

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## 1(a) Mission, Academic Philosophy, and Values

### MISSION

The mission of FirstLine Schools is to create and inspire great open admissions public schools in New Orleans.

Aligned with this general organizational mission, the mission of FirstLine College Prep (FLCP) is to prepare the youth of New Orleans to function successfully in our society by attaining the highest levels of academic achievement, personal accountability, civic responsibility, environmental awareness and tolerance for people from all walks of life. Our ultimate goal is to prepare our students to attend and successfully graduate from college.

### ACADEMIC PHILOSOPHY AND VALUES

FLCP will be founded on the belief that all of our students are capable of high achievement and self-discipline. We also believe in the potential of all of our students to attend college. Additionally, we believe that community service, a strong work ethic, personal discipline, good manners, and environmental awareness are important values that contribute to the life-long success and responsible citizenship.

Given these beliefs, FLCP will be committed to academic excellence, discipline and respect with an expectation that all students will go to college. FLCP students will learn in a highly disciplined and socially conscious environment. Students will be required to wear uniforms, work hard and complete eighty hours of community service to graduate.

FLCP will offer a rigorous, college-prep curriculum that centers on reading, writing, math, science and community services. Advancement to the next grade level will be contingent upon successfully passing all classes - including physical education, exhibiting proper conduct and completing the community service requirement. Students must also be passing all of their classes to be eligible to participate in extracurricular activities.

FLCP will offer summer school with a special effort to place enrolling students in Summer Enrichment programs at colleges and universities across the country. Students will have the opportunity to attend universities, colleges and competitive prep schools all over America.

## 1(b) Overview of School Structure, Leadership Team and Governance

### SCHOOL STRUCTURE and LEADERSHIP TEAM

FLCP will be organized under a school Principal, with a Vice-principal and Dean of Students on the leadership team. There will be one School Operations Manager supervising support staff and one Special Education Coordinator who will supervise the special education teachers.

The Principal will report directly to the CEO of FirstLine Schools, who reports directly to the FirstLine Schools Board of Directors. The Principal will receive educational and operational support from the FirstLine Schools network as needed.

### GOVERNANCE

FLCP will be governed by the FirstLine Board of Directors and will be developed in partnership with the leadership team of the Noble Street Charter School in Chicago. This type of governing structure best serves our principal, teachers, and the students by allowing staff to address the needs of the students at the school level with strategic direction supplied by the board. Our goal of preparing students for college, careers, and citizenship is advanced by the governing structure by giving maximum day-to-day power to the educational staff which allows them to develop strategies to prepare students to achieve these goals. In addition to strategic and policy guidance, the FirstLine Board will ensure accountability for the results of the educational staff. The FLS board currently oversees the existing Arthur Ashe Charter School and S.J. Green Charter School, and prior to that oversaw New Orleans Charter Middle School, the first charter school in New Orleans, and the highest performing open admissions middle school in the city pre-Katrina..

**1(c) A description of the school’s short- and long-term goals (academic and operational)**

See the charts below:

**Primary Goals**

Category	Grade(s)	FLCP Goals '11-'12	FLCP Goals '12-'13	FLCP Goals '13-'14	FLCP Goals '15-'16	FLCP Goals '16-'17
<b>Attendance</b>	All	97%	97%	97%	97%	97%
<b>ACT average</b>	11	N/A	N/A	20	21	22
<b>PLAN Average</b>	10	N/A	18.5	19	20	20.5
<b>EXPLORE Average</b>	9	17	17.5	18	18.5	19
<b>LA State Proficiency (% meeting goals)</b>	11	N/A	N/A	80%	85%	90%
<b>% Students applying to college</b>	12	N/A	N/A	N/A	100%	100%
<b>% Students still attending college</b>	Post-secondary	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	100%
<b>% Students completing 80 Hrs Community Service</b>	12	N/A	N/A	N/A	100%	100%

<b>Additional Goals</b>					
	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>
<b>Performance on State Tests</b>					
% Students Passing ELA GEE in Grade 10	n/a	95%	97%	97%	97%
% Students Passing Math GEE in Grade 10	n/a	95%	97%	97%	97%
% Students Passing Sci. GEE in Grade 11	n/a	n/a	95%	97%	97%
% Students Passing SS GEE in Grade 11	n/a	n/a	95%	97%	97%
<b>Matriculation:</b> student admission and attendance at 4 year college/universities	n/a	n/a	n/a	>90%	>90%
<b>Graduation</b> % of students starting as freshmen who graduate in four years	n/a	n/a	n/a	>90%	>90%
<b>Teacher Retention</b> Voluntary annual attrition rate of teachers employed on October 1 and remain employed on Oct 1 of the subsequent year will be less than	>20%	>15%	>15%	>15%	>15%
<b>Student Retention:</b> Percentage of students enrolled on October 1 and remain enrolled on Oct 1 of the subsequent year	>85%	>88%	>90%	>90%	>90%
<b>Client Satisfaction</b> Students, teachers, and families will rate our school an A or B on the End Of Year Satisfaction Survey	>80%	>85%	>90%	>90%	>90%
<b>Operational Measures</b>					
<b>Financial Management</b>					
Successful Audit in Each Year of Operation					
All Financial Reports Submitted in Timely Manner					
<b>Operational &amp; Administrative Support:</b> Teachers, School Leaders, and Parents who rate operational and administrative services an A or B on the end of year survey	>80%	>85%	>90%	>90%	>90%

#### 1(d) Research that Supports School Model

FirstLine will be working in partnership with Noble Street Charter High School based in Chicago. Noble Street has been in existence since 1999 and is considered to be one of the most successful non-selective secondary schools in the nation. Noble Street has attained impressive achievements in all important academic measures: test scores, dropout rates, and attendance rates. The Noble Street leadership team will have nine campuses in operation by 2009 and has extensive experience in replicating its success. Noble Street's campuses currently rank at the very top of all non-selective high schools in Chicago and rank as high as tenth of all 110+ selective and non-selective high schools in Chicago. Moreover, it has a success rate of placing

over 85% of its students in post-secondary education. This is almost twice the reported average of CPS high schools (~45%). The school leadership team will include educators experienced in the Noble Street model.

FirstLine Schools and Noble Street share the same proven educational drivers of success in open admissions urban schools that will underline the FLCP:

#### **Teaching and Learning**

- Skillful instruction based on a shared vision of effective teaching
- Aligned curriculum with clear learning objectives for each unit
- Systematic use of formative assessment data
- Layers of learning interventions
- Rigorous and engaging curriculum
- Literacy and numeracy as priorities

#### **School Culture**

- High expectations for achievement and behavior
- Calm orderly culture where teaching, learning, and healthy relationships can thrive
- Aspirational identity and motivational environment
- Partnership with parents
- Time matters

These *FirstLine Schools Educational Principles* are drawn from the practices of highly effective open admissions urban schools serving low-income student populations in the United States and the United Kingdom. Three sources of evidence support the common thread of these principles as key levers in highly effective urban schools: the *Urban Excellence Framework*<sup>1</sup> developed by New Leaders for New Schools; the aligned instructional approach used initially by the Brazosport, Texas schools and now widely copied across the country<sup>2</sup>; and the effective schools research of Ron Edmonds, Larry Lezotte<sup>3</sup>, and others.

Finally, although the right educational principles and inspired, visionary leadership are necessary enablers of a successful school, there are other essential success drivers that have been identified which will serve as levers for the effective transfer and implementation of the Noble Street model at FLCP. These drivers include:

1. A small intimate learning environment
2. Selection and retention of exemplary teachers
3. A transparent and risk-free collegial teaching environment
4. Information technology that facilitates management of these drivers

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<sup>1</sup> *Key Insights of the Urban Excellence Framework, Version 2.0*, New Leaders for New Schools, May 30, 2008. [www.nlins.org/documents/NewLeadersReport-Version3.0-FINAL.pdf](http://www.nlins.org/documents/NewLeadersReport-Version3.0-FINAL.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> *Closing the Achievement Gap: No Excuses*, Pat Davenport and Gerald Anderson, American Productivity and Quality Center: Education Initiative, 2002

<sup>3</sup> “Correlates of Effective Schools: The First and Second Generation”, Larry Lezotte, Effective Schools Products, Ltd., 1991. <http://www.effectiveschools.com/main/resources/resources-44-45.html>

**1(e) Appropriateness of Model for All Students, Leading to Higher Levels of Academic Achievement for the Target Population**

According to the June 2007 report: *The State of Public Education in New Orleans - A Report Prepared by The Boston Consulting Group for The Greater New Orleans Education Foundation*, it was found that for every ten students who enrolled in the public high schools in New Orleans, fewer than six will made it to graduation, and only two enrolled in college. Moreover, one out of three students in New Orleans attended a private or parochial school - a rate three times higher than the national average. For families with no means, New Orleans Public Schools have become a racially divided school system of last resort.

Although there seems to be some improvement in these numbers, the vast majority of students and families of New Orleans – like Chicago and other large urban areas in the nation – still suffer from the scarcity of quality school choice. FirstLine Schools is determined to bring quality secondary school choice to the New Orleans community. Through its partnership with the Noble Street leadership team, FirstLine Schools seeks to address this issue by bringing a proven world-class non-selective secondary school model that has proven success with a target population similar to the public school population in New Orleans.