in supporting turnarounds, and the effectiveness of charter schools in executing turnarounds. Specifically, on a school level, the evaluation will provide information identifying the key elements of a charter school's design and operation that contribute to high levels of student academic performance. The Performance Management rubric isolates school-level operations and practices. Applied in each school each year, the rubric generates a time series of multiple measures that can map against the school's academic performance to isolate the factors of the rubric that most contribute to either high levels of achievement or strong gains in learning. This blend of qualitative and quantitative insight can then target the critical elements for replication elsewhere.

The Project Plan Includes Sufficient Resources to Carry Out the Project Evaluation Effectively

Project Budget

The project budget includes sufficient resources to ensure that the evaluation is comprehensive and of the highest quality. We have allocated for contractual expenses equivalent to 15% of the overall program budget – \$4,430,000 – to cover the evaluation costs, based on estimates of 10%-20% we received from several independent external evaluators.

Expertise and Capacity of Evaluator (see Section G for more details)

While we have not yet secured an evaluator and will run a formal procurement process to do so upon receipt of a grant award, we are committed to selecting an

evaluator who brings high quality research and analysis expertise and has extensive experience in the tasks and activities described above, including use of the VCR methodology and performance management rubric.

The proposed evaluation is rigorous, independent, and neither the program developer nor the project implementer will evaluate the impact of the project

A third party evaluator will be identified to conduct the evaluation. The individual or individuals involved will be entirely independent from the design or implementation of the project. We will conduct a thorough selection process to ensure that the evaluator hired demonstrates the capacity, based on prior experience, to carry out a rigorous, high quality evaluation – and, of course, that they were not among the individuals involved in designing, developing, or implementing the project.

SECTION E: SCALE STRATEGY

If our nation is to ever achieve the capacity to turn around the bottom 5% of its schools, the country will need both a proof point and living model of how such a turnaround effort can be executed. Given the turnaround emphasis in the Race to the Top and School Improvement Grants federal programs, and the increased willingness of private sector funders to invest in school turnaround, there exists an urgent need to understand how to successfully execute large-scale reform efforts. SEAs, LEAs, and non-profits will need successful models to scale their own turnaround efforts. To this end, our aim is to:

- Execute *The New Orleans Charter Restart Model* in New Orleans. Within the grant period, we will fully develop the capacity of New Orleans to turn around the bottom 5% of schools (~ 4 schools) on an annual basis using charter restarts.
- Seed the emerging charter markets in Nashville and Memphis with sustainable restart capacity, as well as engage other SEAs, LEAs, and non-profits in other districts, several of whom have already expressed interest in adopting the model (see letters of support from government and non-profit actors in Indiana and Delaware in Appendix D).
- Document and disseminate *The New Orleans Charter Restart Model* by utilizing the Broad Residency and the Broad Superintendent’s Academy to educate a national audience of high-level district officials and superintendents on this model of reform (see letter of support from The Broad Center in Appendix D).

Number of Students Proposed To Be Reached

Over the five year grant period, the proposed project will reach a total of approximately 15,281 students across 27 schools in New Orleans and Tennessee. Students reached each year include: the number of students who attend a new turnaround school opened that year, plus students who are in an entry-level grade cohort at all schools opened through this grant in preceding years (e.g., assumes a class of 60 enters into each of the turnaround schools each year after its initial opening year). This is a conservative estimate – we anticipate that additional students will be reached indirectly as this model is disseminated, through the Broad Academy programs and other networks, and these reforms begin to be replicated at greater scale.

Projected Impact	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
Total Schools Turned Around	3	5	6	7	6	27

<i>New Orleans</i>	3	3	4	5	4	19
<i>Tennessee</i>	0	2	2	2	2	8
Total Students Reached	1,295	2,556	3,286	4,078	4,066	15,281
<i>New Orleans</i>	1,295	1,477	2,087	2,759	2,627	10,245
<i>Memphis & Nashville</i>	0	1,079	1,199	1,319	1,439	5,037

Capacity to Reach the Proposed Number of Students Over the Grant Period

As described in detail in Section G (Management Plan) and the Budget Narrative, we have allocated substantial personnel time and expertise to ensure the project reaches the proposed number of schools and students. The project leadership team consists of existing NSNO, RSD, and TASD staff members with deep turnaround and incubation expertise. Each organization will have a full or half-time i3 project manager in place, supported by other full-time i3 dedicated personnel (2 at NSNO, 7 at RSD,¹³ and 2 at TASD). These project managers will collaborate with other key leaders (see table below) committed to helping guide the project. (Section G describes the role each of these individuals will play and past experience; resumes are included in Appendix C).

i3 Project Time Allocation for NSNO, RSD, and TASD Leadership

Leader	% Time Dedicated to i3 Project
Sarah Usdin, CEO, NSNO	10%
Neerav Kingsland, Chief Strategy Officer, NSNO	50%
Paul Vallas, Superintendent, RSD	As needed
Rayne Martin, Reform Director, RSD	10%
Wanda Anderson-Guillaume, Chief Academic Officer, RSD	50%
TASD Superintendent (yet to be hired)	20%
Eric Hilgendorf, Director of Charter Schools for TN DOE	10%

Most important, we will rely on the capacity of existing high-performing charter operators to scale their efforts. These operators will be selected through a process that

¹³ Given that twice as many school turnarounds are being conducted in New Orleans than in Tennessee through the grant, and that the RSD i3 staff will be spending significant portions of their time providing technical assistance to their peers in Tennessee, i3 funds will support more personnel at RSD than at ASD (see Budget Narrative for full detail of personnel being funded for each organization).

both takes into account their demonstrated effects on student learning (as measured by quasi-experimental studies), as well as the capacity and experience of their leadership teams. Lastly, the expected growth patterns for existing CMOs in each city will be to launch at maximum one school per year (and in most cases less than one school per two years), which mirrors the past growth trajectories of our nation’s highest-performing charter networks.

Capacity to Bring the Project to Scale on a State or Regional Level

Scaling the New Orleans model to other geographies is an essential goal of this project. As such, significant staff resources will be committed to ensure that scaling efforts in Tennessee during the life of the grant – and in other locations subsequently – are executed successfully.

Scaling Efforts in Tennessee

NSNO and RSD will work in close partnership with the Tennessee Department of Education and T ASD to turn around 8 schools in Nashville and Memphis using the charter restart model. This will build upon and support the strong work of education reformers already operating in Memphis and Nashville. Staff members at NSNO and the RSD will provide technical assistance to help T ASD design and execute the turnaround process. NSNO will have a full-time team member devoted to helping launch NSNO-like organizations in other states, and will focus on Tennessee in particular. T ASD, the Tennessee Department of Education, and the charter school community will devote significant staff resources as well to ensure that the infrastructure is in place to carry out effective turnaround efforts, as follows:

Tennessee’s Staffing Plan to Implement i3 Activities

Staff Member	Roles and Responsibilities	% Time to i3 Project
Community Liaison	Manage school and community relationships during turnaround process	100% over 5 years
Data Analyst	Collect, process, and analyze data on school performance, compliance, and finances in order to determine which schools to restart and to monitor performance of schools that have been turned around	100% over 5 years
Eric Hilgendorf (Director of Charter Schools)	Orchestrate coordination with charter schools for the i3 project	10% over 5 years
Project Director (TASD Superintendent)	Oversee execution of the i3 project	20% over 5 years
Project Manager	Responsible for coordinating all i3 activities at TASD, including CMO incubation program, providing guidance to new school leaders and connecting them with resources, organizing a once-annual convening of the TN charter restart / turnaround community, and reporting on finances and outcomes to NSNO	100% over 5 years
42 School leaders, turnaround specialists, and CMO central office personnel	Launch and scale up to eight charters to take over 8 failing schools	100% - ranges from 6 months to 3 years, depending on role

Other areas in the nation have also expressed strong interest in adopting *The New Orleans Charter Restart Model* (see letters of support from Indiana and Delaware in Appendix D) – and NSNO and the RSD will provide technical assistance to these other regions. Finally, the partnership with The Broad Center will begin to scale the model to a national level.

Feasibility of Replicating the Project Successfully

The feasibility of successfully implementing *The New Orleans Charter Restart Model* in cities outside of New Orleans should be significantly higher than the initial feasibility of executing the model in New Orleans. In 2005, New Orleans experienced one of the worst natural disasters in the history of the country. Thousands of New Orleans children missed an entire school year, and even more suffered severe emotional damage. As a result of this disaster, New Orleans had to construct a brand new model of public

schooling out of what had been a politically fractured, ineffective, and bankrupt school system.

In numerous cities across the country, the conditions are thankfully much more hospitable for increasing student achievement than in New Orleans: poverty rates are lower, adult education rates are higher, and the populace has not had to endure a natural disaster. As such, New Orleans stands as a test case of how strategic charter school development can transform a city's educational system even in the most difficult contexts. In replicating the model to other sites, the feasibility of replication will be determined by the ability of adults to make data-driven decisions around charter school development. The combination of reform minded educational leaders, such as those in Tennessee, and the conditions developed by programs such as Race to the Top, have created a national opportunity to scale *The New Orleans Charter Restart Model* to other regions.

Ease of Replication

Our program has several key structures that will make it easier for operators, states, and districts to turn around persistently low performing schools:

- *Investment in CMOs*: By building the capacity of CMOs to expand, versus opening multiple single site charters, scaling becomes easier and more cost effective. Because CMOs share a central office function and thus pool resources, and can replicate practices from their most successful schools, they will benefit from scale efficiencies.
- *Network of Support for Best Practice Sharing*: Charter operators supported through this grant will have access to a rich set of resources, such as technical

assistance, instructional strategies, budget models, and community support that will facilitate the turnaround process. The collective knowledge base that develops out of this work will be another invaluable resource that will facilitate turnaround efforts. Through formal meetings and informal network-building (see Section G for details in Management Plan), the charter operators supported through this grant will build a toolkit of best practices and lessons learned that will remove roadblocks and make it easier to execute future turnarounds. Likewise, state and district scaling partners will benefit from Louisiana's lessons learned about creating necessary conditions at the state and district level for turnaround success.

- *Human Capital:* Operators will have access to a robust human capital pipeline from which to source high quality teachers, leaders, and key central office personnel through the work of the local intermediaries, such as NSNO.
- *Strong Government/Nonprofit/Charter Collaboration:* Typically, actors in turnarounds are isolated, operating without the benefit of coordinated efforts with other key stakeholders. An integral component of this project is explicit partnership and coordination between a government entity, a nonprofit partner, and a charter market. This three-way partnership significantly reduces many of the barriers common to turnaround efforts.

Estimated Project and Scaling Costs

As shown below, per student costs over the five-year grant period average \$2,223, with higher costs in the early years due to expenses associated with building CMO central

office capacity. As detailed in the Budget Narrative, these figures include start-up and operating costs per year, including incubation costs.

Project Cost Effectiveness

	FY1 2010-11	FY2 2011-12	FY3 2012-23	FY4 2013-14	FY5 2014-15	Total
Total project cost per year	\$4,604,391	\$6,187,879	\$8,024,848	\$8,960,283	\$6,187,291	\$33,964,692
Cost per student reached each year	\$3,554	\$2,422	\$2,442	\$2,197	\$1,522	\$2,223

Per student costs were also estimated to reach 100,000; 200,000; and 500,000 students. Several assumptions were necessary to make this calculation because cost per school differs depending on the CMOs’ level of development. For a detailed description of our calculation methodology, see Appendix H. Costs differ significantly among timeframes, as a longer time frame increasingly compounds the number of students reached without requiring incremental cost.

Scale-up Targets: # of Students		100,000	250,000	500,000
5 year timeframe	# of CMOs scaled	42	106	212
	Total cost	\$182,681,508	\$456,703,771	\$913,407,542
	Cost per student	\$1,827	\$1,827	\$1,827
10 year timeframe	# of CMOs scaled	16	41	81
	Total cost	\$86,449,409	\$216,123,523	\$432,247,045
	Cost per student	\$865	\$865	\$865
20 year timeframe	# of CMOs scaled	9	23	46
	Total cost	\$48,588,354	\$121,470,885	\$242,941,770
	Cost per student	\$486	\$486	\$486

Mechanisms of Dissemination

Beyond activities in Tennessee, grant funds will also be used to codify and disseminate *The New Orleans Charter Restart Model* in other large urban centers across the country. Specifically, we will be partnering with the The Broad Center to disseminate information on the model through their network of current and former fellows of the Broad Residency and the Broad Superintendents Academy. Currently, Broad Superintendents Academy alumni are acting as superintendents in *over 20 large urban districts*, including: Detroit, Providence, Pittsburgh, Kansas City, and Oakland. This alumni base presents an enormous opportunity to disseminate *The New Orleans Charter Restart Model* to districts across the country. Through both formal and informal mechanisms, The Broad Center will disseminate information by:

- Hosting one Broad Superintendent’s reunion and one Broad Residency reunion in New Orleans to showcase *The New Orleans Charter Restart Model*
- Hosting a series of webinars on the New Orleans reforms for participants and alumni of the Broad Residency and Broad Superintendent’s Academy
- Disseminating any publications or data to their full network, including the guide to *The New Orleans Charter Restart Model* created by this project
- Informing and encouraging their alumni network to attend any conferences or learning sessions hosted in New Orleans

In addition to this collaboration with The Broad Center, we will disseminate information through the following activities:

Dissemination Activity	Lead
Develop a comprehensive “How To” Guide to implementing <i>The New Orleans Charter Restart Model</i> (including the creation of turnaround legislation, structure and function of the state turnaround arm [RSD], overview of NSNO, process and key activities in incubation, charter school selection and support, key success factors and obstacles encountered, etc.)	NSNO
Provide support to NSNO-like organizations in other districts through technical	NSNO

assistance and strategic planning	
Support recently-legislated RSD-like take over arms in other states through technical assistance and help with strategic planning (e.g., landscape mapping, assessing risks and opportunities, determining capacity constraints, etc.), best practice sharing (e.g., on managing community relations, data analysis), and connecting with experienced turnaround practitioners	RSD
Host conferences in New Orleans and Tennessee for their turnaround / charter restart communities; extend invitations to interested reform leaders in other states and districts to attend to further dissemination	NSNO and T ASD

In addition to the activities described above, dissemination efforts will build on the fact that New Orleans is already in the national spotlight because of the bold reforms currently underway. New Orleans is frequently cited in national news outlets as serving as a model for other districts (see Appendix H for news articles), and reform leaders, including Paul Pastorek (Louisiana State Superintendent) and Paul Vallas (RSD Superintendent) frequently speak at high profile education gatherings across the country with state and district leaders, and other key influencers. i3 grant partners will leverage this national attention and extensive network of relationships in place to increase awareness and adoption of *The New Orleans Charter Restart Model*.

SECTION F: SUSTAINABILITY

A defining feature of *The New Orleans Charter Restart Model* is that it builds *permanent infrastructure* to turnaround the bottom 5% of schools in a district. By investing in charter operators – rather than in one-time programs – the model utilizes an initial investment to build the central office capacity of charter operators that will then be able to execute future high-quality school turnarounds. Additionally, the government infrastructure needed to support the turnarounds is of minimal cost and can be funded by reoccurring public funds.

Resources to Operate Beyond the Grant

Restart Charter School Partners

The restart charter schools and CMOs developed through these funds will all be financially sustainable through per-pupil revenue streams. Specifically, i3 funds will not be granted to an operator for expansion of permanent central office staffing in an amount that is in excess of the revenue it will eventually generate from its schools to support those roles (using a 6% CMO fee for revenue projections). As such, in advance of full enrollment, i3 funds will be used to cover central support for management of operations, academics, and finances; but once a CMO has completed its expansion, it will be able to sustain itself solely on public revenues. Incubations of new operators, as opposed to the scaling of existing operators, will involve upfront funding of basic roles (e.g., School Principal, Dean of Curriculum, CMO CEO) before schools open their doors and receive public funds. Once they are operational, all incubated schools will receive public funding that will be used to finance these personnel going forward.

The only cost that will not be covered by the per-pupil revenue is future charter restart projects after the grant period; however, this cost is budgeted at \$340,000 for incubation of key school personnel for the year in advance of opening, and can be covered by the Federal Public Charter Schools Grant, which provides upwards of \$600,000 for the creation of new charter schools.

New Schools for New Orleans (NSNO)

NSNO has a broad base of financial support to draw upon, including local and national partnerships. NSNO has relationships with over 40 foundations, corporate partners, and individuals who have made significant donations. Examples include: the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Doris & Donald Fisher Fund, the Eli & Edythe

Broad Foundation, New Schools Venture Fund, and the Walton Family Foundation. NSNO will draw on these same private sector funders to supply the 20% match for federal funds it receives through the i3 grant program.

Recovery School District and Tennessee Achievement School District

Both the RSD and T ASD are sustainable entities that receive per pupil funding from the state and federal governments. Most of this funding follows the student, but a portion is kept by the entities to fund their essential functions of school portfolio management. The ongoing staff to carry out the technical assistance and support of other districts in adopting *The New Orleans Charter Restart Model* will be determined by the level of demand for these services after the life of the grant; the intention, however, is to maintain these i3 personnel on staff to continue this work, as it is integral to the missions of both organizations. The resources needed to continue this work also will be made available through a combination of re-allocation of existing budget to this project and modest fees charged to districts and states receiving support. Specifically, both districts can utilize school improvement dollars as well as local and state education funds.

Support of Stakeholders

This partnership has broad support from educational, civic, and funding stakeholders.

Government and Civic Stakeholders

Perhaps most significantly, the two official partners to the application are LEAs that are the turnaround arms of their respective state departments of education. The charter restart model cannot be executed in a high quality and sustainable way without governmental support. The fact that both Louisiana and Tennessee have passed

legislation that creates permanent turnaround agencies – coupled with the deep commitment to the project by the Louisiana Superintendent and the Tennessee Commissioner – demonstrate extremely strong civic and SEA support (see Appendix D for all governmental letters of support).

Education Stakeholders

Numerous educational stakeholders also support this application. Executing charter restart turnarounds is extremely difficult work, and pre-existing partnerships with Teach For America, The New Teacher Project, and New Leaders for New Schools will go far in ensuring that all educational resources are aligned in supporting the charter restart schools. (See Appendix D for all education stakeholders' letters of support).

Incorporation of Project Goals Into Ongoing Work

New Schools for New Orleans

The project goals are highly aligned with NSNO's mission. Following the i3 grant period, NSNO will continue to fulfill its mission by: incubating new school operators and school support providers; expanding the human capital pipeline within New Orleans through partnerships with Teach For America, The New Teacher Project, New Leaders for New Schools, and others; and supporting a performance-driven system of schools whereby failing schools are turned around and high-performing schools are able to replicate. Capabilities that are developed and enhanced through this grant – primarily restart charter school incubation, CMO scale-up support, and school reviews, will be core activities pursued by NSNO after the grant period ends.

Recovery School District and Tennessee Achievement School District

Both the RSD and the T ASD were specifically created to turn around the lowest performing schools in their respective states; as such, both will continue their turnaround efforts after the grant period. Additionally, the RSD is committed to supporting the ongoing replication of *The New Orleans Charter Restart Model* through technical assistance and support to other districts nationwide beyond the period of the grant. The tools and training protocols required to assist in the replication will be created through the grant, and the RSD is committed to re-allocating a portion of its existing budget to cover the costs of providing technical assistance to other RSD-type entities. The roles being established within T ASD (e.g., Community Liaison, Data Analyst, incubation Program Manager) will be made permanent following the life of the grant using public funding.

SECTION G: QUALITY OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN AND PERSONNEL

Management Plan to Achieve Grant Objectives

NSNO, RSD, and T ASD have created a management plan for this project that emphasizes accountability, rigorous performance monitoring, and active stakeholder engagement to ensure that grant objectives can be met in a timely and cost-effective manner. The four core tenets of the management strategy that will enable successful execution are:

- *Dedicated project managers:* NSNO, RSD, and T ASD will each have a dedicated i3 project manager oversee the day-to-day execution of the initiative. The NSNO and T ASD project managers will be full-time; the RSD project manager will be half-time, as she will be supported by 7 fully-dedicated i3 FTEs who will assist with many of the administrative tasks required of the project manager. A partially dedicated Project Director, someone more senior in the organization who can

provide overall project guidance and oversight, will support these project managers. In this way, sufficient personnel capacity will be dedicated to managing the project's activities and performance.

- *Rigorous project coordination and performance management:* A core responsibility of the dedicated personnel at NSNO, RSD, and TASD will be to coordinate on-going dialogue among all partners to monitor progress, to identify and resolve roadblocks, and to seize new opportunities for expansion and scale-up as they emerge. A key tool within this hands-on performance management approach will be “dashboards” completed by each partner on a monthly basis (monitoring use of federal and non-federal funds, hires made, schools opened, students reached, and growth in student achievement). These dashboards will be complimented by informal monthly check-ins by NSNO with each official project partner, as well as more formal progress report-outs of all project partners together once per quarter, providing an opportunity to share best practices and lessons learned among the broader i3 project team.
- *Laying the foundation for further scale:* The i3 grant program presents a unique opportunity to begin taking *The New Orleans Charter Restart Model* to scale in other states and districts by first assisting Tennessee in implementing this model of turnaround reform. Inherent in the management strategy for this project is continuous learning alongside our partners in Tennessee to understand the pain points and roadblocks they encounter as they attempt to replicate the model. By having FTEs within NSNO and RSD dedicated to providing technical assistance and supporting this scale-up effort in Tennessee, they will respond to these

challenges, and likewise document the learnings to ensure that others can benefit from the experience as the model is scaled to other regions.

- *On-going engagement of key stakeholders:* Our project will not be able to succeed without the deep and meaningful engagement of the communities in and around the schools we seek to turn around, including parents, teachers, the education reform community, funders, and political leaders. Implementation of this project, especially in the new Tennessee markets, will depend on ongoing collaborative conversations with Tennessee stakeholders to brainstorm how best to implement this project within their specific communities. This collaboration will take the form of one-on-one meetings between key stakeholders and i3 Project Directors and Managers, as well as group forums to brainstorm, problem-solve, and discuss concerns. For these reforms to take root, the entire community must be behind them – for this reason, we have FTEs serving as dedicated Community Liaisons at both the RSD and T ASD to facilitate this process of constructive community engagement.

The following three exhibits show the management plan.

Goal #1: Build the capacity to incubate and expand charter restart operators			
Responsibility	Partners	Timeline	Milestone
Incubate new restart charter operators by recruiting and supporting school leaders for one year in advance of opening	NSNO and T ASD	*Incubate 1 CMO in FY1 in NOLA, another in FY4 *Incubate 1 CMO in TN in FY4	Each new CMO opens its first school by the end of its incubation year, and those schools achieve 0.1 effects in both reading and math by end of year two of operation.
Conduct selection process for NOLA and TN CMOs/charter schools to	RSD, T ASD, and	*June 21, 2010: Applications due, scored on a standardized rubric	Official partners announced September 1, 2010

expand as official partners via sub-granting and assistance	NSNO	*August 1, 2010: Applicants interviewed	
Efficiently and effectively execute sub-grants to CMO official partners	NSNO	*September 2010: NSNO and CMOs execute MOU for sub-granting of funds (see Appendix A for sample MOU)	Funds sub-granted to partners as of September 30, 2010 and they are able to deploy them immediately
Expand current CMO operations by preparing to open and operate additional charter re-start schools	CMOs	*Exact timing will vary by CMO/charter school based on individual expansion plans *Incubation year: hire staff, enroll students, liaise with community, prepare facility	24 charter restart schools have been opened in NOLA and TN by expanding existing charters or CMOs, and those schools achieve 0.1 effects in both reading and math by end of year two of operation.

Goal #2: Provide infrastructure to sustain restart charter schools

Responsibility	Partners	Timeline	Milestone
Connect with the community (parents, teachers) to foster support for turnaround process, also increase understanding of charters and school performance / school choice	RSD, TASD	* During each school's incubation year, have community liaison work closely with parents and teachers in the closing school to address concerns, and explain the process * During each re-start school's first 2 years in operation, maintain frequent community contact (e.g., town hall meetings, home visits) to check-in with families and community leaders, discussing school performance data and how to exercise school choice	Each charter re-start opens with community support; there is a demonstrable increase in parents' knowledge about school performance by the end of the life of the grant
Identify failing schools and monitor turnarounds using a robust, transparent data system	RSD, TASD	* Recruit data analysts in October 2010, onboard by November * By spring 2011, data collection system and standardized reporting tools	After FY1 of the grant, data systems exist to identify failing schools and monitor long-term performance

		should be active	
Conduct twice annual school reviews to monitor school performance and convene charter restart leaders to share learnings and drive continuous improvement	NSNO, TASD	*Twice annually, conduct a thorough school review of each charter re-start created with i3 grant support * Convene the turn-around communities in NOLA and TN once annually to discuss school review results and findings, and share best practices	School review reports issued within 2 weeks of each review; 5 turnaround convenings held in each state over course of the grant

Goal #3: Take strategy to scale by codifying and replicating <i>The New Orleans Charter Restart Model</i>			
Responsibility	Partners	Timeline	Milestone
Provide technical assistance to districts outside NOLA looking to implement <i>The New Orleans Charter Restart Model</i>	NSNO, RSD	* October 2010: hire one FTE at NSNO and one at RSD to provide technical assistance and strategic planning support to NSNO-like and RSD-like organizations in other districts, as well as CMOs, engaged in charter restarts	Tennessee, NSNO and RSD's first partner district, is able to open eight charter restart schools by the end of the life of the grant.
Document <i>The New Orleans Charter Restart Model</i> and disseminate widely	NSNO	* October 2010: hire 0.5 FTE to document model * October 2010-October 2011: Conduct research (data analysis, interviews of NOLA education stakeholders, school visits, etc.) to produce an instructional guide to implementing <i>The New Orleans Charter Restart Model</i> * Following publication of guide, Scale-up Manager at NSNO responsible for continuously updating the guide with learnings from TN experience taking to scale	At end of FY1, the guide to <i>The New Orleans Charter Restart Model</i> is complete and available online, and dissemination efforts have begun. By the end of the life of the grant conversations have been had with at least 3-5 additional districts interested in replicating the model to lay the foundation for further scale-up.

Qualifications of Key Project Personnel

Relevant training and experience in managing complex projects

Sarah Usdin, CEO of New Schools for New Orleans, will provide overall leadership for NSNO and all official partners as the i3 Project Director. In this role, she

will directly oversee the NSNO personnel implementing the project day-to-day, assist them in trouble-shooting, provide guidance on emerging issues, and serve as the project's key ambassador (e.g., at speaking engagements to promote *The New Orleans Charter Restart Model* in other states/districts as part of scaling strategy). She will also oversee the i3 activities conducted by the official partners in the project, ensuring milestones are reached and assisting where needed to improve collaboration. Approximately 10% of Usdin's time will focus on oversight of the i3 project. Usdin has spent nearly 20 years as an education reform leader, beginning her career in the classroom as a TFA teacher in Baton Rouge, and then serving as TFA's Executive Director in Louisiana. In this role, she clearly demonstrated her capacity to manage complex projects, coordinating teacher placement and development in New Orleans and in twenty other communities in Louisiana. As founder and CEO of NSNO, Usdin's management ability has enabled her organization to collaborate effectively with partners to eliminate the New Orleans teacher shortage, to launch eight schools that will serve 5,500 students, to train 36 NOLA charter school boards, and to invest in three local CMOs, a parent organizing network, two data-driven instruction support providers, and a SPED cooperative. Usdin's deep knowledge of education in Louisiana, paired with her national presence as an expert and practitioner in the education reform movement, render her an ideal candidate to lead this effort.

Supporting Usdin will be Neerav Kingsland, NSNO's Chief Strategy Officer. A graduate of Yale Law School, Kingsland has worked at NSNO since its inception and currently assists the CEO in developing and executing NSNO's strategy in the areas of human capital, charter school development, school support providers, and governance. Specifically, he drafted a strategic plan for an educational fund that aims to invest \$25

million in the New Orleans reform movement. He has helped manage several of NSNO's more complex project, including: launching and supporting of charter schools; managing partnerships with national human capital providers such as The New Teacher Project, New Leaders for New Schools, and Teach For America; and supporting both the state and the district in major policy initiatives, including Race to the Top and School Improvement Grants. Kingsland will devote 50% of his time to serving as the i3 Project Supervisor, providing direct oversight for the full-time i3 Program Manager, as well as the other new FTEs brought onboard at NSNO to conduct the i3 program activities.

Collaborating closely with Usdin and Kingsland will be Rayne Martin, Reform Director of the Recovery School District, who will serve as the Project Director for the RSD team. Martin has 13 years of experience as an executive manager developing and implementing complex projects within public service organizations in crisis. She has operated effectively both in managing daily operations (finances, academics, communications, staffing, IT, and operations) of the RSD and in providing overall leadership, writing the RSD strategic plan and aligning local, state, and national resources against it (which led to the largest academic gains in New Orleans history). Martin created detailed performance scorecards to monitor RSD's progress toward its strategic goals, and has anchored this emphasis on accountability and results in her management and implementation of special projects for the Superintendent. Approximately 10% of Martin's time will focus on overseeing the i3 project. Martin will work with RSD Superintendent Paul Vallas, who will also provide overall support and guidance for the project, in addition to serving as one of its ambassadors as we scale the model out of

state. See Martin's and Vallas' resumes/biographies in Appendix C for more detail on their experience in implementing complex projects.

Wanda Anderson-Guillaume, RSD's Chief Academic Officer, who will serve as the Project Manager for RSD i3 activities, will support Martin. 50% of Anderson-Guillaume's time will be dedicated to managing the i3 project; she will have seven other FTEs at RSD fully dedicated to i3 and assisting her with the day-to-day administrative tasks, so her time will be spent mostly overseeing their work, providing guidance, and reporting out on RSD's work to other i3 project leaders within the partnership. Anderson-Guillaume is a Native New Orleanian with 20 years of experience in public education. She has served as the principal of Bienville Elementary School, George O. Mondy Elementary School, Lafayette Elementary School, and Joseph A. Craig Elementary School. As the Chief Academic Officer of the Recovery School District, Anderson-Guillaume currently manages curriculum and instruction, including monitoring all data (especially state testing) – a skill set that will be immensely valuable during our project evaluation efforts. She also ensures compliance with all state and federal programmatic regulations and manages all state and federal grants, another skill set that is highly relevant to managing RSD's i3 program.

As the Tennessee Achievement School District is a newly-established entity, the majority of i3 project oversight will be supplied by its new leadership once they are installed. The TASD Superintendent will spend 20% of his/her time providing overall i3 project leadership and guidance at the TASD; similar to the other official partner organizations, TASD will also hire a full-time i3 Project Manager to facilitate daily operations of the program. Complimenting this team will be Eric Hilgendorf, the Director

of Charter Schools and Choice at the Tennessee Department of Education. He will devote 10% of his time to coordinating relationships between the T ASD and charter operators for the purposes of i3 activities. Hilgendorf is responsible for overseeing monitoring, evaluation, compliance, and implementation issues directly related to the cultivation of high-quality charter schools, and for building the infrastructure of the Tennessee public charter schools.

Relevant Training and Experience in Designing and Conducting Experimental / Quasi-Experimental Studies of Educational Initiatives

As stated in Section D on the Project Evaluation, this core project management team will be augmented by an external evaluator, who will be chosen specifically on the basis of his/her experience in designing and conducting experimental and quasi-experimental studies of charter schools and turnaround efforts that have had strong external and/or internal validity, and ideally both. Qualifications for the external evaluator are articulated in more detail in Section D. The external evaluator will be complimented by a project team with deep knowledge of education reform in the New Orleans context to leverage as the basis for evaluation design and implementation.