

PLA Continuation Submission

I. Cover Page



Part I: Cover Page – Organization Information

Organization Information	
Organization Name:	Phalen Leadership Academies <input type="checkbox"/> New or <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continuation Submission
Primary Contact:	Earl Martin Phalen
Email Address:	emphalen@phalenacademies.org
Phone Number:	(617) 818-1959
Mailing Address:	1001 Marina Drive, Suite 410, Quincy, MA 02171
Organization Category (select all that apply)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Charter Network, Charter Management Organization or Charter School <input type="checkbox"/> Turnaround Leader Development Provider <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Management Partner <input type="checkbox"/> Stakeholder Engagement Specialist	
Preferred Geographical Region(s) in Colorado to Work In (select all that apply)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Metro Denver <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Front Range (Colorado Springs, Ft. Collins) <input type="checkbox"/> Rural / Mountain / Western Slope	

II. Narrative Responses

a. Provide an update on your organization's work and progress since the original RFI submission in 2018.

As a reminder, PLA's mission is to serve children who have historically not had access to a high quality education. Ninety-three percent of our scholars are Black or Latino; 89% of our children are eligible for free-or-reduced-priced lunch; and our schools are in some of the toughest neighborhoods in each of our cities. This has remained consistent since the original RFI.

The two areas that have become even more refined since our RFI include:

- Our process for recruiting and developing talent; and
- Resources for ensuring our partner schools can effectively implement our Six Academic Priorities for Success.

Process for Recruiting and Developing Talent

PLA's goal is to retain over 80% of the educators in the schools in which it partners. We believe that through the implementation the PLA Academic Priorities for Success (described below), high quality professional development, and the PLA Coaching Cycle,

staff will receive the support they need to be effective; and scholars will receive the high-quality instruction that they deserve.

While PLA works to retain the administrators and teachers that are currently serving at its partner schools, it is not always possible. When we need to recruit and hire new team members, PLA focuses on selecting educators who are able to accept feedback and use data to continuously improve the quality of instruction for students. In Beaumont, Texas this year, for instance, our extensive outreach efforts enabled us to fully staff both of our partner schools with strong leadership and highly qualified staff. We hire staff who are able to meet our standard of excellence through a very rigorous, multi-stage screening process that consists of an online application; phone interview; in-person interviews; observation of the candidate's classroom teaching; and modeling of data-driven teaching.

Once hired, PLA provides intensive professional development through: (1) in-person workshops, and (2) through PLA University, our on-line training platform. During the summer months, our educators participate in one or more – dependent on their role – of three new, in-person training sessions:

- Leadership Institute, a specialized week-long training for school leaders;
- New Teacher Institute, a week-long training program for new teachers; and
- Teacher Institute, a training program that prepares new teachers and returning teachers for success. (New teachers participate in two weeks of pre-service training.)

In addition to the summer institutes, PLA provides in-person training during the school year. Each school receives 20 hours of professional development that is specifically tailored to the needs of the school. During the school year, our partners also have access to PLA University, which is a comprehensive online professional development resource and training platform. The platform's 72 specialized modules are equipped with narrated presentations, videos, activities, best practices, and additional resources. PLA University modules are differentiated in order to serve professionals on a spectrum of career trajectories, offering customized growth pathways for teachers, leaders, and instructional support staff members.

Access to such a rich and diverse array of professional development has been one of the keys in supporting the success of our schools. Another strength of our model is the PLA Coaching Cycle, a proprietary tool used to support the development of our educators and school leaders.

Academic Model

There are still six key elements of our program model, which are called the ***PLA Academic Priorities for Success***. Each priority, when implemented with fidelity, helps scholars excel:

- Effective Leadership;
- Strong Culture and Climate;
- Collaborative Staff; Effective Instruction;
- Curriculum, Assessments and Interventions; and
- Strong Support Systems.

Below are some of the intensified ways that we support our schools in successfully implementing each priority:

Effective Leadership

PLA has developed several tools to support the success of our school leaders. Some of which include the PLA Coaching Cycle for Leaders, a process that systematically support the growth of our school leaders; our Leadership Evaluation Assessment, a rubric outlining the successful behaviors of turnaround school leaders; and the PLA Leadership Institute, a week-long intensive leadership training institute for school leaders. Weekly tactical meetings with peers, monthly webinars, and tailored professional development also support the success of our school leaders. PLA also supports the development of future leaders through our new Pathways to Leadership program, which is a uniquely designed fellowship program tailored to building capacity for aspiring school leaders.

Climate and Culture

Having a school that is safe, loving and nurturing is critical to the success of scholars. We provide several resources to our schools to support them in developing a strong school culture including Kickboard and PLA RESTORE, a systematic process for recognizing scholars who make good choices and treat others well. The PLA Coaching Cycle and PLA University, our on-line training portal, also support teachers in ensuring effective classroom and behavior management. Both of these tools have been refined, based on partner feedback, since the original RFI.

PLA also believes that parents are a critical partner in supporting the success of their scholars and the school. PLA has developed a scientifically-validated method for partnering with parents, and will train our school leaders and teachers in how to more effectively engage partners.

Collaborative Staff

For our partner schools to maximize their impact on children, staff must work together to promote strong professional growth. Our newly developed Peer Mentoring Program, Coaching Cycle, Summer Book Club, and Differentiated Professional Development are just some of the ways we build collaborative staff. In addition, hiring and retaining the right staff are also critical. PLA will implement our rubrics for hiring principals, teachers, and staff; our operating methods for high-impact PLCs and Instructional Learning Rounds; and our Staff Appreciation framework. To further support retention and teacher satisfaction, some of our partner schools also elect to implement our newly

developed Raising the Bar Initiative, PLA's annual performance-based incentive program.

Effective Instruction

The most important component of effective instruction is hiring strong teachers (discussed above). PLA believes that school structure matters, and we have developed a targeted staffing model for our partner schools. A third key to effective instruction includes the implementation of evidence-based curriculum. All of our partners both implement evidence-based curriculum, and they have sufficient training to implement the curriculum with fidelity.

Curriculum, Assessments and Interventions

For scholars to succeed, educators need to have the instructional materials needed to teach, assess and inform instruction. As discussed above, our partner schools implement approved, research-based curriculum aligned to state standards. Another critical element of the PLA model is our weekly formative assessment. Using weekly assessments developed with Edulastic, our partner schools are able to gauge scholar progress in vocabulary, grammar, cold reads and math, and then use this data to inform instructional decisions. This data will help educators address both scholar needs and grouping for Tier 2 instruction, and the specific targeted interventions that will help scholars both catch up and move ahead.

Support Systems

PLA believes that it "takes a village to raise a child." Schools, families and communities provide resources and support systems that ensure success for all scholars. We will help our schools leverage these key partnerships, some of which might include: All Pro Dads/Muffins with Mom; wrap-around programming (i.e., summer learning, STEM); and health service organizations.

Several new schools have joined our network since the original RFI. Below is a list of our current partner schools:

Phalen Leadership Academies School Demographic Summary												
School Name	Location	Grades	Overall Enrollment	% F/R Lunch	Black (4)	Hispanic /Latino (1)	Asian (3)	Two or More Races (7)	White (6)	American Indian (2)	Native Hawaiian (5)	Unclassified
Dr. Mae E Jones-Clark Elementary	Beaumont, TX	K-5	622	96%	72%	26%	-	1%	1%	-	-	-
Smith Middle	Beaumont, TX	6th-8th	574	96%	78%	21%	-	1%	-	-	-	-
Trix Academy	Detroit, MI	K-8	263	99%	99%	-	1%	-	-	-	-	-
James and Rosemary Phalen Middle-High School	Indianapolis, IN	7th-10th	509	79%	77%	17%	-	1%	5%	-	-	-
George and Veronica Phalen Academy	Indianapolis, IN	K-8	415	77%	93%	2%	0%	3%	2%	0%	-	-
PLA @ Francis Scott Key School - 103	Indianapolis, IN	K-6	479	78%	72%	23%	-	3%	2%	0%	-	-
PLA @ George Fisher - 93	Indianapolis, IN	K-6	434	71%	73%	15%	-	3%	9%	-	-	-
Timothy L Johnson Academy	Fort Wayne, IN	K-8	537	99%	43%	7%	45%	4%	1%	-	-	-
Thea Bowman Leadership Academy	Gary, IN	K-6	532	99%	94%	4%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	-
Thea Bowman Middle/High School	Gary, IN	7th-12th	604	99%	94%	4%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	-
Higher Institute of Arts and Technology	Merrillville, IN	K-8	241	78%	79%	2%	-	7%	2%	-	-	10%
Sheehy Elementary	Tampa, FL	K-5	341	99%	84%	12%	-	2%	2%	-	-	-
Oak Park Elementary	Tampa, FL	K-5	576	99%	76%	12%	-	6%	6%	-	-	-
Foster Elementary	Tampa, FL	K-5	489	97%	70%	18%	2%	2%	9%	-	-	-
Mcdonald Elementary School	Seffner, FL	K-5	556	95%	15%	30%	1%	6%	48%	-	-	-
Rainbow Dreams Academy	Las Vegas, NV	K-8	363	81%	76%	14%	0%	8%	1%	0%	0%	-
Overall Network	-	-	-	89%	73%	12%	7%	4%	7%	0%	0%	10%

b. Describe any new work you have done or are doing in Colorado schools and districts since the original RFI submission in 2018.

PLA has not done any work in Colorado since the original RFI submission in 2018.

Summer Advantage, which is our affiliated organization which offers evidence-based summer learning programs to our school, has continued to serve nearly 1,000 children in Roaring Forks Valley this summer.

III. Capacity: Does your organization currently have the capacity to serve additional schools and districts in Colorado? If yes, indicate how many new schools or districts your current capacity would allow for. If no, explain what additional capacity you would need to put in place, and any other constraints such as timelines or minimum participating schools or districts.

PLA currently has the capacity to manage 10 additional partner schools in Colorado next year. As previously mentioned, PLA is a national non-profit organization that has successfully developed partnerships with 20 schools in five states and eight school districts. PLA's headquarters currently consists of 43 team members who provide its partner schools with an array of support that ranges from recruitment; climate and culture; curriculum and assessment;

teacher and leader coaching and development; resource allocation and development; compliance and reporting; parent and community engagement; and more.

In addition to an exceptional team, PLA has enhanced its extensive portfolio of tools and processes that our partners are able implement to support the success of their schools. A few examples of the tools that are immediately ready for use and/or participation by our new school partners include:

- Colorado-aligned weekly assessments, developed using Edulastic, which enable our partner schools to gauge scholar progress in vocabulary, grammar, cold reads and math, and then use this data to inform instructional decisions;
- Framework for effective Tier 2 instruction, which will support daily small group instruction for every scholar;
- Framework for effective PLCs, ensuring that weekly planning meetings are focused on data and leveraged to consistently improve student performance;
- PLA Teacher Coaching Cycle;
- PLA University;
- PLA Teacher Evaluation framework;
- PLA Leader Evaluation, a rubric outlining the successful behaviors of turnaround school leaders;
- PLA Leadership Coaching Cycle, which systematically supports the development of leaders;
- Pathways to Leadership, which is a uniquely designed fellowship program tailored to building the capacity of aspiring teachers and school leaders; and
- PLA Leadership Institute, a week-long intensive leadership training institute for school leaders.

Our strong team; proven model; the aforementioned tools; and strong monitoring and support processes have been the cornerstones to the success of our partner schools.

As we learn more about the needs of potential partner schools in Colorado, if our capacity needs to be expanded in any way (i.e., hiring extra Instructional Coaches or Interventionists), we will make those hires. We generally begin this hiring process in January, but have been able to successfully launch in the fall with notice of partnership as late as April.

IV. Evidence of Track Record of Improved Student and School Outcomes:

a. Provide concrete evidence from your three most recent engagements with schools and districts (Colorado schools and districts are preferred, if available). Include a description of the criteria and the data that you use to determine the impact of your work. Highlight the context and location of where this work has occurred.

PLA is a non-profit that was founded in 2013. In our seven-year history, we have been able to have a strong impact on the success of children including:

- Transformed five F-rated schools into A-rated schools, all within three years of becoming a partner.
- Increased scholars' passing rates on Indiana state ELA and Math tests by 11% in just one year – the highest standardized test growth for all schools in Central Indiana in 2015-16.
- Earned school rankings of #4 and #5 in the district for strongest growth – with 8.2% and 8.1% increases in state test score proficiency growth, respectively.
- Accelerated progress towards grade-level proficiency with 72% of scholars showing standard to high annual growth on the state test.
- Achieved an average of 92% passing on IREAD (Indiana state reading exam) at founding school since opening year.
- Empowered PLA scholars in grades K-6 to gain an average of 1.3 years of annual growth toward grade-level proficiency on the 2017-18 math STAR end-of-year assessment.

After three years of partnering with PLA, we expect our schools to outperform their host district peers. After five years of partnering with PLA, we expect our scholars to outperform the state average on the state test. Currently, nine out of our 10 partners (results are not yet available for our new SY18-19 partners) are outperforming their host district. Our oldest school is five years old, and scholars at that school outperformed the state average on both the ELA and math portions of the state test.

PLA is also unique both in its track record and that it is led by people of color. The founder and most of its board, leadership team and headquarters staff are representative of the community of children and families that we serve. PLA has also been successful in recruiting high percentages of teachers of color, both male and female. Our diverse staff and our deep knowledge of our communities has enhanced our ability to partner with families, and help our scholars excel:

- In 2017-2018, Black scholars at PLA exceed the district average by 29% on the ELA state assessment, and by 11% on math.
- PLA scholars who come from low-income families surpass the district by 10% in math and by 24% in ELA on the state test.
- In 2017-2018, Latino scholars at PLA schools exceed the district average by 28% on the Math state assessments, and by 33% in ELA.
- Scholars who are English Language Learners at PLA schools perform 21% higher than the district average, and 8% higher than the state average.

In sum, we have extensive qualifications, experience and a track record of success with managing school improvement and turnaround efforts aligned with student achievement outcomes.

b. Self-assess the evidence base for the interventions your organization provides using the following Evidence-Based Intervention (EBI) tiers. Which EBI tier best describes your work, and why?

We believe that PLA has Tier 3 evidence. As shared previously, PLA has been blessed to transform multiple failing schools into a loving, and academically rigorous one that children deserve. Additionally, scholars in our scholars had made strong gains on both nationally-normed formative and summative assessments. Below are some additional academic results that our scholars have achieved:

- Only 20% of Indiana schools maintained an A grade from 16-17 to 2017-18. Two PLA schools, George H Fisher 93 and Francis Scott Key 103, maintained their A grade for the last two years
- In its first year of state accountability grading, James and Rosemary Phalen Leadership Academy became one of the only 29% percent of schools to get an A grade in 2017-2018.
- In its first year of state accountability grading, James and Rosemary Phalen Leadership outperformed 95% of Indiana schools in state measured growth for 2017-2018.
- In 2017-18, George H Fisher school outperformed 89% of Indiana schools in state measured growth.
- In 2017-18, PLA grew more than 93% of Indiana schools as measured by the state.
- Only 23% of Indiana schools increased their state grade from 2016-2017, only 7% of all schools went from a B to an A grade. George and Veronica Phalen Leadership Academy went from good to great – moving from a B in 2016-2017 to an A in 2017-2018.

Thank you for your consideration of our continuation application.