

NOBLE EDUCATION INITIATIVE



Response to Charleston County School District Solicitation for Interest (SFI)

Submitted by:

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Submitted Electronically via Email to:

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Section 1

1. Name, mailing address, phone number, and name of point of contact;

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2. Group type (e.g., LLC, non-profit, minority-owned, woman-owned, veteran-owned) and length of time working to turn around schools;

Noble Education Initiative (NEI) is a non-profit education service provider founded in 2017 by Sherry Hage with the mission of creating a collaborative group of exceptional professionals who will boldly rethink education and make success attainable for all students, preparing the next generation to solve the complex challenges of tomorrow.

NEI as a company has been providing turnaround services since 2017. However, the individuals that makeup the NEI team bring decades of experience in school management, turnaround operations, innovative program design, and data-driven instruction. This expertise will not only prepare students for the future, but also develop and train the next generation of school leaders.

3. Resumes or detailed bios of individuals proposing to lead this work;

Sherry Hage – Founder and Chief Executive Officer

Sherry is the founder and Chief Executive Officer of Noble Education Initiative (NEI). She has dedicated her working career to the success of students and teachers throughout the United States. After graduating from the University of Miami with her bachelor's degree in music, she began her teaching career with the Broward County school system in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. After obtaining her master's degree in education policy and planning from The University of Maryland, she returned to Florida to teach and serve as an adjunct professor at Florida Atlantic University. As her career progressed she would rise to become a Curriculum Specialist for the Broward County Schools' district office. During her tenure at Charter Schools USA, Sherry served as the Vice President of Education before being promoted to Chief Academic Officer. As the company's CAO, Sherry was responsible for both the academic and operational functions of the company's 84 schools. While she has proven her ability to lead large and diverse teams, deliver excellent results, and effectively scale the growth and development of programs, her real passion revolves around setting children up to reach their dreams.

Mitchell Wise – Chief Operating Officer

Mitchell Wise is Chief Operating Officer for Noble Education Initiative (NEI) and supports all aspects of company operations as a member of the Executive Team. He received his bachelor's degree in Finance from the University of Florida. In addition, he successfully completed a global executive development program with a prior global company where he received full marks. Mr. Wise is responsible for collaborating with the CEO to oversee the overall execution of NEI's Education Model and Services. He also works with the management team on both strategy and tactical operations. In this capacity, he provides day-to-day operational leadership, including general strategy and project planning; business development; marketing and communications; financial management; and oversight for internal and external policies and procedures that support compliance and adhere to company quality standards.

Most recently, Mr. Wise held the title of Vice President of Business Development at Charter Schools USA where he was responsible for multiple corporate departments to include Business Development, Governance and Enrollment in addition to active involvement in strategic projects. During his tenure, he implemented multiple processes and systems/tools to drive optimal business decisions. This included standardized business development processes for

pipeline management and contract record-keeping to ensure company-wide alignment; a model to measure site location viability to drive capacity utilization of new schools; re-structuring departments to improve internal and external customer relations; and, new reporting and forecast tools that led the company to achieve 99.2% of the network-wide enrollment target for 2018-2019. Prior to Charter Schools USA, he worked in multiple global organizations and successfully filled roles in different functional areas.

Teresa Brown – Director of Curriculum Design and Staff Development

Teresa Brown serves as the Director of Curriculum Design and Staff Development for Noble Education Initiative (NEI) and provides thought leadership in her areas of expertise as a member of the Executive Team. She received a bachelor's degree in Health Science Education from the University of Florida, and a Master's in Educational Leadership from the American College of Education. She also holds a Florida Professional Teaching Certificate and is a Certified John Maxwell Team Coach, Teacher and Speaker.

Ms. Brown is responsible for the strategic direction and execution of curriculum design, development and implementation as well as leadership and staff development. She has over 20 years of experience in educational delivery and management, progressing through leadership roles as a coach, athletic director, teacher, dean and principal. Ms. Brown served as a Regional Director of Education at Charter Schools USA for Indiana, Georgia and Palm Beach County schools. In this role, she supported school principals by monitoring the effectiveness of programs, strategies and operations, and also by serving as liaison between the schools, the corporate office and the school's governing board. Most recently, she was Vice President of Enrollment at Charter Schools USA. In this capacity, she was responsible for increasing student enrollment in 84 schools while managing a team of Regional Enrollment Managers. She worked collaboratively with school leadership and marketing to focus on specific markets and identify potential populations for the schools that would potentially increase enrollment. She also provided training for state funding, reporting and online registration procedures to Enrollment Managers and Assistant Principals.

April Williams-Khorran – Director of Operations and School Support

April Williams-Khorran is an accomplished educator with over 13 years of experience in school leadership. Mrs. Williams-Khorran began her teaching career in Florida, where she served as a teacher on special assignment to school leadership and supported instructional programming design. As the dean and assistant principal at Palm Bay Community Charter School, Mrs. Williams-Khorran further developed her leadership skills by supporting the development of instructional activities tied to school-wide goals. She also delivered new teacher induction training, provided teacher support, and managed student discipline procedures.

During Mrs. Williams-Khorran's time as principal of Canoe Creek Charter Academy, a K-8 school, she increased the school rating to an "A" for two consecutive years. Her role in developing and coordinating instructional programming, monitoring implementation of the school's education model, leading data chats, working with school stakeholders, and managing all operational aspects of the school helped prepare her for her next role as a Regional Director. In this role she worked collaboratively with executive team members to institute educational best practices and strategies across regional networks in Florida. Mrs. Williams-Khorran's experience in this role provides her with the comprehensive skillset required to drive educational programming, monitor implementation, oversee professional development efforts, develop a positive school climate, and address school operational needs. Currently, she serves as a Director of Operations and School Support for NEI. Mrs. Williams-Khorran earned a bachelor's in Education from St. Thomas in 1999, and a master's degree in Educational Leadership from Nova Southeastern University in 2008.

Dr. Byron Ernest – Director of Educator Development and Partnerships

Dr. Ernest serves as Director of Educator Development and Partnerships for Noble Education Initiative (NEI). He has extensive teaching and school leadership experience and was the 2010 Indiana Teacher of the Year and 2011 Christopher Columbus Foundation National Outstanding Agriscience Teacher. Dr. Ernest holds bachelor's degrees in Animal Science and Agricultural Education and a master's degree in Education from Purdue University. He received his Doctorate from Walden University in Administrator Leadership for Teaching and Learning. Dr. Ernest also completed the Certificate for Advanced Educational Leadership program at Harvard University where he is continuing

his Post-Doctoral Studies. Dr. Ernest currently serves as Secretary to the Indiana State Board of Education (INSBOE). He was appointed to the Indiana State Board of Education by House Speaker Brian Bosma, and also serves as Secretary/Treasurer on the Executive Committee of the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) Board of Directors.

Previously, Dr. Ernest served as Head of Schools for Hoosier Academies. While at Hoosier Academies, he developed a successful teacher leader program, the Focused Leader Academy, for developing an intent-based and distributed leadership school community model. Dr. Ernest also served as principal at Emmerich Manual High School in Indianapolis after it was taken over by the State for receiving seven consecutive failing annual performance grades. As principal, he worked with a new staff to develop a culture of excellence focusing on high student achievement and performance. Prior to going to Manual, he worked as the Department Head for Agriculture Science and FFA at Lebanon Community School Corporation where he started the program from scratch. The program is now one of the largest in the state and is well respected nationally for its focus on teaching science in the context of agriculture.

4. Summary of group's philosophy regarding education and student achievement; and educational/curricula used in schools.

NEI's education program is grounded in effective implementation of a rigorous curriculum based on state academic standards. It affords all students the opportunity to experience academic enrichment by including a framework for continuous improvement. Our program design provides all students with the structure, routine, and high expectations they need to succeed while integrating regular cycles of student assessment, review, support, and growth. As a result, our academic plan is robust, research-based, and built with continuous learning in mind. To ensure a positive learning environment that supports implementation of our academic program, we actively attend to the development of a positive school culture that meets student social and emotional needs. Our approach to standards-based instruction rests within a strong frame of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL).

For every grade level, the academic plan begins with an instructional calendar, which is developed to incorporate all state academic standards and key instructional strategies aimed to nurture and develop SEL competencies. This integrated approach ensures that opportunities for addressing SEL needs, which are at the forefront of instructional planning, are included in the curriculum via selected strategies and activities. Our curriculum is mapped into seven to nine instructional units in grades K – 8, and eight to nine instructional units in grades 9 – 12. The model employs a cyclical approach that guarantees priority standards are addressed adequately prior to state testing or advancement to the next grade. The instructional calendar, which provides a scope and sequence of standards, provides teachers the flexibility to adjust instruction based on formative and end-of-unit assessments so that students have every possible opportunity to advance learning.

NEI also utilizes the Eight-Step Continuous Improvement Process developed by Patricia Davenport and Peggy Hinckley (2013). This continuous improvement process will continue to drive delivery of our curriculum and provides a touchstone for all professional learning. The process is implemented at the school level via professional development aimed at instructional leaders to ensure a thoughtful rollout and integration with the highest level of fidelity. Teachers are then provided with initial professional development to gain a baseline understanding of the eight steps, and then guided in making connections to our data-driven approach in order to enhance our planning and delivery of effective instruction. Following the initial professional development, teachers and school leaders are provided with ongoing implementation support from NEI as part of a capacity building plan to effectively utilize and monitor the school-wide implementation of the continuous improvement process.

Section 2

1. Number and size of elementary, middle and/or secondary schools under management currently or previously; locations of schools; academic achievement and growth; and student retention data;

In 2011, the Indiana State Board of Education (SBOE) exercised its statutory authority to intervene in the management of several schools that had been deemed failing for six years under Public Law 221 and the state's school accountability system. As a result, the SBOE assigned the Indiana Department of Education to contract with third party "turnaround school operators" to manage the schools. Emmerich Manual High School (Manual), Emma Donnan Middle School, and Thomas Carr Howe Community High School (HOWE), all within the Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS) system, were three of the schools impacted. In the spring of 2017, NEI began providing management services to these three schools, as well as Emma Donnan Elementary School, which shares a campus with Emma Donnan Middle School and is designated by the Indiana SBOE as an innovation school. It's important to note that these schools serve a student population that consist of 97% economically disadvantaged students and an average 63% minority population.

Please see Table 1 below for specific school information and academic data. In the 2016-17 and 2017-18 school years, Indiana students in grades 3 – 8 were assessed using the ISTEP+, and students in 10th grade were assessed using the ISTEP+ Grade 10. Beginning in the 2018-19 school year, Indiana modified its state assessments and accountability measurements. Students in grades 3 – 8 are now assessed using the ILEARN, while students in 10th grade are still assessed using the ISTEP+ Grade 10. Proficiency is shown as an average of the percentage of tested students who demonstrated proficiency in each grade level, while growth is measured via growth points on the school report card. Please note that academic data for the 2018-19 school year does not include growth metrics since it was the first year that Indiana used new state assessments and accountability measurements, and as such, growth was not calculated.

Table 1

| School/Grade Levels/Total Students | Location | 2016-17 ELA and Math Proficiency | 2016-17 ELA and Math Growth | 2017-18 ELA and Math Proficiency | 2017-18 ELA and Math Growth | 2018-19 ELA and Math Proficiency |
|---|---|---|--|---|--|---|
| Emma Donnan Elementary School Grades: K – 6 Current Enrollment: 249 | 1202 East Troy Avenue, Indianapolis, Indiana 46203 | ISTEP + ELA: 30% Math: 19% | ISTEP + ELA: 120.7 Math: 108.3 | ISTEP + ELA: 15% Math: 21% | ISTEP + ELA: 116.5 Math: 95.7 | ILEARN ELA: 21% Math: 30% |
| Emma Donnan Middle School Grades: 7 – 8 Current Enrollment: 179 | 1202 East Troy Avenue, Indianapolis, Indiana 46203 | ISTEP + ELA: 27% Math: 14% | ISTEP + ELA: 71.3 Math: 84.5 | ISTEP + ELA: 37% Math: 28% | ISTEP + ELA: 113.9 Math: 105.6 | ILEARN ELA: 28% Math: 18% |
| Emmerich Manual High School Grades 9 – 12 Current Enrollment: 630 | 2404 Madison Avenue, Indianapolis, Indiana 46225 | ISTEP + Grade 10 ELA: 25% Math: 10% | ISTEP + Grade 10 ELA: 95.3 Math: 91.8 | ISTEP + Grade 10 ELA: 24% Math: 8% | ISTEP + Grade 10 ELA: 83.2 Math: 91.4 | ISTEP + Grade 10 ELA: 28% Math: 8% |
| T.C. Howe Community High School Grades: 7 – 12 Current Enrollment: 519 | 4900 Julian Avenue, Indianapolis, Indiana 46201 | ISTEP + Grade 10 ELA: 21% Math: 0% ISTEP+ ELA: 29% Math: 21% | ISTEP + Grade 10 ELA: 69.3 Math: 83.2 ISTEP+ ELA: 68.3 Math: 76.9 | ISTEP + Grade 10 ELA: 24% Math: 0% ISTEP+ ELA: 30% Math: 16% | ISTEP + Grade 10 ELA: 101.8 Math: 136.5 ISTEP+ ELA: 80.1 Math: 84.5 | ISTEP + Grade 10 ELA: 30% Math: 0% ILEARN ELA: 20% Math: 10% |
| Knowledge Academy* Grades: 5 – 8 Current Enrollment: 267 | 5320 Hickory Hollow Parkway, Antioch, Tennessee 37013 | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Knowledge Academy at the Crossings* Grades 5 – 8 Current Enrollment: 305 | 5320 Hickory Hollow Parkway, Antioch, Tennessee 37013 | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Knowledge Academy High School* Grades 9 – 12 Current Enrollment: 353 | 5320 Hickory Hollow Parkway, Antioch, Tennessee 37013 | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |

*Please note that NEI assumed management responsibility for Knowledge Academies prior to the start of the 2019-20 school year. As such, data for these schools has not been included since historical data is not reflective of NEI's management of the schools.

Student Retention

Please see Table 2 below.

Table 2

| School | 2018-19 Retained Students |
|---|------------------------------|
| Emma Donnan Elementary and Middle Schools | 38 |
| Emmerich Manual High School | 9 |
| Thomas Carr Howe Community High School | 53 |

2. **Proven turnaround experience with improving academic achievement; climate/culture indicators; teacher recruitment/retention; and parent/community engagement;**

Academic Achievement

NEI has been instrumental in driving the significant strides that have been made at Manual since 2017. Manual has raised its overall letter grade from an "F" for the 2012-13 school year to a "C" for the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 school years. Manual also had the 3rd highest ISTEP+ passage rate among all IPS high schools in 2017-2018. In 2018-19, Manual increased its ISTEP+ Grade 10 ELA passage rate from 23.6% in 2017-18 to 28%, and ISTEP+ Grade 10 math passage rate remained nearly the same in 2018-19 (7.4%) as it was in 2017-18 (7.9%). For years 2016-2017 and 2017-2018, Manual earned at least 83 points on its School Report Card in both ELA and math growth on the ISTEP+ Grade 10 assessment. Furthermore, in the 2012-13 school year, 10% of Manual students received College and Career Readiness Indicator (CCRI) on the School Report Card, but this percentage has increased every year since then, raising to 51% for the 2017-2018 school year. Manual has also raised student graduation rates steadily since 2012-2013, increasing from 61% to almost 80% in the most recent year.

HOWE also made significant improvements in numerous school accountability categories starting in 2017. HOWE's graduation rate greatly increased from 49% in 2016-17 to 92% in 2017-18, an exceptional school and community achievement. On the 2017-18 ISTEP+, HOWE had the 2nd highest passage rate among all high schools within the IPS system. HOWE's growth points on the School Report Card for the math portion of the ISTEP+ Grade 10 increased by over 50 points compared to 2016-17, and by over 30 points in ELA. Furthermore, on the ELA portion of the ISTEP+, 8th graders doubled their proficiency compared to 2016-17, increasing by 21 percentage points. On the math portion, 8th graders increased their proficiency by 11 percentage points. ISTEP+ growth points on the accountability matrix also increased by 12 points in ELA and 8 points in math. In the 2018-19 school year, HOWE continued to improve, increasing its proficiency on the ELA portion of the ISTEP+ Grade 10 to 30%, which was a 6-percentage point increase over 2017-18 proficiency.

Since being designated as a turnaround school with IPS beginning with the 2012-13 school year, Emma Donnan Middle School had received a school letter grade of "F" every school year. However, in the 2017-18 school year, the school improved its overall letter grade to a "C", which was an incredible milestone for the school. More Specifically, Emma Donnan Elementary School increased its ISTEP+ growth points on the School Report Card by 28 points and 68 points in ELA and math, respectively, when comparing 2017-18 performance to its initial year (2015-16).

When comparing Emma Donnan Middle School's ISTEP+ assessment data on the 2016-17 and 2017-18 School Report Cards, significant improvement is apparent: ELA proficiency was 7 percentage points higher in 7th grade and 12 percentage points higher in 8th grade, while math proficiency was 15 percentage points higher in 7th grade and 13 percentage points higher in 8th grade. In addition, points earned for ELA growth was over 40 points higher, while points earned for math growth was over 20 points higher.

When comparing the 2018-19 academic performance of the schools that NEI currently manages in Indiana to the other schools within the IPS system, NEI schools are currently outperforming the IPS school system as a whole. Moreover, the schools that NEI manages achieve this success despite serving a population consisting of 97% economically

disadvantaged students, which is much higher than the IPS average of 63%.

The assessment information outlined below compares 2018-19 academic assessment data for economically disadvantaged students at NEI-managed schools to assessment data for economically disadvantaged students at other IPS schools:

- ILEARN: NEI had **43% more** of its economically disadvantaged students pass both ELA and math than IPS
- ISTEP+ Grade 10: NEI had **95% more** of its economically disadvantaged students pass both ELA and math than IPS
- ISTEP Biology: NEI had **68% more** of its economically disadvantaged students pass than IPS
- IREAD-3: NEI had **5% more** of its economically disadvantaged students pass than IPS

Furthermore, when comparing all NEI students to all of IPS students, NEI students still outperformed IPS students in every 2018-19 testing category with the exception of one:

- ILEARN: NEI had **3.7% less** of its students pass both ELA and math than IPS
- ISTEP+ Grade 10: NEI had **33% more** of its students pass both ELA and math than IPS
- ISTEP Biology: NEI had **7% more** of its students pass than IPS
- IREAD-3: NEI had **5% more** of its students pass than IPS

Climate/Culture Indicators

Spring school-level surveys were administered by NEI in May 2019. Responses were received from 231 staff members, which represented 92% of all school-level employees in NEI's managed schools in Indiana. Overall, 90% of staff across the schools "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that they "know what is expected of me at work" and that "the mission/purpose of my school makes me feel my job is important." In addition, 89% of respondents reported that they "feel that their supervisor or someone at work seems to care about them as a person and that they are happy with their work place," and over 86% of the staff agreed or strongly agreed that: (1) they "have a good friend at work," (2) "the school team builds a sense of community where all students are valued and treated equally," and (3) "the school team respects students' differences, races and ethnicities."

Teacher Recruitment/Retention

In 2016-17, the average teacher and administrative turnover among each of NEI's managed schools in Indiana was 47%, then slightly increased to 53% in 2017-18, and decreased to 48% in 2018-19. When NEI began managing its Indiana schools in the spring of 2017, a thorough review of the then-current staff was conducted. NEI's goal was to staff each school with educators whose greatest strengths aligned to the type of teaching and administrative oversight necessary to excel in a turnaround environment, such as instilling positive school culture and driving student growth via interventions, remediation, and data-driven instruction. As such, each of the schools experienced both voluntary and involuntary turnover, resulting in slightly elevated turnover in the 2017-18 school year. As is shown in the data above, turnover decreased in 2018-19 since NEI is no longer focused on making critical adjustments to administrative and instructional staff. Furthermore, the schools averaged a 76% administrative and instructional staff retention rate from 2018-19 to the start of the 2019-20 school year.

Parent/Community Engagement

NEI has also been instrumental in each of the schools' efforts to further develop parent and community relationships. NEI has established relationships that have been integrated in the school design to engage students in academic, extracurricular, and wraparound programming. Partners engage in providing academic tutoring, college and career readiness events, and college tours. Additionally, they are engaged in extracurricular programming, driving mentoring of youth, providing clubs, and organizing career fairs. Community partners also provide educational services, mental health services, and internships for students. NEI also utilizes a Family Engagement Representative that drives partnerships aimed to continuously support students.

In addition, spring parent-level surveys were administered by NEI in May 2019. From parent respondents across all of NEI's managed schools in Indiana, 89% of parents agreed that "parents are encouraged to volunteer and be involved in school activities."

3. Experience generating annual budgets and financial projections; evidence of fiscal soundness of existing schools.

NEI has the capacity to provide financial management services and implements established processes and procedures to ensure fiscal responsibility and sound internal controls. These services include general governmental accounting policies, financial reporting, budgeting, cash receipts and deposits, purchasing and cash disbursements, capital assets, and payroll.

NEI has experience in providing (1) the projected annual budget for approval; (2) monthly detailed statements of all revenues received, and detailed statements of all expenditures for services and or expenses rendered or incurred to or on behalf of the school whether incurred on-site or off-site, upon request; and (3) monthly financial statements including a balance sheet, statement of revenues, and expenditures.

In addition, NEI maintains a rigorous budget management process that ensures each school achieves the desired positive financial results. The process is approached in 3-parts: (1) financial statement preparation, (2) regular review of actual results, and (3) continuous forecasting of future results. As budget variances arise and are managed, new forecasts are developed each month to ensure schools stay on track financially throughout the year. These forecasts allow school leadership to make timely management decisions to ensure the financial health of their schools.

Fiscal Soundness of Existing Schools

According to Manual's past three years of audited financial statements, there were no audit findings. The school maintained a positive total net position in all years with the exception of the 2016-17 school year. At the end of the 2017-18 school year, Manual's total net position was \$266,160. According to HOWE's past three years of audited financial statements, there were no audit findings. HOWE has maintained a positive net position in all years, and the school's total net position at the end the 2017-18 school year was \$493,383, which was an increase over the 2016-17 school year's total net position of \$326,758. According to Emma Donnan Elementary School's past three years of audited financial statements, there were no audit findings. The school has maintained a positive net position in all years, and the school's total net position at the end of the 2017-18 school year was \$22,711. According to Emma Donnan Middle School's past three years of audited financial statements, there were no audit findings. The school has maintained a positive net position in all years, with a total net position at the end of the 2017-18 school year of \$393,206.