# APPLICATION

## FOR STATE CHARTER SCHOOL

Taino CoLAB ACADEMY

**PREPARED FOR**
**CSDE**

**PREPARED BY**
**CoLAB Education**

**Waterbury, CT**

## CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION SUMMARY

**Taino CoLAB - Waterbury**
(Proposed Charter School Name)
**Waterbury, CT**
School Location (City, Town)
**September 2027**
Proposed Opening (Month, Year)

**Contact Person:** Dr. Adrian Manuel, Chair, Board of Trustees
**Organization: CoLAB Education**
**Mailing Address: 100 Crown Street 2nd Floor**
**City/St/ZIP: New Haven, CT 06510**
**Telephone:915-656-6675**
**Email:amanuel@colablearning.org**

**Returning Applicant: Yes**

| **TYPE OF SCHOOL** | |
|---|---|
| Local charter school | |
| State charter school | X |

| **FACILITY** | **YES** | **NO** |
|---|---|---|
| Do you presently have access to a facility suitable for a school? | | X |
| If yes, when will you be able to take occupancy? | Date: | |

| **PROJECTED STUDENT ENROLLMENT** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **PK** | **K** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** | **8** | **9** | **10** | **11** | **12** | **Total** |
| **Year 1** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 0 | **100** |
| **Year 2** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 100 | 100 | 0 | 0 | **200** |
| **Year 3** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0 | **300** |
| **Year 4** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | **400** |
| **Year 5** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | **400** |

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## STATEMENT OF ASSURANCES

| | |
|---|---|
| **Project Title:** | **TAINO COLAB - WATERBURY** |
| **Applicant:** | Dr. Adrian Manuel |

The Applicant hereby assures the Connecticut State Department of Education that:

A. The applicant has the necessary legal authority to apply for and receive the proposed grant.
B. The filing of this application has been authorized by the applicant's governing body, and the undersigned official has been duly authorized to file this application for and on behalf of said applicant, and otherwise to act as the authorized representative of the applicant in connection with this application.
C. The activities and services for which assistance is sought under this grant will be administered by or under the supervision and control of the applicant.
D. The project will be operated in compliance with all applicable state and federal laws and in compliance with regulations and other policies and administrative directives of the State Board of Education and the Connecticut State Department of Education.
E. Grant funds shall not be used to supplant funds normally budgeted by the agency.
F. Fiscal control and accounting procedures will be used to ensure proper disbursement of all funds awarded.
G. The applicant will submit a final project report (within 60 days of project completion) and such other reports, as specified, to the Connecticut State Department of Education, including information related to the project records and access thereto as the Connecticut State Department of Education may find necessary.
H. The Connecticut State Department of Education reserves the exclusive right to use and grant the right to use and/or publish any part or parts of any summary, abstract, reports, publications, records, and materials resulting from this project and this grant.
I. If the project achieves the specified objectives, every reasonable effort will be made to continue the project and/or implement the results after the termination of state/federal funding.
J. The applicant will protect and save harmless the State Board of Education from financial loss and expense, including legal fees and costs, if any, arising out of any breach of the duties, in whole or in part, described in the application for the grant.
K. At the conclusion of each grant period, the applicant will provide for an independent audit report acceptable to the grantor in accordance with Sections 7-394a and 7-396a of the C.G.S., and the applicant shall return to the Connecticut State Department of Education any moneys not expended in accordance with the approved program/operation budget as determined by the audit.
L. Nondiscrimination
    1) For purposes of this Section, the following terms are defined as follows:
        a. "Commission" means the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities;
        b. "Contract" and "contract" mean this grant;
        c. "Contractor" and "contractor" means the applicant and any successors or assigns;
        d. "Gender identity or expression" means a person's gender-related identity, appearance or behavior, whether or not that gender-related identity, appearance or behavior is

different from that traditionally associated with the person's physiology or assigned sex at birth, which gender-related identity can be shown by providing evidence including but not limited to, medical history, care or treatment of the gender-related identity, consistent and uniform assertion of the gender-related identity or any other evidence that the gender-related identity is sincerely held, part of the person's core identity or not being asserted for an improper purpose;

e. "good faith" means the degree of diligence which a reasonable person would exercise in the performance of legal duties and obligations;

f. "good faith efforts" shall include, but not be limited to, those reasonable initial efforts necessary to comply with statutory or regulatory requirements and additional or substituted efforts when it is determined that such initial efforts will not be sufficient to comply with such requirements;

g. "marital status" means being single, married as recognized by the State of Connecticut, widowed, separated or divorced;

h. "mental disability" means one or more mental disorders, as defined in the most recent edition of the American Psychiatric Association's "Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders", or a record of or regarding a person as having one or more such disorders;

i. "minority business enterprise" means any small contractor or supplier of materials fifty-one percent or more of the capital stock, if any, or assets of which is owned by a person or persons: (1) who are active in the daily affairs of the enterprise, (2) who have the power to direct the management and policies of the enterprise, and (3) who are members of a minority, as such term is defined in subsection (a) of C.G.S. §§ 32-9n; and

j. "public works contract" means any agreement between any individual, firm or corporation and the State or any political subdivision of the State other than a municipality for construction, rehabilitation, conversion, extension, demolition or repair of a public building, highway or other changes or improvements in real estate, or which is financed in whole or in part by the State, including, but not limited to, matching expenditures, grants, loans, insurance or guarantees.

2) For purposes of this Section, the terms "Contract" and "contract" do not include a contract where each contractor is (a) a political subdivision of the state, including, but not limited to, a municipality, unless the contract is a municipal public works contract or quasi-public agency project contract, (b) any other state, including but not limited to any federally recognized Indian tribal governments, as defined in C.G.S. § 1-267, (c) the federal government, (d) a foreign government, or (e) an agency of a subdivision, state or government described in the immediately preceding enumerated items (a), (b), (c), or (d).

3) Contractor will not discriminate or permit discrimination against any person or group of persons on the grounds of race, color, religious creed, age, marital status, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender identity or expression, status as a veteran, intellectual disability, mental disability or physical disability, including, but not limited to, blindness, unless it is shown by such Contractor that such disability prevents performance of the work involved, in any manner prohibited by the laws of the United States or of the State of Connecticut; and the

Contractor further agrees to take affirmative action to ensure that applicants with job-related qualifications are employed and that employees are treated when employed without regard to their race, color, religious creed, age, marital status, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender identity or expression, status as a veteran, intellectual disability, mental disability or physical disability, including, but not limited to, blindness, unless it is shown by the Contractor that such disability prevents performance of the work involved; (b) the Contractor agrees, in all solicitations or advertisements for employees placed by or on behalf of the Contractor, to state that it is an "affirmative action equal opportunity employer" in accordance with regulations adopted by the Commission; (c) the Contractor agrees to provide each labor union or representative of workers with which the Contractor has a collective bargaining Agreement or other contract or understanding and each vendor with which the Contractor has a contract or understanding, a notice to be provided by the Commission advising the labor union or workers' representative of the Contractor's commitments under this section and to post copies of the notice in conspicuous places available to employees and applicants for employment; (d) the Contractor agrees to comply with each provision of this Section and C.G.S. §§ 46a-68e and 46a-68f and with each regulation or relevant order issued by said Commission pursuant to C.G.S. §§ 46a-56, 46a-68e, 46a-68f and 46a-86; and (e) the Contractor agrees to provide the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities with such information requested by the Commission, and permit access to pertinent books, records and accounts, concerning the employment practices and procedures of the Contractor as relate to the provisions of this Section and C.G.S. § 46a-56. If the contract is a public works contract, municipal public works contract or contract for a quasi-public agency project, the Contractor agrees and warrants that he or she will make good faith efforts to employ minority business enterprises as subcontractors and suppliers of materials on such public works or quasi-public agency projects.

4) Determination of the Contractor's good faith efforts shall include, but shall not be limited to, the following factors: The Contractor's employment and subcontracting policies, patterns and practices; affirmative advertising, recruitment and training; technical assistance activities and such other reasonable activities or efforts as the Commission may prescribe that are designed to ensure the participation of minority business enterprises in public works projects.
5) The Contractor shall develop and maintain adequate documentation, in a manner prescribed by the Commission, of its good faith efforts.
6) The Contractor shall include the provisions of subsection (3) of this Section in every subcontract or purchase order entered into in order to fulfill any obligation of a contract with the State and in every subcontract entered into in order to fulfill any obligation of a municipal public works contract for a quasi-public agency project, and such provisions shall be binding on a subcontractor, vendor or manufacturer unless exempted by regulations or orders of the Commission. The Contractor shall take such action with respect to any such subcontract or purchase order as the Commission may direct as a means of enforcing such provisions including sanctions for noncompliance in accordance with C.G.S. § 46a-56, as amended; provided if such Contractor becomes involved in, or is threatened with, litigation with a subcontractor or vendor as a result of such direction by the Commission regarding the State contract, the Contractor may request the State of Connecticut to enter into any such

litigation or negotiation prior thereto to protect the interests of the State and the State may so enter.

7) The Contractor agrees to comply with the regulations referred to in this Section as they exist on the date of this Contract and as they may be adopted or amended from time to time during the term of this Contract and any amendments thereto.
8) (a) The Contractor agrees and warrants that in the performance of the Contract such Contractor will not discriminate or permit discrimination against any person or group of persons on the grounds of sexual orientation, in any manner prohibited by the laws of the United States or the State of Connecticut, and that employees are treated when employed without regard to their sexual orientation; (b) the Contractor agrees to provide each labor union or representative of workers with which such Contractor has a collective bargaining Agreement or other contract or understanding and each vendor with which such Contractor has a contract or understanding, a notice to be provided by the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities advising the labor union or workers' representative of the Contractor's commitments under this section, and to post copies of the notice in conspicuous places available to employees and applicants for employment; (c) the Contractor agrees to comply with each provision of this section and with each regulation or relevant order issued by said Commission pursuant to C.G.S. § 46a-56; and (d) the Contractor agrees to provide the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities with such information requested by the Commission, and permit access to pertinent books, records and accounts, concerning the employment practices and procedures of the Contractor which relate to the provisions of this Section and C.G.S. § 46a-56.
9) The Contractor shall include the provisions of the foregoing paragraph in every subcontract or purchase order entered into in order to fulfill any obligation of a contract with the State and such provisions shall be binding on a subcontractor, vendor or manufacturer unless exempted by regulations or orders of the Commission. The Contractor shall take such action with respect to any such subcontract or purchase order as the Commission may direct as a means of enforcing such provisions including sanctions for noncompliance in accordance with C.G.S. § 46a-56, as amended; provided, if such Contractor becomes involved in, or is threatened with, litigation with a subcontractor or vendor as a result of such direction by the Commission regarding a State contract, the Contractor may request the State of Connecticut to enter into any such litigation or negotiation prior thereto to protect the interests of the State and the State may so enter.
10) Nondiscrimination Certification. Pursuant to subsection (c) of section 4a-60 and subsection (b) of section 4a-60a of the Connecticut General Statutes, the Contractor, for itself and its authorized signatory of this Contract, affirms that it understands the obligations of this section and that it will maintain a policy for the duration of the Contract to assure that the Contract will be performed in compliance with the nondiscrimination requirements of such sections. The Contractor and its authorized signatory of this Contract demonstrate their understanding of this obligation by signing this Statement of Assurances below.

M. The grant award is subject to approval of the Connecticut State Department of Education and availability of state or federal funds.

N. The applicant agrees and warrants that Sections 4-190 to 4-197, inclusive, of the C.G.S. concerning the Personal Data Act and Sections 10-4-8 to 10-4-10, inclusive, of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies promulgated thereunder are hereby incorporated by reference.

I, the undersigned authorized official, hereby certify that these assurances shall be fully implemented.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Signature of Authorized Official** | Adrian Manuel |
| **Name:** | Dr. Adrian Manuel |
| **Title** | Chair, Board of Trustees |
| **Date:** | 11/5/24 |

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Reimagining Education in Waterbury

Over the past two years, significant global changes have influenced our approach to education in the proposed Taino CoLAB Charter School. First, the rise of public access to large language models and advancements in AI technology have reshaped the ways we learn and work, making it essential to equip our students with the skills to thrive in this new technological landscape. Second, CoLAB's continued engagement with the Waterbury community—home to a diverse, high-need student population—has underscored the importance of a school model that reflects local culture, values, and aspirations, especially in a city where 61.6% of students are Hispanic and 21.2% are Black or African American.

This application builds on our initial submission in 2022, during which we gained valuable insights and feedback from the community and stakeholders. Since that time, we have worked to expand our partnerships, engage even more deeply with Waterbury's families, and strengthen our model to reflect the evolving needs and aspirations of the community. This revised proposal highlights an instructional model that blends future-focused learning with community engagement rooted in the unique needs and strengths of Waterbury's students.

### Seizing a Unique Opportunity

Waterbury's current educational landscape reveals an opportunity for transformative change. With a graduation rate below the state average and a substantial percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price meals, there is a clear need for educational models that not only improve academic outcomes but also provide viable pathways to post-secondary success. CoLAB's model addresses this challenge by combining a rigorous academic curriculum with innovative pathways in Media and Communication Arts, Business and Entrepreneurship, AI, Machine Learning, and Robotics, Biotech and Health Sciences, and Social Impact and Global Changes.

This application proposes opening the Taino CoLAB High School in Waterbury in 2027, allowing sufficient time to ensure alignment with key partners and to find an appropriate facility that fully supports our model. By offering Waterbury students access to these forward-thinking fields, CoLAB ensures that they are equipped with future-ready skills and leadership abilities, empowering them to thrive in an ever-evolving world. Our approach provides a distinctive alternative within Waterbury's high school options, meeting the needs of today's students and tomorrow's workforce.

### The CoLAB Advantage

In a world where adaptability, innovation, and specialized skills are paramount, traditional education models often fall short in preparing students for the demands of the modern workforce. Taino CoLAB Waterbury (CoLAB) seeks to overcome these limitations by cultivating a learning environment that not only embraces the dynamic landscape of industry but

also empowers students to forge their unique paths towards success. This groundbreaking educational initiative is poised to revolutionize the way we think about electives and pathway coursework and will ignite the potential within every student, transforming them into critical thinkers, social advocates, and digital leaders. Inspired by the World Economic Forum's Schools of the Future Report[1], our mission is to create an educational environment for grades 9-12 that not only prepares students for college and careers but also empowers them to become impactful community leaders.

At the core of CoLAB's educational model is our pioneering 4D Quantum Learning Matrix. This innovative framework emphasizes:

- **Inquiry:** Encouraging students to ask questions and seek knowledge through critical thinking and investigation.
- **Design Thinking:** Empowering students to solve real-world problems through a structured approach to creativity and innovation.
- **Creative Arts:** Integrating artistic expression with academic learning to foster cognitive flexibility and emotional intelligence.
- **Service Learning:** Extending education beyond the classroom to make meaningful societal contributions.

This holistic approach - infused with generative AI, Literacy, and Community connections in partnership with LEAD - not only fosters intellectual curiosity and problem-solving but also ensures that students can apply their learning in real-world contexts, making education both engaging and relevant.

**A Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion**

CoLAB is dedicated to serving a diverse student body, including those with a history of low academic achievement, those eligible for free/reduced lunch, and English language learners. Our mission aligns seamlessly with Connecticut's priorities of reducing educational disparities and fostering skills for the future. We believe in the potential of every student and are committed to providing the support needed to unlock that potential. In addition, our commitment to developing a community school model is to unlock the potential and impact of similar organizations in the Waterbury community who seek to serve the needs of our prospective students and families.

**Supporting Every Learner**

Inclusivity is at the heart of CoLAB's philosophy. We are fully committed to meeting all legal requirements for Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and Section 504 plans. By hiring certified special education teachers, paraprofessionals, and a dedicated school nurse, we ensure that every student receives the individualized support they need to succeed.

**Strategic and Sustainable Growth**

CoLAB's growth plan is thoughtfully phased to ensure a smooth and effective rollout. We will start with a grade 9 cohort of 100 students, adding one grade level each year until we reach a

[1] https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Schools_of_the_Future_Report_2019.pdf

full enrollment of 400 students across grades 9-12. This strategic growth allows us to maintain our high standards of education and individualized support.

**Investing in Exceptional Educators**

Our commitment to excellence extends to our staff who will be responsible for leading and building CoLAB's agile ecosystem. CoLAB prioritizes the recruitment and retention of highly-qualified educators prepared to not only engage students differently, but who are also ready to grow and share new skills. We will hire certified special educators and paraprofessionals to support students with IEPs and Section 504 plans. Additionally, counselors and health professionals will be available to provide comprehensive support to all students, ensuring their well-being and academic success.

**A Call to Action**

CoLAB is more than just a school; it's a movement towards a brighter future for Waterbury's youth. We are dedicated to providing an innovative, high-quality educational experience that prepares students for success in college, careers, and beyond. We urge the Connecticut State Department of Education to approve our charter application, allowing us to bring this transformative vision to life and contribute to a brighter educational landscape for Connecticut. Join us in creating a legacy of excellence and empowerment for the next generation.

## WAIVER REQUEST FORM 1

Taino CoLAB - Waterbury
100 Crown Street 2nd Floor
New Haven, CT 06510
914-656-6675
amanuel@colablearning.org

**1. Section of the general statutes or regulations you seek to have waived:**
**Sec. 10-66bb. Application process and requirements. Initial certificate of approval for charter. Charter renewal. Probation. Revocation. Enrollment lottery; exceptions**

**2. Describe why you feel that this waiver is necessary to achieve your mission:**

The mission of Taino CoLAB - Waterbury (CoLAB) is to unlock the ability for all students to be critical thinkers, social advocates, and digital leaders. The education they receive at CoLAB will enable them to serve as agents of positive change within their own lives, the industries in which they will work, and our global community.

It is our desire to extend this opportunity to as many students from the state's priority background in Waterbury as possible. A grade level cohort of 100 students and a total student population of 400 students will allow us to do so, while upholding our commitment to operating a small and personalized learning environment.

CoLAB's rationale for this waiver is consistent with allowability under the law as its intent is to extend opportunities for:

- Students with a history of low academic performance
- Students who receive free or reduced priced lunches
- Students who are English Language Learners
- Students who reside in a priority school district
- Students who reside in a district where seventy-five percent or more of the enrolled students are ethnic minorities

Our model and mission are also consistent with CT's priorities of reducing economic isolation for students as a result of their educational experience.

**3. Describe the desired outcome/rationale (how you expect this waiver to assist in achieving educational learning objectives described in your plan):**

This waiver will allow our school to serve more students who have been identified as high-need by the state. By enrolling more students, we will also increase the annual budget of our school which will allow for greater investments in technology, facilities, high-quality teachers and other resources which support students at CoLAB. In addition, within our model exists three distinct pathways which each need a critical mass of students within them to be meaningful. We also want to expose our students to a variety of peers such that they learn to collaborate with a diversity of individuals.

**4. Date of Application:** 11/5/24

## WAIVER REQUEST FORM 2

Taino CoLAB - Waterbury
100 Crown Street 2nd Floor
City/St/ZIP: New Haven, CT 06510
914-656-6675
amanuel@colablearning.org

**1. Section of the general statutes or regulations you seek to have waived:**
**Sec. 10-145b. Teaching certificates & Sec. 10-145f. Testing for prospective teachers**

**2. Describe why you feel that this waiver is necessary to achieve your mission:**
This waiver is necessary to achieve our mission for two reasons:

1. There is currently a shortage of certified educators in CT. CSDE identified several areas where there are currently shortages in teacher candidates.[2] Of these, several are applicable to our model. They include:

| | |
|---|---|
| • TESOL (PreK-12) | • School Library Media Specialist (PreK-12) |
| • Mathematics (4-12) | • Technology Education (PreK-12) |
| • Special Education (PreK-12) | • World Languages (7-12) |
| • Science (4-12) | |

2. The CoLAB model requires support from professionals who are experts in the fields of Computer Science, BioTechnology and Media Arts & Design. We will regularly mobilize these experts to facilitate industry-aligned learning experiences for students in their pathway elective coursework.

**3. Describe the desired outcome/rationale (how you expect this waiver to assist in achieving educational learning objectives described in your plan):**
Flexibility in the qualifications which CoLAB requires of its educators will be essential to ensuring that all students within our school are served by a high-quality educator. We wish to recruit teachers from a national pool due to state shortages in educators who are qualified per the state's criteria. We also recognize that experts in our pathway content areas may be highly qualified in their fields but do not have the academic credentials or prior classroom experience that would allow them to easily gain CT educator certificates. Moreover, we know that while while 95.6% of students in CT's high poverty districts are from minority backgrounds, only 15.7% of educators in these districts are non-white.[3] Leaving flexibility within the required backgrounds of our educators will allow CoLAB greater latitude in the valuing of educator diversity as an asset to our school community.

**4. Date of Application:** 11/5/24

[2] https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Talent_Office/Talent-Office-home-page/Shortage-Areas

[3] The State of The Connecticut Teacher Workforce Report by the Rockefeller Institute for Government (2019).https://edsight.ct.gov/relatedreports/State%20of%20the%20Connecticut%20Teacher%20Workforce%20-%20Teacher%20Table%20Report.pdf

# I. SCHOOL VISION AND DESIGN

## 1. Mission, Purpose, and Vision Specialized Focus

### a. Describes the mission of the proposed school.

The mission of Taino CoLAB Waterbury (CoLAB) is to unlock the ability for all students to be critical thinkers, social advocates, and digital leaders. The education they receive at CoLAB will enable them to serve as agents of positive change within their own lives, the industries in which they will work, and our local and global community.

### b. Defines the core purpose and key values of the school, specific to the school model, grade configuration and the total number of students it plans to enroll and serve.

In a rapidly changing world, the need for innovative, future-ready education has never been greater. Taino CoLAB Waterbury—Community Leadership, Advocacy, and Building (CoLAB)—presents a groundbreaking model of high school education designed to equip students with the skills and mindset needed to thrive as equity-minded trailblazers. Our vision is to create a new standard in secondary education, preparing students not only for academic and career success but also for impactful community leadership.

CoLAB's vision is a new model of high school that will prepare its graduates to develop into the future-ready, equity-minded trailblazers that our society needs most. This vision is brought to life through the integration of the 4D Quantum Learning Matrix, which incorporates Inquiry, Design Thinking, Creative Arts, and Service Learning into every aspect of our curriculum. Underpinned by Literacy and Generative AI, CoLAB will provide students with foundational learning experiences to ensure their success through the integration of inquiry, as well as problem-based, project-based, and experiential learning theories.

CoLAB defines student success as academic achievement, career readiness, and community leadership. Our rigorous curriculum cultivates critical thinking, problem-solving, and future-ready skills. To personalize learning and ignite student passion, CoLAB offers a range of specialized pathways, explored in detail later, that allow students to delve deeper into specific fields. CoLAB Pathways include:

- Media and Communication Arts
- Business and Entrepreneurship
- AI, Machine Learning, and Robotics
- Biotech and Health Sciences
- Social Impact and Global Changes

Amid the advancements of education, CoLAB is pioneering an innovative educational framework known as the 4D Quantum Learning Matrix. By embedding Taino cultural values of community, environmental stewardship, and health and well being into our curriculum, this model is designed to equip high school students with the skills and mindsets necessary to thrive in a complex, interconnected world. Inspired by quantum theory and grounded in contemporary pedagogical research, the CoLAB 4D Quantum Learning Matrix integrates four foundational

instructional pillars: Inquiry, Design Thinking, Creative Arts, and Service Learning supported by Five Elements: Integrated Literacy Practices, Dynamic Pathways for College and Career Readiness, AI-Augmented Teaching, Learning, and Leadership, Agile Ecosystem, Community Investment

At the heart of this framework is the belief in fostering *Generative Practices* and creating *Agile Co-Constructionists*. Generative Practices highlight the continuous flow and evolution of ideas, promoting a growth mindset and entrepreneurial thinking. Agile Co-Constructionists emphasize the active, collaborative construction of knowledge, where students and teachers become creators, makers, and co-thinkers who can flexibly apply knowledge both individually and collectively. Combined, these concepts provide a modern, dynamic approach to education, preparing students to adapt and innovate in an ever-changing world.

**The 4D Quantum Learning Matrix**

1. **Inquiry**

Inquiry nurtures the natural drive of curiosity by encouraging students to ask questions, explore ideas, and seek knowledge through critical thinking and investigation. By engaging in Shared Inquiry and Socratic teaching methods, CoLAB students engage in a collaborative search for understanding which develops their ability to think critically and articulate their thoughts clearly. Using an inquiry lens, we employ Socratic seminars, research projects, and multimedia exploration to provide students with opportunities to develop a deep understanding of diverse perspectives. Our approach cultivates intellectual rigor, resilience, empathy, and a lifelong love of learning. This foundation is built through the 4D Quantum Learning Matrix Framework, a detailed curriculum framework further explained in Appendix A4.

2. **Design Thinking**

Design Thinking empowers students to translate curiosity into actionable solutions. By embracing this systematic approach to problem-solving, students learn to identify challenges, brainstorm innovative ideas, and quickly prototype practical solutions. Inspired by Google's design sprint methodology, CoLAB's design thinking curriculum engages students in real-world projects that address local community issues, fostering creativity, collaboration, and a growth mindset.

3. **Creative Arts**

The Creative Arts pillar at CoLAB is about more than just fostering artistic talent; it’s a transdisciplinary approach that harnesses the power of creativity and artistic expression to prepare students for future success. Whether through media arts, performance arts, visual arts, or unique forms of creative expression, by integrating AI and other innovative technologies, CoLAB students can explore new realms of creativity and innovation. This approach promotes cognitive flexibility, emotional intelligence, and cultural awareness, ensuring that creativity is not an isolated endeavor but a vital component of holistic education.

4. **Service Learning**

Service Learning extends education beyond the classroom to make a meaningful impact on society. By participating in service projects, students apply their skills and knowledge to address real-world problems, from environmental sustainability to social justice. The Taino values of community, environmental stewardship and health/well being form the curricular lanes of student exploration for CoLAB's community based projects. This hands-on approach reinforces academic concepts and fosters leadership, compassion, and a commitment to making a positive difference in the world.

**The Five Core Elements (5E) of the 4D Quantum Learning Matrix**

1. **Integrated Literacy Practices**
   In the context of Education 4.0, literacy extends beyond traditional reading and writing to include digital, media, and information literacy. This expanded notion of literacy is fundamental for developing informed, critical, and engaged individuals. It aligns with the Quantum Matrix's pillar of Inquiry, promoting deep understanding and critical engagement with various forms of information.
2. **Dynamic Pathways for College and Career Readiness**
   The 4D Quantum Matrix recognizes the necessity of preparing students for diverse future pathways, whether that involves higher education or immediate entry into the workforce. The belief is grounded in providing robust pathways that cater to both college readiness and career preparedness, particularly in technology and other high-demand fields.
3. **AI-Augmented Teaching, Learning, and Leadership**
   CoLAB acknowledges the transformative impact of AI on education. Preparing students to adapt and navigate AI tools is critical. The belief in integrating AI into the educational framework ensures students understand AI's role in society and become informed users and creators in an AI-integrated world. See Appendix H5 for our AI acceptable use policies.
4. **Agile Ecosystem**
   CoLAB's philosophy embraces the Agile Ecosystem, recognizing the necessity for agility in a rapidly changing world. This belief aligns with the Quantum Matrix's pillars of Design Thinking and Creative Arts, emphasizing continuous learning, adaptability, and innovative problem-solving.
5. **Community Investment**
   Community Investment is crucial for fostering a strong, supportive, and interconnected educational environment. This component aligns with the Quantum Matrix's pillar of Service Learning, emphasizing the importance of civic responsibility and community engagement.

The term "Quantum Matrix" embodies our belief in each student's potential and our commitment to fostering an environment that promotes continuous self-realization and growth. Inspired by quantum theory, this framework underscores the dynamic, interconnected nature of learning,

where students are encouraged to explore, innovate, and evolve. At CoLAB, the Quantum Matrix represents a holistic approach to education, empowering students to discover and actualize their unique talents and aspirations through a supportive, experiential learning environment.

**School Model, Grades, and Enrollment**

CoLAB will serve students in grades 9-12, starting with grade 9 and adding one grade each year until the school reaches its full four-grade scale. Our educational model is enriched by the 4D Quantum Learning Matrix, ensuring that students engage deeply with Inquiry, Design Thinking, Creative Arts, and Service Learning. Each grade will consist of a cohort of 100 students, leading to a total enrollment of 400 students in grades 9-12. There are several reasons why serving students in grades 9-12 aligns with the CoLAB model and is appropriate for the Waterbury community, explained below:

- **Need for Additional High School Choice**: The Waterbury community has expressed a need for more high school options. With a diverse student population, 61.6% of whom are Hispanic and 21.2% Black or African American, CoLAB's unique model offers an important addition to existing high school choices. While Waterbury has established high schools, CoLAB provides a distinctive focus on technological applications and career pathways, preparing students for post-secondary options, including college, technical certifications, and direct work placements in industries critical to the future workforce.
- **Improved Outcomes at the Secondary Level**: Waterbury's high school graduation rate stands at 83%, below the statewide average of 88.9%, with even lower rates among high-need students. For example, only 66.8% of students with disabilities graduate within four years, highlighting the need for innovative and inclusive high school models. Additionally, with 77.1% of students eligible for free or reduced-price meals, CoLAB's focus on preparing students for meaningful post-secondary opportunities through a dynamic and supportive learning environment aligns well with Waterbury's student needs and the district's commitment to closing achievement gaps.

CoLAB will serve secondary students by responding to the immediacy of their post-secondary choices and leveraging their ability to demonstrate independence, inquiry, and self-directed learning. Secondary students are best prepared to identify their talents and align them with competency development in both traditional academic and career-focused coursework. The school model emphasizes rigorous academics, future-ready skill development, and a focus on pathways in Media and Communication Arts, Business and Entrepreneurship, AI, Machine Learning, and Robotics, Biotech and Health Sciences, and Social Impact and Global Changes. This model is designed to meet the specific needs of the Waterbury community and provide students with the tools they need for success in their post-secondary endeavors.

**Core Purpose and Key Values**

CoLAB's core purpose is to create a transformative educational experience that prepares students to become community leaders and advocates. This is achieved through CoLAB's 4D

Quantum Learning Matrix Framework and by embedding Taino cultural values of community, respect for nature, and shared responsibility into our curriculum. The key values include a focus on health and wellness, community, and environmental stewardship. These values directly compliment our the 4D Quantum Learning Matrix Framework:

| Taino Values | 4D Quantum Learning Matrix | Description |
|---|---|---|
| **Health and Wellness** | **Creative Arts, Inquiry** | Encourages holistic well-being through creative expression, promoting emotional and mental health. |
| **Community** | **Service Learning, Inquiry** | Fosters community engagement, leadership, and collaboration to address societal issues. |
| **Environmental Stewardship** | **Design Thinking, Inquiry** | Empowers students to develop sustainable solutions for environmental challenges through innovative thinking. |

**Research and Supporting Arguments**

The CoLAB 4D Quantum Learning framework is grounded in contemporary educational research and best practices, ensuring a dynamic and innovative learning environment that prepares students for future success. The following table identifies the research that supports our ideas across the 4D Quantum Matrix and other components of our model.

| Concept/Element | Supporting Research |
|---|---|
| Inquiry | WEF's Schools of the Future Report (2019), XQ Design Principles Rubric (2022); "Inquiry-based learning: A review of the research literature" Pedaste et al. (2015) |
| Design Thinking | WEF's Defining Education 4.0 (2023), Stanford d.school research (Carroll et al., 2010; Razzouk & Shute, 2012) |
| Creative Arts | Arts education research (Deasy, 2002; Winner, Goldstein, & Vincent-Lancrin, 2013); Learning in and Through the Arts: The Question of Transfer (2000) Studies in Art Education 41(3):228-257 |
| Service Learning | Research on service learning (Billig, 2000; Eyler & Giles, 1999); "The Impact of Service-Learning on Students: A Meta-Analysis" by Celio, Durlak, & Dymnicki (2011) |
| Integrated Literacy Practices | Framework for the Future of Learning (2023), XQ Design Principles Rubric (2022) |
| Dynamic Pathways for College and | WEF's Schools of the Future Report (2019), Partnership with ASU for |

| | |
|---|---|
| Career Readiness | early college and industry credentialing; "Pathways to Prosperity: Meeting the Challenge of Preparing Young Americans for the 21st Century" by Symonds, Schwartz, & Ferguson (2011) |
| AI-Augmented Teaching, Learning and Leadership | WEF's Defining Education 4.0 (2023); "Artificial Intelligence in Education: Promises and Implications for Teaching and Learning" by Holmes et al. (2019) |
| Agile Ecosystem | Research on agile learning environments (WEF's Schools of the Future Report, 2019) |
| Community Investment | Research on community schools (XQ Design Principles Rubric, 2022); "The Role of Community Schools in Place-Based Initiatives" by Maier, Daniel, Oakes, & Lam (2017) |
| Agile Co-Constructionists | Conceptualized based on WEF's Defining Education 4.0 (2023); "Staff student partnership in assessment: enhancing assessment literacy through democratic practices," Susan J. Deeley &Catherine Bovill (2015); "Do students experience transformation through co-creating curriculum?" Tanya Lubicz-Nawrocka &Catherine Bovill (2021) |
| Generative Practices | Research on growth mindset and continuous improvement (Dweck, 2006) |

The CoLAB 4D Quantum Learning Matrix represents a visionary approach to education, preparing students to navigate and shape a rapidly changing world. By integrating Inquiry, Design Thinking, Creative Arts, and Service Learning, with the constant support of AI, CoLAB creates a dynamic learning environment that nurtures intellectual growth, creativity, and social responsibility. This compelling model fosters the skills and mindsets needed for success in the twenty-first century and beyond.

**c. Explains how the school mission is consistent throughout the application and illustrates high academic standards for student success.**

The mission of CoLAB is consistent throughout the application, reflecting high academic standards aimed at fostering student success. CoLAB will serve grades 9-12, starting with grade 9 and adding one grade each year until the school reaches a total enrollment of 400 students. The school addresses the Waterbury community's need for more high school options, offering a unique focus on technological applications and post-secondary pathways.

CoLAB aims to improve secondary-level outcomes, targeting high-need students whose graduation rates lag behind the state average. By focusing on rigorous academics and future-ready skills in areas like Media and Communication Arts; Business and Entrepreneurship; AI, Machine Learning, and Robotics; Biotech and Health Sciences; and Social Impact and Global Changes, CoLAB provides students with the necessary tools for post-secondary success.

The core purpose of CoLAB is to create transformative educational experiences, preparing students to be community leaders and advocates. This mission is embedded in the school's key values: Innovation in Education, Empowerment through Leadership, and

Community Engagement. These values are operationalized through an inquiry-based, problem-based, and experiential learning approach.

Supporting research, such as the WEF's Schools of the Future Report and the XQ Design Principles Rubric[4], underpins CoLAB's 4D Quantum Learning Matrix framework. This framework integrates inquiry, design thinking, creative arts, and service learning, augmented by AI, to create a dynamic learning environment. This comprehensive approach ensures that CoLAB's mission and high academic standards are consistently reflected throughout the application, illustrating a clear pathway to student success.

**d. Presents a clear vision of the school. Identifies a specialized focus and ways in which the school will positively impact its stakeholders and community.**

Imagine a high school where students are not only academically accomplished but also equipped to drive positive change in their communities. Taino CoLAB Waterbury (CoLAB) envisions this reality, preparing graduates to be influential leaders and agile navigators of our evolving global economic landscape. Our graduates will possess the skills and knowledge to make significant impacts on both their families and the broader Waterbury community.

**Portrait of a CoLAB Graduate**

This table describes the accomplishments and skills expected of students who complete our high school program.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Global Citizenship Skills**<br>● Awareness of global and social issues<br>● Participation in global service projects<br>● Diversity and Inclusion skills<br>● Proficient in multiple languages | **Interpersonal Skills**<br>● Leadership skills<br>● Emotional Intelligence<br>● Social Intelligence<br>● Empathy |
| **Innovation & Creativity Skills**<br>● Collaborative Problem Solving<br>● Design Sprint Skills<br>● Fluency with AI Tools<br>● Design thinking skills<br>● Media Production Skills | **Advocacy**<br>● Research skills<br>● Communication skills (oral, written, media<br>● production)<br>● Evidence based writing and speaking<br>● Awareness of social impact<br>● Social entrepreneurship |
| **Digitally Literacy**<br>● Achieved all minimum digital literacy badges over 4 years<br><br>**Sampling of potential badges for digital literacy:**<br>● Word Processing, Spreadsheets and Presentations<br>● Data Analysis<br>● Web 3.0 skills<br>● Digital ethics | **Achievement**<br>● College Ready<br>○ NWEA 11th grade reading and math scores at or above proficient<br>○ ACT Score at or above 21<br>○ SAT scores at or above 500 (Math and ERW)<br>○ GPA at or above 3.5<br>○ Earned 8 or more college credits<br>● Career Ready<br>○ Digital Literacy Badges<br>○ Financial Literacy Badge |

[4]https://xqsuperschool.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/XQ-Design-Principles-in-Practice-Rubric_06NG.pdf

| | |
|---|---|
| • Cyber security | ○ Pathway Badges (2 or more)<br>○ Pass simulated job interview<br>○ Pathway based portfolio at or above mastery<br>○ Passed all pathway courses by 85% or higher |
| **Socio/Cultural Competence**<br>• Deep understanding and appreciation of local and regional socio/cultural history<br>• Exploration and connection to personal socio/cultural history<br>• Active participation and service learning in socio/cultural local and regional civic and cultural activities<br>• Engagement, advocacy and research into the core Taino values of Community, Health & Wellness, and Environment | |

While our Portrait of a CoLAB Graduate will evolve based on school college and career readiness standards, finalization of external partners and providers, input from key stakeholders, and external resources, the key design elements, values, and commitments that underpin these tables are not subject to change.

**Clear Vision and Specialized Focus**

CoLAB's core purpose is to cultivate future-ready, equity-minded leaders who are prepared to make a tangible difference in their communities. Our specialized focus on community leadership and economic agility ensures that students are not only prepared for academic and career success but also equipped to address and solve real-world challenges. This approach distinguishes CoLAB as a school that prioritizes both individual student achievement and broader societal impact.

**Community and Stakeholder Impact**

CoLAB's rigorous academic program is enhanced by our strong commitment to community engagement and stakeholder collaboration. Our goal is to benefit the larger community and external stakeholders by fostering a culture of leadership and service among our students. As a community school, we will work closely with local partners, such as LEAD and various service providers, to ensure comprehensive wrap-around services for our students and families year-round.

We have established a robust network of partnerships within Waterbury, all dedicated to addressing youth disengagement, health and wellbeing, and community engagement. These collaborations aim to broaden their impact through our joint efforts. CoLAB, which stands for Community Learning, Achieving, and Building, embodies the principles of collaborative learning and collective endeavor.

**Roll-out Plan and Enrollment**

CoLAB will serve students in grades 9-12, starting with grade 9 and adding one grade each year until reaching a total enrollment of 400 students. This gradual roll-out plan allows for the careful implementation of our educational model and ensures that each cohort receives the attention and resources needed to succeed.

Through this comprehensive approach, CoLAB is dedicated to creating an educational environment that not only meets academic standards but also empowers students to be agents of change in their communities.

**e. Articulates how the school's vision aligns with the school's mission and how it will be operated once it's opened.**

The vision of Taino CoLAB Waterbury is to set a new benchmark in secondary education, preparing students to be equity-minded trailblazers poised for academic and career success, and to be impactful community leaders. This vision is achieved through the implementation of the 4D Quantum Learning Matrix, which integrates Inquiry, Design Thinking, Creative Arts, and Service Learning. Our mission to unlock the potential of all students to become critical thinkers, social advocates, and digital leaders is supported by this vision. By equipping students with the necessary skills and mindset, CoLAB aims to cultivate individuals who can drive positive change within their lives, industries, and the global community.

To realize this vision, CoLAB employs the innovative 4D Quantum Learning Matrix, which integrates Inquiry, Design Thinking, Creative Arts, and Service Learning. This comprehensive approach ensures that students not only achieve academic excellence but also develop the critical thinking and problem-solving abilities essential for leadership and advocacy. Through real-world projects and community engagement, students are encouraged to apply their learning in ways that directly benefit their local and global communities, reinforcing their roles as social advocates and digital leaders.

In essence, CoLAB's vision of preparing students to be future-ready, equity-minded trailblazers directly supports its mission. By focusing on innovative educational practices and fostering a growth mindset, CoLAB ensures that its students are not only academically prepared but also empowered to lead and advocate for positive change, aligning perfectly with the mission to cultivate critical thinkers, social advocates, and digital leaders.

**2. Educational Philosophy**

**a. Describes the founding group's core beliefs and values.**

At Taino CoLAB Waterbury (CoLAB), we envision a dynamic educational environment where collaborative learning and innovative thinking are at the forefront. Our school is designed as a "Lab school" where inquiry, problem-solving, digital literacy, critical thinking, and innovation are fostered daily among students and staff. All CoLAB students will receive a standards-aligned foundational learning experience that includes entrepreneurial skills/thinking, financial literacy, global civics, research and technical writing skills, computational thinking, and community-related social improvement projects. These experiences are structured within the 4D Quantum Learning Matrix framework to foster holistic development.

Building on this foundation, CoLAB offers industry-aligned pathways in Media and Communication Arts; Business and Entrepreneurship; AI, Machine Learning, and Robotics; Biotech and Health Sciences; and Social Impact and Global Changes. These pathways are designed to prepare students for the "Fourth Industrial Revolution," a concept introduced by the World Economic Forum to describe the future of work. This theory suggests that the future of work is people-centric. While technology will continue to evolve, leaders must emerge who have the foresight to connect emerging trends, think globally, build effective teams, and work across traditional disciplines.

We have chosen our pathways to prepare students for the future of work in Connecticut and across the globe. Each pathway has corresponding core content areas:

| Pathways | Educational Components | Standard Core Content Areas | Research Citations |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Media and Communication Arts** | Creative Arts, Integrated Literacy Practices, Service Learning | English Language Arts, Visual Arts, Digital Media | Catterall, J. S., et al. (2012); Connor, C. M., et al. (2017); Celio, C. I., et al. (2011) |
| **Business and Entrepreneurship** | Design Thinking, Inquiry-Based Learning, Agile Ecosystem | Economics, Mathematics, Social Studies | Razzouk, R., & Shute, V. J. (2012); Pedaste, M., et al. (2015); Gottfredson, C. |
| **AI, Machine Learning, and Robotics** | AI-Augmented Teaching, Learning and Leadership, Agile Co-Constructionists | Computer Science, Mathematics, Engineering | Holmes, W., et al. (2019); Palloff, R. M., & Pratt, K. (2007) |
| **Biotech and Health Sciences** | Service Learning, Inquiry-Based Learning, Integrated Literacy Practices | Biology, Chemistry, Health Education | Celio, C. I., et al. (2011); Pedaste, M., et al. (2015); Connor, C. M., et al. (2017) |
| **Social Impact and Global Changes** | Social Impact and Global Changes, Community Investment, Generative Practices | Social Studies, Environmental Science, Global Studies | Maier, A., et al. (2017); Dweck, C. S. (2006) |

Recognizing that youth have diverse interests and skills, we designed the CoLAB pathways to be flexible and diverse, unlike some certificate and training pathway programs which have stringent course sequences, locking students into narrow specialties as early as grades 8 and 9. All students will complete at least three courses in their selected pathway (at least two of those courses will be for college credit through ASU) and will apply their domain pathway to problem-solving on standards-aligned, performance-based assessments.

**Core Beliefs and Values**

CoLAB's core beliefs center on the idea that learning should be both rigorous and relevant to engage and prepare youth for life beyond high school. Our educational philosophy, partly inspired by the International Baccalaureate (IB), incorporates holistic education and transdisciplinary learning to create well-rounded, empathetic, and capable leaders. As such, CoLAB affirms that:

**Education Should Prepare Students for the Fourth Industrial Revolution**

The Fourth Industrial Revolution, coined by Klaus Schwab and the World Economic Forum, describes the future of work where technology and human ingenuity intersect. While we live in an increasingly technology-based society, human problem-solving and relationship-building remain irreplaceable. Preparing for the Fourth Industrial Revolution means developing both interpersonal and technical skills necessary to harness technology's power to bring the world closer together. This includes advanced design thinking, technical writing, teamwork, and mission-driven leadership.

**Education Is Not "One Size Fits All"**

Education should be tailored to individual students' interests and needs. CoLAB provides numerous flexible opportunities for students to take agency in their academic coursework and the application of their knowledge and skills. Students can choose from one of five pathways aligned with their interests and have multiple opportunities for choice within these pathways, rather than following a traditional career education track. CoLAB will also use data (such as NWEA, skill assessments, and interest surveys) to further personalize each student's experience. We believe in creating an algorithm for student success that is grounded in data-informed, self-selected decision-making regarding course choice, pathway, and post-secondary plans.

**Education Should Benefit Both Individuals and the Community**

We aim to develop scholars who recognize their ability to leverage their gifts to solve community challenges. We will provide many opportunities for students to discuss their interests, skills, and strengths and then work with them to intentionally map those areas onto the challenges facing Waterbury, the State of Connecticut, and the world. At the same time, we will focus on culturally relevant pedagogical practices (see appendix B1) that uplift our student experience and expression. Students will learn how systems of inequity are perpetuated and how they can break those cycles through their academic journeys and the skills they impart on the world.

**Alignment with Evidence-Based Practices**

CoLAB's innovative curriculum, built on Understanding by Design, backwards planning, inquiry based learning, design thinking, and generative AI, fosters rigorous academic achievement and personal growth. This approach prepares well-rounded, empathetic, and capable leaders equipped to tackle the challenges of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

By integrating these core beliefs and aligning our practices with evidence-based research, CoLAB is committed to creating an educational environment that nurtures both individual student success and community well-being.

**b. Demonstrates the philosophy to embrace and serve the diverse needs of individual students.**

CoLAB embraces the fundamental belief that every student possesses the potential to master challenging academic content. Our instructional philosophy incorporates the 4D Quantum Learning Matrix, ensuring all students engage in Inquiry, Design Thinking, Creative Arts, and Service Learning to support their diverse learning needs. It is our commitment to ensure that all students receive the necessary support structures to access rigorous coursework, whether through

formal plans such as Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), 504 plans, or the use of language acquisition strategies, or through an understanding of individual student differences cultivated by our staff. Central to our approach is the cultivation of strong student-educator relationships, providing the foundation for identifying, evaluating, and addressing each student's unique needs and strengths.

**Differentiation and Student Support**

CoLAB places a deliberate emphasis on curriculum selection with a focus on differentiation. Our approach is grounded in Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development. We aim to keep students within their "learning zone," where they are challenged yet supported to take risks and grow. The principles of differentiation are organized into four key categories, ensuring equitable access to the curriculum for all learners:

- **Affirming Each Learner's Identity:** We prioritize building self-esteem by leveraging student preferences, interests, and cultural backgrounds, identifying and fostering their strengths, engaging with parents, and setting high but achievable goals.
- **Valuing Prior Knowledge:** Recognizing and building upon students' existing knowledge, we facilitate the seamless integration of new information, language development, and individual learning profiles.
- **Scaffolding Learning:** Our instructional strategies include the use of graphic organizers, differentiated questioning, demonstrations of learning, collaborative peer support, personalized AI learning tools and a gradual release of responsibility.
- **Extending Learning:** Encouraging experiential practice, diverse teaching materials, technology integration, formative feedback cycles, and personalized performance targets enrich students' learning experiences.

**Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Inclusion**

Furthermore, as CoLAB aims to foster self-directedness among students, we empower them to advocate for their own accommodations and provide opportunities for expressing mastery through varied modalities. Embracing the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), our academic practices are anchored in three core elements: multiple means of engagement, representation, and action and expression.

Moreover, CoLAB adopts a full inclusion model, detailed further in Section III: Student Composition, Services, and Policies of this application, ensuring that every student is fully integrated into our academic community. Recognizing the evolving demographics of the Waterbury community, our staffing approach prioritizes responsiveness, ensuring that our educators are equipped with the necessary certifications and training in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) and global cultural competence.

Aligned with evidence-based practices and research, our philosophy at CoLAB is dedicated to serving the diverse needs of each individual student, fostering an environment where every learner can thrive.

**c. Provides an effective approach that is likely to improve students' academic performance.**

We are committed to fostering an educational environment where every student thrives academically through the strategic integration of the 4D Quantum Learning Matrix, which promotes deep engagement and holistic development. Our philosophy is rooted in the belief that rigorous, relevant, and accessible education is the cornerstone of high academic achievement. Through strategic support systems and opportunities for student choice, we aim to empower learners to excel in college, careers, and beyond.

**Rigor: Preparing Students for Success**

At the heart of our academic approach is rigor. We integrate best practices in teaching with rigorous content standards from esteemed organizations such as the CSDE, CCSS, NGSS, ISTE, and C3. By challenging students with rigorous tasks and providing appropriate scaffolds for learning, we promote student self-determination, problem-solving skills, and self-efficacy. Our commitment to rigor sends a clear message to our students: we believe in their potential to achieve greatness.

**Relevance: Making Learning Meaningful**

While rigor is essential, relevance is equally important to student engagement. We strive to make learning meaningful by ensuring that our lessons align closely with our pathway focus areas and students' individual interests. Project-based assessments incorporate culturally-, socially-, and geographically-relevant topics, fostering connections between classroom learning and real-world applications. Additionally, we offer students significant choice in their coursework, empowering them to take ownership of their learning journey.

**Inquiry: Empowering Curiosity and Critical Thinking**

At CoLAB, we embrace inquiry-based learning as a powerful approach to education. We empower students to ask questions, explore solutions, and integrate their own thoughts and beliefs with academic learning. By fostering a culture of inquiry, we enable students to deepen their understanding of the connections between their education and their communities, nurturing lifelong learners and critical thinkers.

**Inclusion: Celebrating Diversity and Supporting Every Learner**

Inclusion lies at the heart of our educational philosophy. We celebrate differences as assets, not deficits, and ensure that every student receives the support they need to thrive. Our lessons are designed with diverse learners in mind, offering ample opportunities for both remediation and extension. We leverage evidence-based tools and emerging technologies to reinforce inclusive practices, ensuring that every student is prepared for success beyond high school.

At CoLAB, our philosophy is not just a vision—it's a commitment to excellence in education, where every student has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

3. **Curriculum**
    a. **Explains the process to access, identify or develop curriculum to be used by the school and provides criteria for the process.**

CoLAB is dedicated to providing a curriculum that fosters academic excellence and prepares students for success in the digital age. This curriculum is guided by the 4D Quantum

Learning Matrix, ensuring comprehensive development in Inquiry, Design Thinking, Creative Arts, and Service Learning. Our approach to curriculum development is grounded in alignment with the education standards set forth by the Connecticut State Board of Education. With a focus on digital literacy, problem-based inquiry, and experiential learning, our curriculum draws inspiration from evidence-based programs and incorporates best practice literacy approaches. Research supporting CoLAB's educational model and practices is detailed in Appendix A.

**Curriculum Selection: Guided by Research and Rigor**

CoLAB prioritizes a well-structured curriculum that fosters deep learning and student engagement. Appendix A provides a detailed chart to demonstrate the key considerations used in selecting curricular resources. The selection process is guided by a series of essential questions that ensure the chosen programs:

- Align with CoLAB's philosophy and goals.
- Meet rigorous academic standards.
- Drive high student achievement.
- Are evidence-based and promote skill development.
- Offer opportunities for personalization and mastery-based learning.
- Support CoLAB's core beliefs on social justice, cultural competence, and future-oriented skills.
- Allow for student choice and voice.
- Are financially sustainable and supported by professional development.
- Differentiate CoLAB's program from other schools in the district.
- Cater to diverse learners, including non-native English speakers.
- Integrate seamlessly with CoLAB's pathways program.

By carefully considering these factors, CoLAB aims to equip students with the knowledge, skills, and experiences necessary for success in college and beyond.

**Selected Curricular Resources: A Closer Look**

CoLAB's curriculum integrates essential reading skills, structured discussion groups, and comprehensive social studies frameworks. MobyMax provides a personalized approach to reading support through a computer-adaptive platform, offering formative assessments and differentiated instruction aligned with CCSS and PSAT/SAT standards. Literature Circles, using the Great Books Shared Inquiry Approach, engage students in daily structured reading and discussions, fostering critical thinking and aligning with CCSS and NGSS standards. The College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework guides the history curriculum, emphasizing inquiry-based learning and alignment with state and Common Core standards. These resources ensure robust academic support for all learners. For more details, see the chart in Appendix A.

As we embark on this journey of curriculum development, we remain committed to transparency and accountability. By sharing our process and criteria for selecting curriculum, we aim to ensure that every aspect of the CoLAB experience is designed to empower students and foster their success.

**Curriculum Planning in an Agile Ecosystem**

CoLAB is built on a unique approach to education inspired by the principles of the Agile ecosystem. The educators at CoLAB work as a cohesive team, much like a well-oiled machine with each member playing a crucial role in the school's success.

Every morning, the teachers gather in a vibrant, open-space lounge for their daily stand-up meeting. They discuss their goals for the day, share insights, and quickly address any obstacles they face. This routine is not just about planning; it's about fostering a sense of unity and collective responsibility.

This agility applies when the school considers a new curriculum. The teachers know that to succeed, they need to leverage their collective efficacy, drawing on their agile practices.

The team decides to organize a series of design sprints, each focused on a different aspect of the curriculum. During the first sprint, they concentrate on content development. Teachers with expertise in various subjects collaborate, sharing their knowledge and resources. They use Kanban boards to visualize their workflow and ensure transparency. Tasks are divided into manageable pieces, allowing everyone to contribute effectively. See Appendix A for a Design Sprint Curriculum.

In the second sprint, the focus shifts to instructional design. Teachers with a knack for creativity and innovation brainstorm ways to make the content engaging. They hold rapid prototyping sessions, quickly creating and testing new teaching materials. Feedback loops are short and efficient, enabling continuous improvement.

The third sprint is all about implementation. The teachers pair up to deliver the new curriculum in their classrooms. They use retrospectives to reflect on their teaching experiences, identify what works well, and discuss what could be improved. This iterative process ensures that the curriculum is refined and optimized in real-time.

Throughout these sprints, the school's Academic Director acts as the "Scrum Leader", facilitating collaboration and removing any impediments that arise. The product owner, a role taken by the head of curriculum development, ensures that the team's efforts are aligned with the school's educational goals.

By the end of their sprints, the new curriculum is not only implemented on time but also exceeded expectations. Students are more engaged, and learning outcomes improve significantly. The success was a testament to the power of collective teacher efficacy within the agile framework.

The educators at CoLAB realize that their strength lay in their ability to adapt, collaborate, and support each other. Their agile approach turns what seemed like an insurmountable (and sometimes mundane) challenge into an opportunity for growth and innovation.

**b. Applies appropriate legislation to evidence alignment to SBE approved standards and frameworks, the Connecticut Core Standards for English language arts, mathematics and the NGSS for science (i.e., scope and sequence, curriculum map, or lesson plan for course of study, etc.).**

In the landscape of modern education, where the demand for adaptable, skilled graduates is ever-growing, CoLAB stands out as a trailblazer of innovation and excellence, driven by the principles of the 4D Quantum Learning Matrix. As state education leaders, you understand the critical importance of preparing students for success in a rapidly evolving world. CoLAB stands at the forefront of this endeavor, redefining traditional education paradigms to cultivate agile, empowered learners ready to navigate the complexities of the 21st century.

**Aligning with State Standards: A Foundation for Success**

At CoLAB, we recognize the fundamental importance of aligning our curriculum with state standards to ensure that our students receive a rigorous, comprehensive education. Our commitment to excellence is reflected in our adherence to the Connecticut Core Standards (CCS) for English language arts and mathematics, as well as the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) for science education. By aligning our curriculum with these standards, we provide our students with the knowledge and skills necessary to excel academically and thrive in a competitive global environment.

**Meeting Graduation Requirements and Beyond**

As proponents of academic rigor and holistic student development, CoLAB mandates that all students complete the Connecticut graduation diploma requirements. These requirements encompass a diverse array of subjects, including humanities, STEM, electives, health, physical education, world language, and project-based assessments of student mastery. In addition to fulfilling these foundational requirements, CoLAB students embark on a journey of exploration and specialization, completing a minimum of three additional electives aligned with their chosen career pathway. This approach ensures that our students not only meet but exceed the expectations set forth by the state, equipping them with the skills and knowledge needed to thrive in their chosen fields.

| Course Requirements | Credit Requirements |
|---|---|
| Humanities | 9 |
| STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) | 9 |
| Electives | 2 |
| Health | 1 |
| Physical Education | 1 |
| World Language | 1 |
| Project-Based Assessment of Student Mastery | 1 |
| CoLAB Career Pathway Additional Electives | Minimum of 3 |
| **TOTAL** | **27** |

**Empowering Student Agency and Pathway Exploration**

CoLAB is dedicated to student agency and pathway exploration, recognizing each student's unique interests and strengths. We offer a variety of elective courses aligned with career pathways in Media and Communication Arts; Business and Entrepreneurship; AI, Machine Learning, and Robotics; Biotech and Health Sciences; and Social Impact and Global Changes, ensuring students can pursue their passions with ample resources and support.

CoLAB will provide at least three electives in each pathway, partnering with universities like ASU to offer early college credit and fulfill graduation requirements. Students will access synchronous and asynchronous courses via a virtual learning platform, with each educator managing the process and reviewing individual student progress..

To ensure relevance and rigor, CoLAB collaborates with industry leaders to develop pathway electives that align with industry standards and provide skill credentialing. Partnerships for early college courses, skill credentialing, and field-based projects will be established annually, utilizing nationally respected resources. As a member of ASU's K-12 Innovation Alliance Network, CoLAB will be part of a larger community of practice facilitated through ASU to innovate and work towards re-defining high school success in the face of rapidly growing global technological change.

**A Vision for Student Success**

As state education leaders, you share our vision of a future where every student has the opportunity to achieve their full potential. CoLAB is more than just a school; it's a catalyst for change, a hub of innovation, and a champion of student success. By aligning our curriculum with state standards, meeting graduation requirements, empowering student agency, and fostering pathway exploration, CoLAB is paving the way for a brighter, more prosperous future for all. Together, let us continue to shape the landscape of education and inspire the next generation of leaders, thinkers, and change-makers.

**c. Provides evidence demonstrating that the curriculum is likely to improve students' academic performance. Is research-based information provided to support proof of high student achievement?**

At CoLAB, we believe in the power of integrated learning experiences that transcend traditional subject boundaries, guided by the 4D Quantum Learning Matrix to ensure academic excellence and holistic development. Our curriculum is carefully designed to weave together content from various disciplines, reinforcing our core values and key design elements while providing students with a holistic understanding of the world around them.

**Vertical Alignment and Cohesive Integration:** From grade 9 through grade 12, CoLAB students embark on a journey of academic and developmental growth, guided by central curricular themes aligned with the CoLAB Pathways. These themes serve as the foundation for cross-curricular exploration, ensuring vertical alignment across grade levels, departments, and core content areas.

**Exploring Essential Themes:** Each grade level focuses deeply on essential themes, delving into them through content exploration, whole-grade projects, and application of acquired knowledge. For instance, in 9th grade, students explore individual development in relation to

societal and technological advancements throughout history. Subjects like English Language Arts and History intertwine to examine how past industrial revolutions have shaped contemporary society, fostering critical thinking and historical perspective.

**Empowering Student Agency:** As students enter CoLAB in 9th grade, they embark on an exploratory year designed to cultivate self-awareness and ignite curiosity. Through initiatives like CoLAB Summer, students set personal goals and chart pathways for growth, preparing to make meaningful contributions to their own futures and broader community.

**Broadening Perspectives:** As students progress through CoLAB, their perspectives expand, and their options for growth multiply. Transitioning from themes of Individual Development to Societal Dynamics, Technological Impact, and Global Change, students not only connect with their own learning but also engage with real-world issues and aspirations for community betterment.

**Electives and Pathway Coursework:**

Taino CoLAB will offer a comprehensive selection of electives across five distinct pathways: Media and Communication Arts, Business and Entrepreneurship, AI, Machine Learning, and Robotics, Biotech and Health Sciences, and Social Impact and Global Challenges. These pathways are designed to provide students with a robust and engaging learning experience that prepares them for both college and career success.

**Early College Credit and University Partnerships**

In partnership with Arizona State University (ASU), Taino CoLAB students will have unparalleled opportunities to earn college credits while still in high school. Starting from the 9th grade, students can enroll in ASU's accredited college courses, earning credits that count towards both their high school graduation and future college education. By graduation, students who take full year-round advantage of our early college courses can achieve an associate degree and/or industry-recognized credentials, significantly reducing the financial burden and time commitment required for further higher education. College credits from ASU are highly transferable and students would have access to completing a ASU bachelor’s degree online after their time at CoLAB at the rate of $400 per credit, which is a substantial reduction of financial burden.

**Blended Learning Management System for College Courses**

Our early college program utilizes a blended learning approach for ASU courses, combining synchronous (session-based) and asynchronous (on-demand) instruction. This ensures that students can experience the rigor of traditional college courses while benefiting from the flexibility of self-paced learning. The virtual learning management system provides interactive content, real-time feedback, and personalized learning pathways, allowing students to progress outside the traditional school day. CoLAB has begun to develop an initial outline of technology integration requirements found in Appendix A5 to prepare for the support of virtual learning programs.

**Educator-Designed Courses**

Each CoLAB educator will design and oversee at least two elective courses, leveraging their expertise to provide innovative and relevant content. Examples include "Introduction to Artificial Intelligence," "Multimedia Advocacy & Design Thinking," and "Bioethics & Climate Change." Educators serve as content experts, ensuring high engagement and academic achievement.

**Pathway Electives and Industry Alignment**

Our pathway electives are developed in collaboration with industry leaders and academic partners, ensuring they meet current industry standards and competencies. Through our partnership with ASU students will have the opportunity to earn skill credentials in areas such as Project Management, Google IT, AWS Cloud Computing, Generative AI and Applied Business Data Analytics, enhancing their employability and preparing them for high-demand careers.

**Skill Credentialing and Field-Based Projects**

CoLAB will seek additional partnerships outside of ASU for early college access and skill credentialing, focusing on local and regional partnerships across Connecticut. By investing in the communities we serve, we aim to align workforce development initiatives that fit our pathways. Our extensive network of supporters will play a crucial role in establishing these partnerships, ensuring that our students have access to a broad range of opportunities for real-world experience and professional growth. These partnerships will support Mastery-Based Performance Assessments, enabling students to apply their knowledge and skills in real-world contexts, leveraging nationally respected, standards-aligned resources to maintain high rigor and quality.

**Advisory Team and Support Network**

ASU is an integral part of our advisory team, ensuring CoLAB remains responsive to evolving industry needs and educational best practices. As part of the ASU Prep and K-12 Innovation Alliance Network, CoLAB benefits from access to a larger community of practice, extensive resources, and collaborative opportunities. This network supports our mission by connecting us with other innovative schools and college partners dedicated to preparing high school students for college and career opportunities in high-demand and emerging fields.

**Pathway Course Offerings**

CoLAB pathways are designed to be flexible, allowing students to choose electives and extension activities aligned with their interests and career aspirations. Inquiry-based practices underpin all pathways, aligning with the NGSS to ensure high academic standards and student engagement. For more information on CoLAB Pathways, see Appendix B.

**Sample: Core Outcomes of Pathways**

| Pathway | Core Content Alignment Area | Core Outcomes of Program |
|---|---|---|
| **Media and Communication Arts** | Interdisciplinary | ● Generate and develop artistic ideas and work.<br>● Integrate aesthetic principles to form original solutions.<br>● Refine and complete artistic work, expressing compelling stories or ideas. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | ● Develop media projects with a clear purpose and audience in mind.<br>● Utilize technology and multimedia tools for creative expression and content creation for various industries. |
| **Business and Entrepreneurship** | Mathematics | ● Apply mathematical concepts in business scenarios.<br>● Develop business plans and strategies.<br>● Analyze financial data and projections.<br>● Understand principles of project management and business operations.<br>● Innovate and create sustainable business models. |
| **AI, Machine Learning, and Robotics** | Mathematics, Science and Engineering | ● Use programming and modern computer tools.<br>● Design and conduct experiments, analyze results.<br>● Solve complex problems and integrate interdisciplinary knowledge.<br>● Develop AI solutions and applications.<br>● Understand ethical implications of AI and computer science.<br>● Apply principles of machine learning and robotics in practical scenarios. |
| **Biotech and Health Sciences** | Science and Mathematics | ● Maintain safe and productive biotech environments.<br>● Perform scientific measurements and tests.<br>● Apply scientific principles to health and wellness.<br>● Conduct research and develop biotechnological solutions.<br>● Understand core concepts and career fields in biotechnology. |
| **Social Impact and Global Challenges** | Social Studies, English Language Arts and Science | ● Analyze social, political, and economic systems.<br>● Engage in civic activities and advocacy.<br>● Lead community-based projects and initiatives.<br>● Develop and implement public health and environmental initiatives.<br>● Understand principles of social justice and apply them in real-world contexts.<br>● Address global challenges and promote sustainable solutions. |

**Sample Pathways Overview: Social Impact and Global Challenges**

The "Social Impact and Global Challenges" pathway at Taino CoLAB provides students with a robust and engaging curriculum designed to address pressing societal and environmental issues. This pathway equips students with the knowledge and skills necessary to become active and informed citizens who can effect positive change in their communities and beyond. Below is a sample of what this pathway could look like:

| Grade Level | Core Course Offerings | Electives | Extension Activities | Credential Opportunities |
|---|---|---|---|---|

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **9th Grade** | Introduction to Social Sciences<br><br>Foundations of Environmental Science | Civic Engagement 101<br><br>Global Issues Seminar | Community service projects<br><br>Environmental field studies | Beginner's Badge in Civic Engagement<br><br>Certificate in Basic Environmental Stewardship |
| **10th Grade** | Social Justice and Policy<br><br>Intro to Public Health | Environmental Advocacy<br><br>Human Rights and Ethics | Participation in local advocacy campaigns<br><br>Health and wellness community projects | Intermediate Badge in Advocacy<br><br>Certificate in Public Health Fundamentals |
| **11th Grade** | Comparative Government<br><br>Environmental Science II | Advanced Civic Engagement<br><br>Global Environmental Policies | Internships with local NGOs<br><br>Research projects on global issues | Advanced Badge in Civic Leadership<br><br>Certificate in Environmental Policy |
| **12th Grade** | Capstone Project in Social Impact<br><br>Advanced Public Health | Sustainable Development<br><br>Advanced Human Rights Studies | Capstone project presentation<br><br>Leadership roles in community initiatives | Mastery Badge in Global Impact<br><br>Certificate in Sustainable Development Practices |

To further enrich the "Social Impact and Global Challenges" pathway, students will have access to a range of ASU Universal Learner Courses available year-round. These courses will deepen student learning and provide college credit, enhancing their readiness for post-secondary education. Examples of ASU courses aligned with this pathway include:

- Global History to 1500 (HST 100 SB)
- Global History since 1500 (HST 101 SB)
- Introduction to Public Health (HCR 230 OD)
- Introduction to Sociology (SOC 101 OD)
- Introduction to Sustainability (SOS 100 SB)
- Public Service and American Democracy (PAF 112 SB)
- Introduction to Social Transformation (SST 220 SB)

**Integrating the C3 Framework**

The "Social Impact and Global Challenges" pathway aligns with the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards, which enhances the rigor of K-12 civics, economics, geography, and history. The C3 Framework's Inquiry Arc focuses on developing questions and planning inquiries, applying disciplinary concepts and tools, evaluating

sources and using evidence, and communicating conclusions and taking informed action. These components are embedded in our pathway, ensuring that students develop the skills needed for effective civic participation.

**Performance-Based and Mastery Approach**

CoLAB's educational model emphasizes a performance-based and mastery approach to assessing student learning. This involves a combination of badges, projects, and community-based initiatives that allow students to demonstrate their competencies in real-world contexts. For instance:

- **Badges:** Students earn badges for completing specific skill sets, such as Civic Engagement or Environmental Stewardship, which reflect their proficiency and commitment.
- **Projects:** Students undertake various projects, such as community service, environmental studies, and advocacy campaigns, which are assessed through Mastery-Based Performance Assessments.
- **Community-Based Initiatives:** Engagement with local NGOs, participation in advocacy campaigns, and internships provide students with practical experience and opportunities to apply their learning in meaningful ways.

Through these components, students develop a portfolio of work that showcases their skills, knowledge, and impact, preparing them for success in college, careers, and civic life. This comprehensive approach ensures that students not only acquire academic knowledge but also develop the critical thinking, problem-solving, and leadership skills necessary to address global challenges.

**Enhancing Pathways through the 4D Quantum Learning Matrix**

CoLAB's educational model is grounded in the innovative 4D Quantum Learning Matrix, which integrates four foundational pillars: Inquiry, Design Thinking, Creative Arts, and Service Learning. These pillars enhance our pathways by promoting critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, and community engagement.

- **Inquiry**: Encourages students to ask questions, explore ideas, and engage in deep learning. This is particularly effective in pathways like Biotech and Health Sciences, where scientific inquiry drives understanding and innovation.
- **Design Thinking:** Empowers students to develop solutions through a structured problem-solving approach. Pathways such as AI, Machine Learning, and Robotics benefit from this method as students create and iterate on technological solutions.
- **Creative Arts:** Fosters creativity and artistic expression, crucial for pathways like Media and Communication Arts. This pillar helps students integrate technology with creativity to produce compelling media projects.
- **Service Learning:** Extends education beyond the classroom, promoting social responsibility and community involvement. This is integral to the Social Impact and

Global Challenges pathway, where students address real-world issues through civic engagement.

The CoLAB 4D Quantum Learning Matrix (4DQLM) is a transformative framework central to the Taino CoLAB model, integrating Inquiry, Design Thinking, Creative Arts, and Service Learning into a cohesive, standards-aligned curriculum. **Detailed in Appendix A4**, this framework includes comprehensive descriptions of how each pillar connects to standards such as the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), National Council for the Social Studies (C3 Framework), and ISTE standards, ensuring a rigorous approach to academic mastery and skill development. Appendix A4 also provides a sample project rubric, illustrating the application of these standards through performance-based assessments and offering a deeper understanding of CoLAB's commitment to preparing students for success in Education 4.0. **We strongly encourage a thorough review of this appendix (A4) to gain a fuller perspective on how the 4DQLM underpins every aspect of our instructional model, fostering students' academic and personal growth through purpose-driven, interdisciplinary learning.**

**Goals and Vision for the Future**

CoLAB aims to prepare students for success in rapidly evolving industries and to excel in college and career preparation. By integrating rigorous academic standards with innovative teaching methods, CoLAB ensures that students graduate with the skills, knowledge, and perspectives needed to thrive in a rapidly changing world. Our first graduating class in 2031 will be well-equipped to meet the challenges and opportunities of the future, embodying the principles of inquiry-based learning and global citizenship.

**Addressing Youth Disengagement**

The Dalio Foundation's report highlights the critical need to address youth disengagement in Connecticut, where 119,000 young people (aged 14-26) were either at-risk or disconnected in 2022. Taino CoLAB's pathway-focused curriculum aims to re-engage students by providing relevant, career-oriented education that addresses these challenges directly. By offering diverse and flexible pathways, we aim to reduce the dropout rate and increase postsecondary success, particularly in high-need areas like Waterbury, which faces significant concentrations of at-risk and disconnected youth.

Through our partnership with ASU and the implementation of the 4D Quantum Learning Matrix, Taino CoLAB students will not only excel academically but also develop as innovative thinkers, problem solvers, and engaged citizens. Our program's comprehensive approach to education fosters intellectual growth, creativity, and social responsibility, positioning Taino CoLAB at the forefront of educational innovation.

**d. Demonstrates accessibility and appropriateness for students at all levels, including EL/ML, students with disabilities and other at-risk students.**

By seamlessly integrating early college credit opportunities, industry partnerships, and personalized learning pathways, CoLAB ensures accessibility and appropriateness for students at all levels, including English Learners/Multilingual Learners (EL/ML), students with disabilities, and other at-risk students. In fact, CoLAB's model is built around individual learners and the expectation that students will arrive with many strengths but also many academic challenges. CoLAB is not just reimagining education; it is ushering in a new era of possibility for students of all backgrounds and abilities.

**Curriculum Appropriateness**

CoLAB's curriculum design is not just about offering a diverse range of electives; it's about meeting the unique needs and aspirations of every student. This is achieved through the 4D Quantum Learning Matrix, ensuring accessibility and appropriateness for all learners.

- **Accessibility:** By providing access to virtual learning platforms and self-paced courses, CoLAB ensures that students with disabilities have equitable opportunities to engage with the curriculum. Additionally, the flexibility in pathway selection allows educators to tailor coursework to accommodate individual learning styles and needs.
- **English Learners/Multilingual Learners (EL/ML):** CoLAB recognizes the linguistic diversity within its student body and is committed to supporting EL/ML students in their academic journey. Through inquiry-based practices aligned with the NGSS and personalized pathway selections, EL/ML students can develop language proficiency while engaging with rigorous content in a meaningful context.
- **Students Below or Above Grade Level:** Traditional grade-level constraints often hinder students who are below or above their peers academically. CoLAB's approach, however, empowers these students to progress at their own pace and pursue coursework that aligns with their individual strengths and interests. Whether it's through early college credit opportunities or specialized extension activities, CoLAB ensures that every student receives the support and challenge they need to thrive.
- **At-Risk Students:** For at-risk students who may face socioeconomic barriers or lack access to traditional educational pathways, CoLAB offers a lifeline of opportunity. By forging partnerships with universities and industry leaders, CoLAB creates pathways to success that extend beyond the classroom walls. Through mentorship, skill credentialing, and field-based projects, at-risk students can gain the confidence and real-world experience needed to overcome obstacles and achieve their goals.

In essence, CoLAB's curriculum is not just inclusive—it's transformative. By fostering a culture of innovation, equity, and personalization, CoLAB ensures that every student has the tools they need to thrive in an ever-evolving world.

**e. Describes a clear plan for the ongoing development, improvement, and refinement of the curriculum.**

In crafting the CoLAB curriculum, we embrace a philosophy of inclusivity and collaboration, recognizing that every stakeholder, from classroom teachers to administrative

leaders, plays a vital role in its success. This collaborative spirit mirrors the principles of the Agile ecosystem, where teams work together seamlessly towards shared objectives.

At the heart of our curriculum planning lies a commitment to involve all educators in the design, development, implementation, and evaluation phases. This inclusive approach ensures that the curriculum reflects the diverse perspectives and insights of those closest to the students, aligning with best practices in educational development (McKimm & Jones, 2018).

Our curriculum revision cycle embodies this ethos, encompassing several crucial phases:

1. **Design, Development, Documentation, and Preliminary Evaluation:** The curriculum undergoes meticulous crafting to ensure alignment with federal and state standards. Feedback loops involving administrative bodies, charter stakeholders, and the Board of Trustees ensure thorough scrutiny and alignment with educational guidelines.
2. **Adoption:** Following rigorous evaluation, the curriculum gains formal adoption by the Board of Trustees. Concurrently, an implementation plan is devised, integrating seamlessly with professional development initiatives.
3. **Implementation:** With adoption secured, the curriculum comes to life in classrooms. Continuous monitoring ensures alignment with educational opportunities, with adjustments made to meet evolving needs.
4. **Evaluation:** Ongoing assessment ensures adherence to standards and required assessments. The Chief Academic Officer (CAO) spearheads data collection, monitoring, and root-cause analyses, driving evidence-based decision-making.
5. **Redesign and Adoption of Revisions:** Iterative evaluation identifies improvement opportunities, leading to redesign and adoption of revisions. Interventions through our Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) ensure alignment with student needs, fostering continuous improvement.
6. **Continuous Yearly Review and Revision:** Annual reviews and revisions uphold the commitment to improvement, enhancing student learning outcomes and accountability reporting.
7. **Redesign, Adoption, and Full Implementation of Interdisciplinary Content:** Interdisciplinary content follows a rigorous review process, ensuring alignment with our educational goals and standards.
8. **Dissemination:** Curriculum changes, adoptions, and revisions are disseminated through departments, facilitated by instructional coaches and direct communication from the CAO, with approval from the Executive Director and guidance from the Board of Trustees.

This holistic approach to curriculum planning ensures that our educational offerings are dynamic, responsive, and continuously refined to meet the evolving needs of our students and community. At CoLAB, we believe that collaboration and inclusivity are the cornerstones of educational excellence.

**f. Describes a process for monitoring and evaluating the implementation and effectiveness of the curriculum.**

To ensure the successful implementation and effectiveness of CoLAB's curriculum, we have developed a robust framework for monitoring and evaluation. This comprehensive process is guided by research-based practices and best practices in educational evaluation, allowing us to make data-informed decisions to continuously enhance educational practices and student outcomes.

- **Establish Clear Goals and Objectives:** The first step in our monitoring and evaluation process is to define clear, measurable goals and objectives for the curriculum. These objectives align closely with CoLAB's educational philosophy and the pillars of the 4D Quantum Matrix, encompassing academic achievements, skill development, and socio-emotional growth.
- **Develop a Comprehensive Evaluation Plan:** We have developed an evaluation plan outlining the methods and tools used for monitoring and evaluating the curriculum. This plan incorporates both formative and summative evaluation methods to provide ongoing feedback and measure long-term outcomes.
    - **Formative Evaluation:** Regular classroom observations provide insights into instructional practices and student engagement, using standardized rubrics to assess adherence to curriculum goals. AI tools will be used to accelerate analysis and response planning. Additionally, teacher and student feedback, collected through surveys, interviews, and focus groups, inform our understanding of implementation challenges and areas for improvement.
    - **Summative Evaluation:** We utilize a variety of methods for summative evaluation, including standardized assessments, performance tasks, and longitudinal data analysis. These measures allow us to assess student achievement, application of knowledge and skills, and the long-term impact of the curriculum on academic and socio-emotional outcomes.
- **Utilize Data-Driven Decision Making:** Data collected through our evaluation processes are analyzed to identify trends, strengths, and areas for improvement. We utilize data visualization tools, AI based tools, and statistical analysis to ensure decisions are based on robust evidence, driving continuous improvement.
- **Implement Continuous Improvement Cycles:** Based on evaluation data, we implement continuous improvement cycles involving regular review, action planning, implementation, and re-evaluation. These cycles ensure that identified challenges are addressed, strengths are leveraged, and strategies are adjusted as needed to optimize curriculum effectiveness.
- **Engage Stakeholders:** Regular communication and collaboration with stakeholders, including teachers, students, parents, and community members, are essential for the success of our evaluation process. This ensures that all perspectives are considered, fostering transparency and inclusivity.
- **Research-Based Processes and Best Practices:** We integrate research-based processes and best practices, such as logic models, mixed-methods approaches, professional

learning communities, evidence-based practices, and continuous professional development, into our monitoring and evaluation framework. These practices ensure that our evaluation process is rigorous, comprehensive, and aligned with our educational goals.

By establishing this comprehensive process for monitoring and evaluating the implementation and effectiveness of our curriculum, CoLAB ensures continuous improvement and delivers a high-quality, impactful education that prepares students for success in the modern world.

4. **Instruction**
    a. **Examples provided that describe the instructional methods or techniques that will be used to facilitate high-quality teaching and learning.**

The master schedule at CoLAB is designed to integrate various curricular programs and ensure a holistic learning experience that balances academic rigor with social and emotional development. This schedule is guided by the 4D Quantum Learning Matrix, ensuring students engage in Inquiry, Design Thinking, Creative Arts, and Service Learning.

The schedule operates on an A/B day rotation, alternating between humanities and STEM learning blocks. This approach allows students to immerse themselves deeply in each subject area while providing flexibility and variety in their daily routine.

**Daily Schedule Components**

- Morning Basecamp (15 mins)
- Humanities/STEM Blocks (135 mins)
- Electives (45 mins)
- Pathway Courses (45-90 mins)
- CoLAB Block (45-90 mins)
- AI Insight Lab (30 mins)
- Afternoon Basecamp (15 mins)
- Advisory/Mentorship Period (30 mins)
- Wellness Breaks (10 mins)

**Detailed Schedule Description**

- **Morning Basecamp:** The Morning Basecamp occurs at the beginning of each school day and is designed to set a positive and focused tone tailored to each student. During this time, AI tools review student work from the previous day, prepares formative assessments, and addresses any challenging concepts. Teachers upload lesson plans and learning agendas digitally, allowing AI to preview the day's learning for students and offer personalized suggestions. This session not only helps students prepare academically but also includes team-building activities with classmates to foster a sense of community and collaboration before they start their first class.
- **Humanities/STEM Blocks:** These blocks consist of three 45-minute periods, totaling 135 minutes. On A days, students engage in humanities subjects such as literature, history, and writing workshops. On B days, the focus shifts to STEM subjects including

mathematics, science, and lab work. This structure ensures students have concentrated time to delve deeply into each subject area.

- **Electives:** Students have a 45-minute elective period each day, allowing them to explore areas of personal interest and develop skills outside the core curriculum. Electives cover a broad range of topics, from the arts and digital literacy to physical education and health. Additionally, elective time can be used for taking ASU online college courses or working independently on coursework for those classes, through a partnership with the ASU Accelerate Program.
- **Pathway Courses:** Pathway courses vary in length from 45 to 90 minutes, depending on the specific needs of the course. These courses provide specialized instruction in the student's chosen pathway: Media and Communication Arts, Business and Entrepreneurship, AI, Machine Learning, and Robotics, Biotech and Health Sciences, and Social Impact and Global Changes. Pathway courses are designed to be intensive and focused, giving students the opportunity to develop expertise in their area of interest. CoLAB offers college courses (synchronous and asynchronous) for all student pathways through a partnership with the ASU Accelerate Program. This integration ensures that students have access to advanced coursework and the opportunity to earn college credit while still in high school.
- **CoLAB Block:** The CoLAB Block is a dynamic period dedicated to CoLAB's "Quantum Learning Matrix," where students engage in an transdisciplinary approach that combines inquiry-based learning, design thinking, creative arts, and service learning. This block allows students to participate in collaborative, project-based learning experiences, fostering critical thinking and creativity. Students conduct Design Sprints, engaging in iterative cycles of ideation, prototyping, and testing to solve real-world problems. The collaborative nature of this block enhances social, emotional, and intellectual engagement, as students work together to develop solutions and create meaningful projects. Additionally, the CoLAB Block provides an opportunity for students to explore transdisciplinary concepts and engage deeply with both local community and global issues. This innovative approach prepares students for the complexities of modern challenges, promoting holistic development and a deep sense of community.
- **AI Insights Lab:** This 30-minute period replaces personalized learning time and leverages the power of AI to support student learning and social-emotional development. During the AI Insights Lab, students work with personalized AI tools to reflect on their learning from the day and participate in formative assessments to gauge their conceptual knowledge and applicable skills. The AI provides immediate feedback and assistance, helping students address any confusion from their classes or challenging assignments. Additionally, this time is used to support students' social and emotional development through activities such as:
    - **Self-Reflection and Journaling:** Guided by AI prompts, students can reflect on their emotions, experiences, and personal growth.

    - **Mindfulness and Relaxation Exercises:** AI can lead students through mindfulness exercises to reduce stress and improve emotional regulation.
    - **Goal Setting and Progress Tracking:** AI helps students set academic and personal goals, tracking their progress and providing encouragement.
    - **Peer Collaboration and Support:** AI facilitates virtual group discussions and peer feedback sessions to build a sense of community and collaboration.
    - **Conflict Resolution and Communication Skills:** AI provides scenarios and role-playing activities to enhance students' conflict resolution and communication skills.
- **Wellness Breaks:** Short wellness breaks are integrated between longer blocks to help students refresh and stay focused. Activities could include mindfulness exercises, physical activity, or social interaction, ensuring students maintain their well-being throughout the day.
- **Afternoon Basecamp:** The Afternoon Basecamp focuses on reflection and closure, helping students mentally prepare for their time out of school. During this session, students engage in reflective discussions about their learning, which are recorded and shared with AI to prepare for the next morning's Basecamp. This period allows students to review their achievements, identify areas for improvement, and set goals for after-school productivity. By reflecting on their experiences and organizing their thoughts, students can end their day on a positive note and be better prepared for future challenges.
- **Advisory/Mentorship Period:** This 30-minute period provides an opportunity for students to meet with advisors or mentors to discuss their academic progress, personal goals, and career aspirations. This time is also used for personalized support, addressing any individual needs, and fostering strong student-teacher relationships.

**Sample Student Schedule**

| Time | A Day | B Day |
|---|---|---|
| 8:30 - 8:45 a.m. | **Morning Basecamp** | |
| 8:50 - 9:35 a.m. | **Humanities Block: Literature Circle** | **STEM Block: Algebra I** |
| 9:40 - 10:25 a.m. | **Humanities Block: Writers Workshop** | **STEM Block: Biology** |
| 10:25 - 10:35 a.m. | **Wellness Break** | **Wellness Break** |
| 10:35 - 11:15 a.m. | **Humanities Block: Global History** | **STEM Block: STEM Lab** |
| 11:20 - 12:05 p.m. | **CoLAB Block** | |
| 12:10 - 12:55 p.m. | **Lunch** | **Lunch** |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1:00 - 1:45 p.m. | **Elective: Physical Education/Health** | **Elective: Digital Literacy/Media Arts** |
| 1:50 - 2:35 p.m. | **Pathway Elective** | |
| 2:35 - 2:45 p.m. | **Wellness Break** | |
| 2:45 - 3:10 p.m. | **AI Insight Lab** | |
| 3:10 - 3:25 p.m. | **Afternoon Basecamp** | |
| 3:30 - 4:00 p.m. | **Advisory/Mentorship Period** | |
| 4:00 - 5:30 p.m. | **Extension School Program and Extracurricular Activities** | |

**Extension School Program:** After regular school hours, students have the opportunity to engage in the Extension School Program, which includes a variety of extracurricular activities, online college courses (partnered with ASU), and additional learning opportunities. This program is designed to extend learning beyond the traditional school day and provide students with access to a wide range of educational resources and experiences. As a community school, and in partnership with LEAD, CoLAB will offer academic and cultural enrichment extracurricular activities centered around our Taino values of community, environmental stewardship and health and wellness.

**Summary**

The CoLAB master schedule is designed to provide a balanced and comprehensive educational experience. CoLAB ensures that students are well-prepared for both academic success and personal growth through the comprehensive integration of the 4D Quantum Learning Matrix, CoLAB pathways, Taino cultural aspects, and community connectedness through LEAD. These elements work together to create a holistic educational experience that prepares students to thrive in a complex, interconnected world. The inclusion of Basecamp sessions, the CoLAB Block, wellness breaks, advisory/mentorship periods, and the Extension School Program further supports the development of well-rounded individuals who are equipped to navigate the complexities of the modern world.

**b. Demonstrates how instructional methods support high standards of achievement and are accessible and appropriate for all students.**

CoLAB is committed to implementing instructional methods that not only support high standards of achievement but are also accessible and appropriate for all students. Drawing from the principles of the 4D Quantum Matrix and the key design elements outlined in CoLAB's educational framework, our approach ensures that every student is given the opportunity to succeed regardless of their background or learning needs.

CoLAB's instructional methods are designed to support high standards of achievement while being accessible and appropriate for all students, grounded in the 4D Quantum Learning Matrix. This framework ensures that every student engages deeply with Inquiry, Design Thinking, Creative Arts, and Service Learning. By integrating inquiry-based learning, design thinking, integrated literacy practices, AI-augmented learning, and an agile ecosystem, CoLAB

ensures that every student has the opportunity to succeed. These methods are underpinned by research-based practices and are continuously evaluated and refined to meet the evolving needs of our diverse student population.

**Inquiry-Based Learning**

Inquiry-based learning cultivates curiosity and critical thinking skills essential for academic success.

- **Practices:**
    - **Socratic Seminars:** These dialogues foster the development of critical thinking skills and the clear articulation of students' ideas while enhancing interpersonal communication skills.
    - **Research Projects:** Through independent and collaborative research endeavors, students delve deeply into topics of interest, honing their research skills along the way.
- **Accessibility:**
    - **Scaffolded Support:** Teachers offer tailored assistance at varying levels, adapting to individual student needs to ensure universal engagement in inquiry-based tasks.
    - **Differentiated Instruction:** Instruction is customized to accommodate the diverse needs of students, with modifications made to content, processes, and outcomes.

**Design Thinking**[5]

Design thinking equips students with problem-solving skills crucial for real-world challenges.

- **Practices:**
    - **Project-Based Learning (PBL):** Students work on projects that require them to apply design thinking principles to solve real-world problems.
    - **Prototyping and Testing:** Students develop prototypes, test their solutions, and iterate their designs based on feedback received, fostering continuous improvement and real-world application of knowledge.
- **Accessibility:**
    - **Collaborative Learning:** Students collaborate in diverse teams, facilitating mutual learning and the utilization of varied perspectives to enhance understanding and problem-solving skills.
    - **Flexible Grouping:** Group compositions are adjusted according to students' strengths and learning requirements, maximizing collaboration and peer support within diverse learning environments.

**Integrated Literacy Practices**

[5] Razzouk, Rim, and Valerie Shute. "What Is Design Thinking and Why Is It Important?" Review of Educational Research, vol. 82, no. 3, 2012, pp. 330–348. DOI: 10.3102/0034654312457429.

Literacy at CoLAB encompasses digital, media, and information literacy vital for modern success.

- **Practices:**
    - **Digital Literacy:** Integration of digital tools throughout the curriculum ensures students develop proficiency in responsible technology use.
    - **Media Literacy:** By instructing students in critical analysis and creation of media content, an understanding of its impact is fostered.
    - **Information Literacy:** Equipping students with skills to effectively find, evaluate, and utilize information is vital for both research and problem-solving endeavors.
- **Accessibility:**
    - **Universal Design for Learning (UDL):** Instruction is intentionally crafted to be flexible, offering various avenues for representation, engagement, and expression to accommodate diverse learning styles and needs.
    - **Assistive Technology:** We furnish tools and resources to aid students with disabilities, guaranteeing equitable access to the curriculum.

**AI-Augmented Learning**

AI tools personalize learning experiences, offering real-time feedback and tailored support.

- **Practices:**
    - **Personalized Learning Platforms:** Leveraging AI technology, these platforms adjust to students' individual learning paces and preferences, providing tailored pathways for mastering content.
    - **Real-Time Analytics:** Teachers utilize AI-generated data to make informed instructional decisions and deliver precise interventions tailored to students' needs.
- **Accessibility:**
    - **Adaptive Learning Technologies:** These innovative tools dynamically modify content and difficulty levels in response to individual student performance, guaranteeing that each student is appropriately challenged.
    - **Data-Driven Support:** AI aids in identifying students requiring additional support and offers insights into optimal strategies for assisting them.

**Agile Ecosystem**

An agile learning environment is essential for meeting diverse student needs and adapting to educational changes.

- **Practices:**
    - **Continuous Professional Development:** Teachers undergo training in agile methodologies and instructional strategies aimed at fostering flexibility and responsiveness.

    - **Responsive Curriculum Design:** We consistently update the curriculum in response to feedback and emerging trends, ensuring its ongoing relevance and effectiveness.
- **Accessibility:**
    - **Inclusive Practices:** Agile methodologies incorporate regular reflections and adjustments to ensure that instructional practices are inclusive and effectively meet the diverse needs of all students.
    - **Flexible Learning Spaces:** Our classrooms are intentionally designed to be adaptable, facilitating various learning activities and accommodating different group configurations.

At CoLAB, our instructional methods not only promote academic excellence but also foster an inclusive and supportive learning environment where every student has the opportunity to realize their full potential.

**c. Explains how the school will create a data-driven culture to meet a wide range of students using differentiated tiered instruction.**

CoLAB is dedicated to creating a data-driven culture that effectively meets the diverse needs of its students through differentiated tiered instruction. This culture is supported by the 4D Quantum Learning Matrix, ensuring high standards of achievement and accessibility. By leveraging data to inform instructional practices, CoLAB ensures that every student receives personalized support and opportunities for growth. This approach aligns with the principles outlined in the 4D Quantum Matrix and the school's commitment to high standards of achievement and accessibility.

**Data-Driven Culture**

- **Comprehensive Data Collection:** CoLAB employs a systematic approach to data collection, gathering information on various facets of student performance, behavior, and engagement. This includes not only academic indicators such as standardized test scores and formative assessment results but also attendance records and qualitative feedback from both teachers and students.
- **Ongoing Teacher Training:** Teachers and staff members undergo continuous training sessions focused on enhancing their skills in data analysis and interpretation. These sessions equip educators with the tools and techniques necessary to derive meaningful insights from the data collected, enabling them to make informed decisions about instructional practices and student support strategies.
- **Collaborative Data Analysis:** Regular collaborative data team meetings serve as a forum for teachers, administrators, and support staff to collectively analyze the data collected. During these meetings, participants collaborate to identify trends, strengths, and areas for improvement. By pooling their expertise and perspectives, the team can develop targeted interventions and instructional adjustments tailored to the needs of individual students and the broader school community.

- **Real-Time Feedback with AI-driven Platforms:** CoLAB leverages advanced AI-driven platforms to provide real-time feedback on student performance. These platforms analyze data in real-time, enabling teachers to receive immediate insights into student progress and areas of difficulty. Armed with this timely information, educators can make on-the-spot instructional adjustments to better meet the needs of their students and optimize learning outcomes.
- **Personalized Learning Plans:** Data collected is utilized to create personalized learning plans for each student. These plans outline specific academic goals, strategies, and supports tailored to the unique needs and learning preferences of individual students. By customizing instruction in this manner, CoLAB ensures that every student receives targeted support designed to maximize their academic growth and success.

**Differentiated Tiered Instruction**

- **Tiered Instruction Framework:** CoLAB implements a tiered instruction framework comprising Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3, to cater to the diverse learning needs of its students.
    - **Tier 1 - Universal Instruction:** Tier 1 offers high-quality, standards-based instruction using Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles. Lessons are designed to be accessible and engaging for all learners, fostering inclusivity within the general education classroom.
    - **Tier 2 - Targeted Interventions:** Tier 2 interventions provide additional support to students who require it, through strategies such as small group instruction, tutoring sessions, and access to supplemental resources. These interventions are tailored to address specific areas of difficulty identified through data analysis.
    - **Tier 3 - Intensive Support:** Tier 3 offers individualized instruction and specialized programs to students with significant learning challenges. Instruction is closely monitored and adjusted based on ongoing assessment data, ensuring that interventions remain responsive to students' evolving needs and that progress is regularly evaluated and documented.

**Collaboration**

- **Family Engagement:** CoLAB emphasizes regular communication with families about student progress and data, ensuring that parents/guardians are informed and involved in their child's education. Workshops and resources are provided to support families in facilitating learning at home. LEAD and other community based partners will enhance and personalize family workshops based on assessed needs and personalized approaches.
- **Professional Learning Communities (PLCs):** PLCs provide a structured platform for teachers to collaborate, share data, and develop effective instructional strategies. These communities foster a culture of collaboration and continuous improvement, enabling educators to learn from one another and implement best practices in their classrooms.
- **Student Involvement:** Students are encouraged to take an active role in their learning journey by setting goals, tracking progress, and reflecting on their achievements. By

empowering students to take ownership of their learning, CoLAB fosters a sense of agency and accountability among learners.

**Continuous Improvement**

- **Reflective Practices:** CoLAB promotes regular reflection on data and instructional practices, encouraging educators to identify areas for growth and celebrate successes. Through reflective practices, teachers can refine their approaches and implement effective strategies to better support student learning.
- **Action Research Projects:** Teachers engage in action research projects to test and refine instructional strategies based on data-driven inquiries. These projects allow educators to experiment with innovative approaches, gather evidence of their effectiveness, and make informed decisions about their implementation.
- **Continuous Feedback Loops:** Continuous feedback loops involving teachers, students, and administrators ensure that data-driven decisions are responsive and effective. By soliciting input from all stakeholders, CoLAB fosters a culture of collaboration and accountability, driving continuous improvement across the school community.

By fostering a data-driven culture, CoLAB ensures that differentiated tiered instruction meets the wide range of student needs. This approach supports high standards of achievement and accessibility for all students through systematic data collection, analysis, and application, creating a dynamic learning environment where every student can thrive.

**d. Describes how the school will determine, support for staff and provide instructional professional development to ensure high quality instructional methods are delivered.**

CoLAB, as an Agile Ecosystem, is deeply committed to cultivating an environment where high-quality instructional methods are not only implemented but continually refined and adapted to meet the evolving needs of students. Central to this commitment is the establishment of a data-driven culture and an agile ecosystem, both of which play pivotal roles in the selection, support, and professional development of educators and leaders.

At CoLAB, the selection of educators and leaders is a meticulous process designed to ensure alignment with the school's mission and educational philosophy. The hiring process is rigorous, involving multiple stages of interviews, teaching demonstrations, and assessments of candidates' fit with CoLAB's core values. This thorough selection process is crucial as it sets the foundation for a team of educators who are not only skilled but also deeply committed to the principles of lifelong learning, reflective practice, and collaboration.

Once onboard, new educators are integrated into CoLAB's supportive environment through comprehensive mentorship programs. These programs pair new teachers with experienced mentors who provide ongoing guidance, support, and feedback. Mentorship is a key component of CoLAB's strategy to acclimate new staff to the school's culture and expectations, ensuring they are well-prepared to deliver high-quality instruction from the outset.

Professional development at CoLAB is a dynamic, continuous process that is deeply embedded in the school's agile ecosystem. Data-driven professional development is a hallmark

of this approach. By systematically collecting and analyzing data on student performance, teacher evaluations, and feedback from staff, CoLAB ensures that professional development activities are targeted and relevant. This data-informed approach allows the school to identify specific areas where teachers need support and tailor professional development to address these needs effectively.

Regular workshops and seminars on a variety of instructional topics are a staple of CoLAB's professional development offerings. These sessions cover a wide range of areas including differentiated instruction, technology integration, and culturally responsive teaching. By providing teachers with access to the latest educational research and best practices, these professional development opportunities equip them with the tools they need to enhance their instructional methods.

Instructional coaching is another critical element of CoLAB's professional development framework. Instructional coaches work closely with teachers, providing personalized support and feedback. This coaching relationship focuses on improving instructional practices, integrating new strategies, and addressing specific challenges that teachers may face in their classrooms. The presence of instructional coaches fosters a culture of continuous improvement, where teachers are constantly refining their practices to better meet the needs of their students.

Collaborative inquiry and reflective practice are also deeply embedded in CoLAB's professional development ethos. Teachers engage in collaborative inquiry projects, where they work together to investigate instructional challenges, implement new strategies, and assess the impact on student learning. This process not only promotes collaboration but also encourages teachers to be innovative and reflective practitioners. By regularly reflecting on their instructional methods and using data to guide their decisions, teachers at CoLAB are able to continuously improve and adapt their teaching to ensure it remains effective and relevant.

Differentiated instruction is a cornerstone of CoLAB's approach to ensuring high-quality instructional methods. Recognizing that students have diverse learning needs, CoLAB employs a variety of instructional strategies, materials, and assessments to ensure all students can access the curriculum. This includes using Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles to design flexible learning environments that accommodate individual learning differences.

Technology integration is seamlessly woven into the instructional fabric of CoLAB. The use of AI-driven platforms and digital tools enhances learning and provides personalized support to students. These technologies allow for real-time feedback and adaptation, ensuring that instruction is responsive to the needs of each student. By leveraging technology, CoLAB ensures that students are not only engaged but also equipped with the digital literacy skills essential for success in the modern world.

In fostering a data-driven culture, CoLAB emphasizes the importance of continuous improvement and innovation. Educators participate in lesson study cycles, where they collaboratively plan, observe, and analyze lessons. This process helps refine instructional practices and promotes a culture of ongoing professional growth. Regular reflection on data and

instructional practices allows teachers to identify areas for growth and celebrate successes, ensuring that instructional methods are continuously improved.

CoLAB's approach to supporting educators and providing professional development is comprehensive and multifaceted. By fostering a data-driven culture, promoting continuous professional growth, and employing innovative instructional strategies, CoLAB ensures that high-quality instructional methods are delivered to all students. This commitment to excellence in teaching and learning creates an environment where both educators and students can thrive, embodying the principles of the 4D Quantum Matrix and preparing students for success in a rapidly changing world.

**e. Describes the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) and related monitoring of student progress and provision of tiered instruction.**

CoLAB operates under a robust Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS), designed to holistically address the academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs of its diverse student body. This comprehensive framework integrates data-driven decision-making and tiered instruction to offer tailored support for all students.

Our MTSS implementation is rooted in best practices and aligns with the American Institutes for Research (AIR)'s MTSS framework, ensuring high fidelity interventions, efficient and sustained intervention implementation, and continuous regeneration of effective, efficient, and relevant practices.

**Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) at CoLAB**

MTSS embodies a proactive approach, leveraging data to identify student needs and offering varying levels of support based on their responsiveness to instruction and intervention. CoLAB's MTSS framework guarantees that all students receive high-quality instruction and timely interventions, fostering equity and excellence in education.

**Tiered Instruction**

- **Tier 1:** Universal Instruction: Tier 1 serves as the cornerstone of MTSS, delivering high-quality, standards-based instruction to all students within the general education classroom. Employing Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles, we create accessible and engaging lessons tailored to diverse learning styles. Best practices encompass differentiated instruction, formative assessments, and evidence-based teaching strategies.
- **Tier 2:** Targeted Interventions: Students identified as needing additional support receive targeted interventions in Tier 2. These interventions, more intensive and specific than general classroom instruction, are delivered within the general education setting. Common Tier 2 practices include small group instruction, tutoring, and targeted skill-building activities. Progress is closely monitored to ensure adequate advancement.
- **Tier 3:** Intensive Interventions: For students requiring further support, Tier 3 offers individualized instruction tailored to their unique needs. These interventions, often delivered in smaller groups or one-on-one settings, may involve specialized programs or

services. Frequent and detailed progress monitoring allows for continuous adjustment of strategies to optimize student success.

**Monitoring Student Progress**

- **Data Collection and Analysis:** CoLAB systematically collects data on student performance, behavior, and engagement, including standardized test scores, formative assessments, attendance records, and teacher observations. Data teams analyze this information to identify students in need of additional support and to assess intervention effectiveness.
- **Progress Monitoring Tools:** Utilizing various progress monitoring tools, CoLAB tracks student progress across all tiers of support, providing real-time feedback and detailed insights into performance. This enables educators to make informed decisions about instruction and interventions.

**Provision of Tiered Instruction**

- **Professional Development:** CoLAB prioritizes ongoing professional development for teachers and staff on MTSS implementation and effective data utilization. Training covers differentiated instruction, intervention strategies, and data analysis, ensuring consistent and effective tiered instruction delivery.
- **Collaborative Data Teams:** Regular meetings of collaborative data teams focus on reviewing student progress data, discussing intervention strategies, and making data-driven decisions. These teams play a pivotal role in improving instructional practices and MTSS effectiveness.

**Best Practices and AIR's MTSS Framework**

- **Evidence-Based Interventions:** CoLAB's MTSS interventions are grounded in evidence-based practices to enhance student outcomes effectively.
- **Fidelity of Implementation:** Ensuring intervention fidelity is crucial to MTSS success. CoLAB employs fidelity checklists and regular observations to guarantee interventions meet intended standards.
- **Family and Community Engagement:** Engaging families and the community is integral to effective MTSS. CoLAB maintains regular communication with families, providing resources and workshops to support student learning at home.
- **Continuous Improvement:** CoLAB is dedicated to continuous improvement in MTSS implementation. Regular reflection on data and instructional practices, along with action research projects, identifies growth areas and celebrates successes, fostering a culture of ongoing improvement responsive to student needs.

Our dedication to excellence extends beyond the initial implementation of MTSS. We recognize that ongoing evaluation is essential to maintaining the effectiveness and relevance of our practices. Therefore, we have established a culture of continuous evaluation, wherein processes and outcomes are regularly assessed and refined. Through ongoing data collection, analysis, and stakeholder feedback, we identify areas for improvement and make necessary adjustments to optimize student outcomes. Artificial intelligence tools will be integrated to

enhance and accelerate student personalization and intervention. This commitment to continuous evaluation ensures that our MTSS framework remains responsive to the evolving needs of our student body and continues to uphold the highest standards of equity and excellence in education.

5. **Student Assessment**
    a. **Presents a comprehensive assessment system, including diagnostic, formative, benchmark, interim and summative assessments.**

At CoLAB, we are dedicated to implementing a comprehensive assessment system that aligns with our curriculum and educational philosophy, which focuses on project-based learning and personalized education.

Our assessment framework integrates diagnostic, formative, benchmark, interim, and summative assessments to provide a holistic view of each student's learning journey. By leveraging data, we aim to continuously enhance both individual student support and overall system quality, ultimately minimizing formal testing time through targeted and effective assessment practices.

**Foundational Student Assessment**

The foundation of our assessment framework was developed in alignment with CSDE's guidance on Sensible Assessment Practices. Upon enrollment, the process will begin with a review of existing data provided for each student by their sending district to CoLAB as well as the provision of a Home Language survey and a review of any existing IEPs or Behavioral Plans. This review will include longitudinal data that is not assessment-based, such as previous attendance and disciplinary records, as well as assessment-based data, such as students' previous performance on required state exams.

**CoLAB Summer**

Based on individual student needs, CoLAB staff will begin to learn about students in three areas:

1. **Reading:**
    - All students will be assessed in Reading using the NWEA Reading assessment. As a nationally normed assessment, NWEA will provide a diagnostic level for each student in reading. Ninth and tenth grade students will take NWEA three times per year.
    - All students, regardless of ability, will enroll in MobyMax to take an initial assessment and participate in the lessons during part of their summer learning day. The initial assessment will result in identifying a student's fundamental reading skills (decoding and phonetic awareness) and providing a Lexile level to identify each student's instructional reading level. Some students will have a longer or shorter learning stint with MobyMax based on their reading performance. Students who struggle with phonological awareness and/or are ENL learners will receive focused assistance during the summer and school year.
2. **Math:**

- All students will be assessed in Math using the NWEA Math assessment. As a nationally normed assessment, NWEA will provide a diagnostic level for each student in math. Ninth and tenth grade students will take NWEA three times per year.
- All students, regardless of ability, will enroll in MobyMax to take an initial assessment and participate in the lessons during part of their summer learning day. The initial assessment will result in identifying a student's fundamental math skills and provide data for each student's instructional math level. Some students will have a longer or shorter learning stint with MobyMax based on their math performance.

3. **Pathway Interests:**
    - CoLAB is committed to enabling students to learn and achieve in five pathway areas: Media and Communication Arts; Business and Entrepreneurship; AI, Machine Learning, and Robotics; Biotech and Health Sciences; and Social Impact and Global Changes.
    - During the summer, students will have the opportunity to explore each of these areas. Students will not have to identify a pathway until the end of their 10th grade year.

We also recognize that for most students the CoLAB model will be a different approach to teaching and learning. Therefore, during CoLAB Summer and their 9th grade year, students will engage in explicit practice in the CoLAB Habits of Mind and the CoLAB CODE behaviors necessary to be successful in the model. See Appendix G for more on CoLAB CODE.

**Grade 9 and Beyond**

Once a student arrives for their first day of school, CoLAB will begin to gather additional performance data that we can use to adapt the student-centered approach to teaching and academic support. This process will also align with that presented by CSDE in that this work will take place on a cyclical basis, whereby teachers are:

- Using diagnostic assessments to identify strengths and weaknesses, especially in the prerequisite skills for on-grade content.
- Delivering differentiated instruction covering grade-level content and personalized to needs and interests of students.
- Using formative assessment practices to gauge impact and adjust instruction.
- Offering Tier 2 supports based on formative assessment info that are either embedded in the classroom or provided separately.
- Administering aligned, on-grade, locally-designed, performance-based assessments to evaluate mastery of learning.

CoLAB will then record all relevant data within the student information system in order to track and motivate students through their CoLAB program. In true commitment to personalized learning, all students will receive targeted coaching and support in order to help students to make predictions and recommendations about what a student should take next or

explore within the CoLAB extension program. Students will also be engaged in a process to understand their data and to work with their educators to create a feasible course of action when corrections are needed.

**Assessment Tools**

Utilizing the selected assessments at CoLAB is essential to our mission of providing a truly guided pathway for each individual student. By embracing data-informed practices, we ensure that every student receives personalized support tailored to their unique needs. The variety of assessments we have chosen offers a comprehensive, holistic view of each student, which is crucial for effective personalization in education.

CoLAB believes in the efficacy of nationally-validated exams and assessment tools. These will be the primary tools for formative assessment at our school, ensuring reliable and standardized measures of student progress.

| Assessment | Grades Assessed | Implementation Schedule | Purpose |
|---|---|---|---|
| Formative | | | |
| Generative AI | Grades 9-12 | Daily | |
| NWEA | Grades 9 & 10<br><br>Grade 11 as needed | Fall, Winter, Spring | Informing instruction and goal setting for students and classrooms |
| PSAT 8/9 | Grade 9 | Spring | State Accountability |
| PSAT 10 | Grades 10 & 11 | Spring | State Accountability |
| Content Mid-Term Exams | Grades 9-12 | 2x/year | Determination of standards proficiency/mastery<br><br>Determination of interventions/ supports needed |
| DESSA | Grades 9-12 | Fall, Winter, Spring | Assess Student Well-Being |
| Summative | | | |
| NGSS | Grade 11 | Spring | State Accountability |
| SAT | Grades 11 & 12 | Spring | State Accountability |
| Content Final Exams | Grades 9-12 | 2x/year | Determination of standards proficiency/mastery<br><br>Partial determination of high school credit |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Formative & Summative | | | |
| Woodcock Johnson; other Specific Assessments | As Needed | As Needed | Per RTI, IEP |
| Accuplacer | Grades 9, 10, or 11 | Fall, Spring | School-wide Program Assessment |
| ENL Assessment (LAS LINKS) | All students who identify a home language other than English on enrollment forms and all students who come to CoLAB as identified MLLs. | LAS LINKS given within first 2 weeks after enrollment and through grades 9-12.<br><br>WIDA Model used as a progress monitoring tool at least 2x/year. | LAS LINKS<br>WIDA Model |
| Benchmark | | | |
| CT Physical Fitness Test | Grades 10 or 11 | Fall | State Benchmark |

The rationale behind the selected assessments is rooted in our commitment to providing a comprehensive, data-informed approach to personalized education at CoLAB.

- The DESSA is included to measure SEL competencies. SEL is not only fundamental to our students' overall well-being but also aligns with the skills needed for future workplace success. By incorporating DESSA, we address both the academic and emotional dimensions of student development, fostering a well-rounded environment conducive to growth and learning.
- For English Learners (ELs), we have included the WIDA/ACCESS assessment. This tool screens and assesses ELs more regularly than the state's standard protocol. Although Connecticut does not participate in the WIDA consortium, we believe that a more frequent assessment than the state's LAS Links is necessary to tailor instruction fully. This inclusion supplements rather than replaces the state's tool, ensuring we can provide targeted support to our EL students.

Most of the assessments we have included align with or exceed state evaluation protocols. While we have gone beyond standard requirements, the vast majority of our chosen tools are either mandated or expected by the state. By integrating these with additional assessments, we enhance the robustness and efficacy of our data collection, providing a more comprehensive understanding of each student's needs.

Moreover, CoLAB recognizes the importance of offering multiple avenues for students to demonstrate mastery. In addition to nationally-validated exams, we have developed a comprehensive framework for Mastery-Based Performance Assessments, allowing students to showcase their skills and knowledge in diverse ways.

Our classroom assessments include:

- **Quizzes (Formative):** Evaluate standards proficiency, curriculum, instruction, pacing, differentiation, and support needs, scored by teachers/departments.

- **Tests and Benchmarks (Summative):** Assess standards proficiency twice per course each semester, scored by teachers/departments.
- **Performance-Based Assessments (Formative and Summative):** Determine proficiency, curriculum effectiveness, pacing, differentiation, and support needs, scored by teachers/departments.
- **Informal Assessments (Interim, Formative):** Use various methods like gaming, discussions, and surveys to assess standards proficiency and modify instruction, evaluated by teachers.

The selected assessments are integral to CoLAB's mission of delivering personalized educational pathways. They enable us to gain a broad, detailed understanding of student performance and needs, facilitating targeted, effective instruction and support. This holistic, data-driven approach, combined with multiple methods for demonstrating mastery, is essential for fostering student success both academically and personally.

**Project Based Assessments of Student Mastery (PBA)**

Mastery-based assessment will be linked to the daily CoLAB block and project-based learning units. As described under instruction, each 9-week cycle will include one or more Design Sprint and will consist of multiple project phases: Pre-assessment, Mutually-designed content, Learning Sprint, Design Sprint, and Written and Performance-based assessment. This model is based on the experience of the applicant group and grounded in research on the Authentic Self and Peer Assessment for Learning (ASPAL) model which "focuses on authentic assessment tasks and engages students by involving them in every step of the process from the creation of the criteria on which they will be marked, through to providing exemplars of work, pilot marking and providing peer feedback."[6]

1. **Pre-assessment:** "What do I know and need to know?"
   We know that student engagement is a critical component of classroom instruction and student learning. One way to engage students from the onset of instruction is to ask them what they already know and determine what students want to learn more about. It is the teacher's responsibility to then respond to those answers by connecting existing knowledge and interests to forthcoming content.
2. **Co-designed Content:** "What are the learning standards?"
   In an effort to build a more student-centric classroom where student ownership of the learning outweighs the teachers', the CoLAB model will support the "co-creation" of learning objectives built on the pre-assessment and student interest. As a first step, the teacher and students will analyze the pre-assessment responses in aggregate, review learning standards for the content area and establish shared learning standards guided by established state standards and content standards (ie NGSS for science).
3. **Learning Sprint:** "How will I demonstrate mastery of this content?"

[6] Kearney, S. P., & Perkins, T. (2014). Engaging Students through Assessment: The Success and Limitations of the ASPAL (Authentic Self and Peer Assessment for Learning) Model. Journal of University Teaching & Learning Practice, 11(3). https://ro.uow.edu.au/jutlp/vol11/iss3/2

At the heart of each classroom will be the Learning Sprint or a 5 to 6 week period where whole group, small group and individual instruction will drive each student toward mastery of the shared standard. Within each Learning Spring, each student will be designated within a flexible grouping format that will provide them with the appropriate content and resources to demonstrate mastery.

- **Learning group:** Each student will read articles and engage in learning activities and research in their designated learning areas. Students will apply their learning through various activities and assessments. As soon as a student has demonstrated mastery of the foundational knowledge, they will move on to work attributed to the next grouping—approaching.
- **Approaching group:** Each student will apply their foundational knowledge to modern world issues with support from their teacher. As soon as a student has demonstrated mastery in applying their knowledge across more broad situations, they will move to work attributed to the next grouping— applying.
- **Applying group:** Each student will apply their sophisticated understanding of Colonization toward building content for other learners, using social media to share analysis and arguments to defend their position.

Shared Inquiry methodology pervades our curricular model. Inspired by the Great Books Foundation, CoLAB's Shared Inquiry is focused on rich and culturally relevant text conversations that require students to participate in text-based responses and question generation to engage their classmates in deep interpretation and application of the text.

4. **Design Sprint (3 weeks):** Derived from the model created by Jake Knapp at Google, the Design Sprint methodology will provide the opportunity for students to develop a solution that emerges from the content explored in their learning sprint (and essential questions). After a sprint, students will ask "How might we solve this problem?" and generate one or two solutions that could be applied to their school, local, and/or global community.
5. **Written and Performance-Based Assessment (1 week):** These "end of unit" or end of "Sprint" assessments will provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of application of learning to content problems. Students will synthesize their understanding and new knowledge into a selected demonstration format (presentation, paper, instructional video, etc.).

We will use the same framework in every core content class, providing students with opportunities to engage deeply in the content, make connections to their learning, apply critical thinking and inquiry skills, and produce solutions.

Assessment in this will also be multidimensional, focusing on the following:

1. **Performance**

Student(s) ability to execute all design sprint stages, steps, and processes with his/her team utilizing the skills and competencies outlined. Specialized performance-based tasks aligned to content standards.

2. **Application of Knowledge**

Student(s) ability to understand the issue, analyze the problem, and produce a quality solution using content knowledge, research, and collaborative learning in alignment with the content-based standards of the course.

3. **Team Dynamics**

Self-assessment completed by each team member to reflect on dynamics of participation, performance, communication, and team-based efforts. The individual ratings are used to develop a team score.

4. **Habits of Mind**

Student(s) ability to perform the design sprint with the habits of mind identified in alignment with the project.

In order to demonstrate mastery in these areas, students will be assessed in the following ways:

1. Pre-assessment in the days prior to students' participation in a design sprint.
2. Student choice of how to demonstrate mastery of a focus area.
3. Learning sprints followed by self-evaluation, where students will work with teachers to determine their evaluation of mastery towards a content area, habit or topic.

Performance levels for these assessments include:

- **Learning** (students who demonstrate little or no knowledge of the content and require significant coaching): While being taught at the grade level instruction, this group will require scaffolds and foundational readings/exercises to gain a higher level of learning in this content area.
- **Approaching** (students who demonstrate a foundational amount of knowledge who need work on synthesizing and broadening their application abilities): While being taught at the grade level instruction, this group will require additional readings and opportunities to apply their knowledge to other situations.
- **Applying** (students who demonstrate a strong foundational knowledge and can apply the content in multiple situations): These students will require opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge through digital media creation, performance tasks, and experience building for other students to learn from.

An example of PBA activities aligned to a 10th grade History course is provided below:

1. **Pre-assessment:** "What do I know and need to know?"
   Students are asked a series of questions about the Industrial Revolution that will inform the teacher about their knowledge of the subject, understanding of how it still applies, and its impact on cultures and populations.
2. **Co-designed Content:** "What is the learning standard?"
   Based on the pre-assessment, the teacher and students will analyze the responses in aggregate, review learning standards for 10th grade history, and establish a shared learning standard guided by established state standard and relevant C3 standards. In the

case of the 10th grade history class, the learning standard may be something to the effect of "How did the Industrial Revolution impact the economic, social, and governmental systems in the US and across the globe?

3. **Learning Sprint:** "How will I demonstrate mastery of this content?"
   Each student will be designated within a flexible grouping format that will provide them with the appropriate content and resources to demonstrate mastery.
   - **Learning group:** Each student will read articles and engage in learning activities on the industrial revolution. Students will apply their learning to the foundational definitions and examples of industrial revolutions. As soon as a student has demonstrated mastery of the foundational knowledge, they will move on to work attributed to the next grouping—approaching.
   - **Approaching group:** Each student will apply their foundational knowledge to modern world issues with support from their teacher. As soon as a student has demonstrated mastery in applying their knowledge across more broad situations, they will move to work attributed to the next grouping— applying.
   - **Applying group:** Each student will apply their sophisticated understanding of Colonization toward building content for other learners, using social media to share analysis and arguments to defend their position.
4. **Design Sprint (3 weeks):** Design Sprint methodology will provide the opportunity for students to develop a solution that emerges from the content explored in their learning sprint (and essential question). After a sprint, students will ask "How might we solve this problem?" and generate one or two solutions that could be applied to their school, local, and/or global community. For example, students might notice that the Industrial Revolution led to an increase in carbon gasses and the current acceleration of climate change. Students then may conduct a design sprint focused on the question: How can the carbon footprint from a current industry be reduced using modern technologies?
5. **Written and Performance-Based Assessment (1 week):** Assessments to gauge mastery of application of learning to content problem. Students will synthesize their understanding of the impact of the Industrial Revolution and reflect on their learning from the solution-finding process. Students may demonstrate their knowledge and skills through written product, a mixed- or multi-media product, or digital product.

**Alignment with Educational Philosophy**

The comprehensive assessment system at CoLAB is meticulously designed to align with our curriculum and educational philosophy, emphasizing project-based learning and personalized education. Here are the key points of alignment:

- **Project-Based Learning (PBL):** Our assessments support our curriculum's emphasis on experiential learning and inquiry-based education.
- **Comprehensive Assessment Types:** By integrating diagnostic, formative, benchmark, interim, and summative assessments, we provide a holistic view of each student's

learning journey, matching our curriculum's goal of fostering academic excellence through rigorous content standards.

- **Personalized Education:** Our use of diagnostic tools (e.g., NWEA MAP, MobyMax, Magna Math) and interest assessments to tailor individual learning plans aligns with our educational philosophy that education should be personalized and responsive to each student's needs and interests.
- **Preparation for the Fourth Industrial Revolution:** The assessment system's integration of digital tools and skill-building initiatives aligns with our commitment to preparing students for future technological advancements and the demands of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.
- **Collaboration and Innovation:** Emphasizing collaborative learning and innovative thinking, our assessments foster an environment where students engage in inquiry, problem-solving, and digital literacy, supporting the core tenets of our educational philosophy.
- **Continuous Improvement:** The use of data from various assessments to drive continuous improvement resonates with our commitment to evidence-based practices, ensuring our teaching methods and student support strategies are constantly evolving to meet high standards of academic achievement.
- **Alignment with Curricular Resources:** Tools like MobyMax, Magna Math, and NWEA MAP assessments complement our selected curricular resources, ensuring foundational skill-building and adherence to rigorous academic standards.
- **Agile Curriculum Planning:** The iterative, collaborative approach in our curriculum development mirrors the agile practices described in our assessment framework, ensuring a dynamic and responsive educational environment.

Our comprehensive approach to classroom assessment ensures that we accurately gauge student learning and provide the necessary support to enhance their educational journey. By integrating formative, summative, and informal assessments, we maintain a dynamic and responsive learning environment tailored to each student's needs.

**b. Indicates how the assessment system ensures the participation of all students on both the state mandated testing and other alternative assessments.**

CoLAB's commitment to inclusive education extends to all aspects of our academic program, including assessments. We understand the importance of ensuring the participation of all students, including general education students, students with disabilities, and English Learners/Multilingual Learners, in various assessments mandated by the state of Connecticut. Here's how we plan to achieve this:

- **Promoting Data-Driven Decision Making:** CoLAB will instill in students the significance of using data to inform their academic journey. Through consistent reinforcement of this idea, students will understand that supports and interventions can be tailored based on progress data. This approach empowers students to take ownership of their learning and make informed decisions about their academic trajectory.

- **Establishing High Expectations and Consistent Support:** We will set and maintain high expectations for all students participating in both internal assessments and state-mandated testing. Our staff will receive training to ensure a deep understanding of assessment protocols and procedures, fostering a supportive environment where every student feels encouraged and capable of demonstrating their knowledge and skills.
- **Implementing a Full Inclusion Model:** CoLAB operates on a full inclusion model, meaning that every student, regardless of disability, language needs, or other challenges, will receive the necessary support to complete required assessments. We are committed to creating an inclusive environment where all students can actively engage in the assessment process and showcase their abilities.
- **Providing Accommodations and Modifications:** Recognizing the diverse needs of our student population, CoLAB will make accommodations and modifications that are appropriate and allowable for each individual student. These accommodations may include extended time, assistive technology, or alternate formats, ensuring that every student can demonstrate their understanding and skills to the best of their ability.
- **Partnering with Families:** We understand the importance of family involvement in supporting students during testing. CoLAB will work closely with families to emphasize the significance of student attendance on testing days and provide resources to help families understand the assessment process and its relevance to their child's academic progress. Our community school model centers parents as year round partners and aligns the appropriate community based resources to support the holistic development of students.
- **Facilitating Understanding of Assessment Results:** Once assessment scores are released, CoLAB will collaborate with students to support them in understanding their results. Through individualized feedback and guidance, students will gain insight into their strengths and areas for growth, empowering them to leverage assessment data to further their academic development.

By implementing these strategies, CoLAB ensures that all students have the opportunity to participate meaningfully in assessments and receive the support they need to succeed academically. We are committed to fostering an inclusive environment where every student can thrive and reach their full potential.

**c. Explains how assessments will be used to determine, monitor, and report student, cohort, and school progress over time.**

CoLAB has developed a comprehensive approach to assessing and utilizing student data to ensure continuous improvement of individual student support and overall system quality. Our assessment framework is grounded in alignment with the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) guidance on Sensible Assessment Practices. This approach begins with a thorough review of existing data for each student, including longitudinal data such as previous attendance and disciplinary records, as well as assessment-based data from previous state exams. CoLAB uses a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) for monitoring student progress and

providing academic and non-academic help. The system has different tiers based on the level of support a student needs. (See Appendix C for the complete chart outlining the steps, people involved, and their roles).

**Pre-Entry and Summer Assessments**

Before students enter CoLAB, we conduct a detailed review of their data, including home language surveys and existing IEPs or behavioral plans. This pre-entry assessment phase ensures we understand each student's background and needs. During CoLAB Summer, we gather baseline data through the MobyMax, NWEA MAP assessments, writing assessments, and strength-finding/interest assessments. This initial data collection helps us create individualized learning plans tailored to each student's academic strengths and interests, facilitating early interventions where necessary.

**Focus Areas and Diagnostic Assessments**

Our assessment strategy focuses on three critical areas: reading, math, and pathway interests. Students are assessed in reading and math using the NWEA MAP assessments, which provide diagnostic levels and are administered three times per year. All students participate in initial assessments through MobyMax Learning (for reading) and Magna Math (for math) during summer learning days. These assessments identify fundamental skills and instructional levels, allowing us to provide targeted support, particularly for students struggling with phonological awareness or those who are English as a New Language (ENL) learners.

**Ongoing Assessment and Instructional Adjustment**

Once the school year begins, we continue to gather performance data to adapt our student-centered teaching approaches. Teachers use diagnostic assessments to identify strengths and weaknesses, deliver differentiated instruction, and employ formative assessment practices to adjust instruction as needed. Tier 2 supports are offered based on formative assessment information, either embedded in the classroom or provided separately. This cyclical process ensures continuous monitoring and adjustment to meet student needs effectively.

**Performance and Mastery-Based Assessments**

CoLAB utilizes a blend of nationally-validated exams and mastery-based performance assessments to evaluate student progress. Project-Based Assessments (PBAs) are integral to our approach, linking assessment to CoLAB's Key Design Elements (KDEs) and project-based learning units. Each 9-week cycle includes phases such as pre-assessment, mutually-designed content, learning sprints, design sprints, and written/performance-based assessments. This model engages students in authentic tasks and peer assessment, fostering deeper learning and skill application.

**Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)**

Our Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework ensures continuous monitoring and support for all students, particularly those not meeting their goals. Regular progress monitoring, data-driven interventions, and individual learning plans guide students through targeted supports. Weekly team meetings, quarterly data days, and semesterly reviews facilitate

collaborative analysis and planning among teachers and school leaders. This structured review process helps identify and address student needs promptly.

**Student Involvement and Self-Reflection**

Students are actively involved in their assessment and intervention processes. Weekly reflections during Basecamp sessions, quarterly conferences with parents/guardians, and end-of-course exhibitions allow students to review their performance, set goals, and receive feedback. At the same time, ongoing use of AI to personalize student support and learning will enhance student reflection and response planning. This engagement fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility for their learning journey.

**Communication and Collaboration**

Effective communication and collaboration are key to our approach. We maintain high expectations for all students and ensure consistent support through training and a full inclusion model. Parents/guardians are kept informed of their child's progress and involved in supporting their learning plans. Teachers collaborate regularly to discuss student data, instructional strategies, and necessary interventions, ensuring a cohesive and supportive learning environment.

**Alignment with Our Mission**

Our assessment framework is intricately tied to CoLAB's mission, which is to unlock the ability for all students to be critical thinkers, social advocates, and digital leaders. The robust data review and pre-entry assessments allow us to tailor educational experiences that cultivate critical thinking from the onset. Focused diagnostic assessments in reading, math, and pathway interests ensure that every student receives the support needed to excel academically and develop into informed, analytical thinkers.

Ongoing assessments and instructional adjustments are pivotal in nurturing social advocacy among our students. By continuously adapting our teaching methods based on formative data, we empower students to engage with learning materials in ways that resonate with their individual and collective social contexts. This adaptive approach nurtures their ability to advocate for themselves and their communities.

The integration of mastery-based and project-based assessments directly supports our goal of fostering digital leadership. These assessments challenge students to apply their learning in digital contexts, preparing them for the technological demands of future industries. Moreover, the emphasis on performance-based tasks and peer assessments encourages students to take initiative, collaborate effectively, and lead within digital environments.

Our Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) ensures that no student is left behind, providing the necessary scaffolding to help all students become agents of positive change. By addressing academic and non-academic needs through regular monitoring and targeted interventions, we equip students with the resilience and skills required to effect change in their lives and beyond.

Involving students in their own assessment and reflection processes instills a sense of responsibility and agency, essential qualities for social advocates and digital leaders. Regular communication with parents and collaboration among educators further solidify a support system

that reinforces our mission to prepare students for impactful roles in their industries and the global community.

By aligning our comprehensive assessment framework with our mission, we ensure that the education students receive at CoLAB not only meets academic standards but also empowers them to become critical thinkers, social advocates, and digital leaders, ready to serve as agents of positive change within their own lives, their future professions, and the broader global community.

**d. Demonstrates how assessment data will be used to improve curriculum, instruction, and tiered supports.**

At CoLAB, we have developed a comprehensive approach to utilizing student assessment data to enhance curriculum, instruction, and tiered supports, ensuring that each student receives personalized and effective educational experiences. Our strategy is built upon a multi-faceted assessment framework, rigorous data analysis, and collaborative review processes that involve students, teachers, school leaders, and families.

**Diverse and Regular Assessments**

CoLAB employs a variety of academic and non-academic assessments, as outlined in Appendix C. These include formative and summative assessments, project-based assessments, and student feedback surveys. By integrating these assessments within the learning process, we minimize disruption to instructional time and embed evaluation seamlessly into daily activities.

**Continuous Data Analysis and Application**

Assessment data at CoLAB is analyzed regularly to monitor student progress, identify strengths, and pinpoint areas needing additional support. We employ both aggregated and disaggregated data analysis to ensure no student subgroup is disproportionately affected based on race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, grade level, or classroom. This ongoing analysis informs instructional planning, program evaluation, and the measurement of student growth towards established achievement targets.

**Structured Review Processes**

CoLAB has established a robust structure for the regular review of student performance data:

- **Weekly Team Meetings:** Teachers participate in structured team meetings that rotate biweekly between grade teams and departments. These meetings, guided by protocols such as "Looking at Student Work," "Tuning," "Data Inquiry," and "Inquiry of Equity," focus on reviewing formative and summative data, student work, and feedback surveys.
- **Quarterly Data Days:** During quarterly data days, teachers engage in collaborative analysis and planning, reviewing interim assessment performance, marking period data, attendance, behavioral performance, and school culture data.
- **Semesterly Reviews:** Teachers and school leaders evaluate end-of-course projects and student work against standards-based rubrics, using the insights gained to update and improve curricular resources and instructional strategies.

**Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)**

Our MTSS framework is designed to provide tiered support based on the needs identified through data analysis as well as personalization through the use of artificial intelligence. This system includes:

- **Day-to-Day Support:** Regular monitoring and support structures to address immediate student needs.
- **Progress Monitoring:** For students needing additional assistance, data from assessments and teacher input trigger the RTI or MTSS process to provide targeted interventions.

**Student Involvement in Data Review**

Students at CoLAB play an active role in reviewing their performance data:

- **Weekly Reflections:** During Basecamp sessions, students reflect on their attendance, homework completion, and formative assessments, identifying areas for improvement.
- **Quarterly Conferences:** Students, along with their parents/guardians, participate in conferences to discuss performance and set goals for growth.
- **End-of-Course Exhibitions:** Students showcase their work through community exhibitions, receiving feedback from peers, teachers, and families. They also provide course feedback through surveys, contributing to the continuous improvement of instructional practices.

**Communication and Collaboration**

Effective communication and collaboration are integral to our approach:

- **Parent/Guardian Involvement:** We ensure parents/guardians are informed of their child's progress and collaborate with them to support the student's learning plan.
- **Teacher Collaboration:** Teachers and school leaders engage in regular discussions about student data, instructional strategies, and necessary interventions during structured planning times and team meetings.

CoLAB's comprehensive use of student assessment data ensures that our curriculum and instruction are continuously refined to meet the diverse needs of our students. Our structured review processes, collaborative approach, and focus on continuous improvement enable us to provide robust tiered supports, fostering an inclusive and effective learning environment for all students.

**e. Describes a clear process to use assessment data to apply appropriate and timely tiered student interventions, support, and targeted goals.**

At CoLAB, we have a structured and systematic process for using assessment data to provide timely and appropriate tiered interventions, support, and targeted goals. Our approach ensures that students who do not meet established achievement targets receive the necessary assistance to improve their performance and achieve their academic goals.

**Continuous Data Collection and Monitoring**

CoLAB employs a comprehensive assessment framework that includes both academic and non-academic assessments, such as formative and summative assessments, project-based assessments, and student feedback surveys. These assessments are embedded within the learning process to minimize disruption and ensure continuous data collection.

**Regular Review and Analysis of Data**

Our data review process is highly structured and involves multiple stakeholders:

- **Weekly Team Meetings:** Teachers participate in weekly team meetings that rotate biweekly between grade teams and departments. These meetings are facilitated using structured protocols such as "Looking at Student Work," "Tuning," "Data Inquiry," and "Inquiry of Equity." During these meetings, teachers review aggregated and disaggregated student performance data, identify trends, and discuss areas needing attention.
- **Quarterly Data Days:** Teachers engage in collaborative analysis and planning during quarterly data days, reviewing interim assessment performance, marking period data, attendance, behavioral performance, and school culture data.
- **Semesterly Reviews:** At the end of each semester, teachers and school leaders evaluate student projects and work against standards-based rubrics, providing insights for curriculum updates and instructional improvements.

**Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)**

Our MTSS framework is designed to provide tiered support based on the needs identified through data analysis:

- **Day-to-Day Support:** Teachers monitor student progress daily, identifying students who are struggling and providing immediate support through differentiated instruction and additional learning opportunities.
- **Progress Monitoring:** For students who do not meet established achievement targets, we initiate a more structured intervention process. This includes:
    - **Individual Learning Plans (GPS):** Each student has an individual learning plan that records their progress and recommends next steps. Teachers and administrators use this plan to guide one-on-one goal review meetings with students, where they reconstruct the student's plan and add appropriate supports, such as after-school programs and online resources.

      **Parental Involvement:** CoLAB staff communicate with parents/guardians to ensure they are aware of their child's progress. Parents/guardians are involved in signing off on the student's learning plan and receive weekly updates on their child's progress.
    - **Teacher Collaboration:** Teachers discuss how to support underperforming students during designated Weekly Team Meetings, exploring options such as alternate assignments, reintegration strategies, and schedule adjustments.

**Targeted Interventions and Supports**

When a student is identified as needing additional support, the following steps are taken:

- **Individual Meetings:** Students meet with teachers or administrators to review their individual learning plans, set targeted goals, and identify improvement strategies.
- **Academic Intervention Conferences:** Students who average less than 70% in any course within a four-week period participate in academic intervention conferences.

During these conferences, teachers and students collaboratively develop a plan of action to address areas of weak performance.

- **Response to Intervention (RTI) Process:** For students requiring more intensive support, we initiate the RTI process. This involves a thorough review of the student's data profile and teacher input to design tailored interventions.

**Student Involvement and Self-Reflection**

Students are actively involved in the assessment and intervention process:

- **Weekly Reflections:** During Basecamp sessions, students complete weekly reflections tracking their attendance, homework completion, and formative assessments. They identify improvement strategies within their control and available resources with the support of artificial intelligence.
- **Quarterly Conferences:** Students participate in quarterly conferences with their parents/guardians to review performance and discuss areas for growth.
- **End-of-Course Exhibitions:** Students showcase their work through exhibitions, receiving feedback from peers, teachers, and families, and providing feedback on courses through surveys.

This teacher training and support framework is based on the Common Formative Assessment (©2012, 2007; Solution Tree Press). See Appendix C for more details.

CoLAB's structured and systematic approach to using assessment data ensures that students receive timely and appropriate tiered interventions and support. Our comprehensive process, involving continuous data collection, regular review and analysis, AI integration, and active student involvement, enables us to address the needs of students who do not meet established achievement targets effectively. This approach fosters a supportive and responsive learning environment, helping all students achieve their academic goals.

## II. STRENGTH OF ORGANIZATIONAL EFFORT

1. **Experience and Expertise of Founders**
    a. **Demonstrates clear expertise and relevant experiences and/or qualifications of the founders.**

Dr. Adrian Manuel, the proposed Chairperson for the school's Board of Trustees, brings over twenty years of distinguished experience in urban education to CoLAB. With a robust track record of transforming school outcomes, Dr. Manuel recently moved to the interim executive director role at Merrick Academy Queens Public Charter School in July to pursue the development of Taino CoLAB School, after serving there for five years. His strategic leadership at Merrick has driven the accreditation process for International Baccalaureate programs, led the school through a successful renewal cycle, and expanded their charter to include a middle school program.

Dr. Manuel's career began in 2000 as a social studies teacher in the Bronx, where he spent his first five years. He then became a middle school principal in the Bronx, leading a turnaround project that improved the school's performance from the 5th percentile to the 74th

percentile citywide in three years. Following this success, he took on the leadership of Kingston High School, a large comprehensive high school, where he increased the graduation rate by 15%, reaching 87%.

He then served as Head of School at the SEED School of Washington DC, the nation's first public charter boarding school for grades 6-12. Under his leadership, the graduation rate was consistently above 90%. As a school turnaround leader in Long Island, Dr. Manuel further demonstrated his capability to drive substantial improvements in challenging environments.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. Manuel served as Superintendent at Wonderful College Prep Academy, where he effectively navigated the transition to distance learning and then back to in-person instruction. At Wonderful College Prep, the graduation rate exceeded 95%, with 40% of students graduating with an associate's degree through the early college program.

In addition to his leadership roles, Dr. Manuel has consulted with school leaders and teams on strategic planning, school redesign, and inquiry-based approaches to teaching and learning. His work has been featured in the books Cage-Busting Leadership and Cage-Busting Teachers by Rick Hess, highlighting his innovative and effective approaches to education.

Dr. Manuel holds a BA from New York University, an MS in Secondary Education from Lehman College, an MPA from Baruch College, and a Doctorate in Educational and Organizational Leadership from the University of Pennsylvania. His extensive experience and proven leadership make him an ideal candidate to lead CoLAB in setting a new standard in secondary education.

Mr. Bill Clarke, the school's Design Partner supporting curriculum and teacher development, is a highly-respected educator and school systems reformer. Mr. Clarke is currently the CEO and Principal Consultant for Results Ahead LLC, an organization which exists to help schools implement bold ideas in support of dramatic improvement through leadership coaching, school design and adolescent literacy. Prior to starting this firm, Mr. Clarke served as the National Growth Officer for the Springboard Collaborative, the Chief Partnerships Officer for School Turnaround at the Rensselaerville Institute, Executive Director of the Office of School Innovation for the New York State Education Department, the Manager of School Transformation at the Rhode Island Department of Education, and the instructional leader for two successful charter high schools in Providence, RI. He has extensive experience designing school models and organizations across the country. He continues to work with schools through leadership coaching and in the use of adolescent literacy and with both schools and organizations through design and systems thinking. Mr. Clarke holds a BA in English from the University of Texas at Austin, MAEd in C&I from University of Mississippi and MEd in Ed Leadership from Providence College. Mr. Clarke was also a DeWitt Wallace Writing Fellow at Middlebury College and is a Globally Certified Design Sprint Facilitator.

**b. Specifies the role of the founding group in the development and launch of the proposed school. Includes founding members anticipated role or relationship with the proposed school.**

The founding group of CoLAB is composed of experienced education professionals who bring a wealth of knowledge and expertise to the development and launch of the proposed school. Their roles are strategically designed to ensure a successful start and sustainable growth for the institution.

**Dr. Adrian Manuel -** Chairperson for the school's Board of Trustees

Dr. Adrian Manuel will serve as the Chairperson for the school's Board of Trustees. With extensive experience in educational leadership and school management, Dr. Manuel will oversee the strategic planning, operational execution, and overall administration of the school. His role includes guiding the vision and mission of CoLAB, ensuring the school meets its academic and organizational goals, and fostering a positive and inclusive school culture.

**Mr. Bill Clarke - School Design Partner**

Mr. Bill Clarke will support the school as a School Design Partner focused on curriculum and teacher development. . Mr. Clarke's responsibilities will include developing and implementing the school's academic programs, ensuring curriculum alignment with state standards, and promoting instructional excellence. He will work closely with faculty to support their professional development and enhance student learning outcomes. Mr. Clarke's role is pivotal in maintaining high academic standards and driving the continuous improvement of teaching and learning at CoLAB.

The collaborative efforts of these founding members will be instrumental in the successful establishment and growth of CoLAB, ensuring that the school meets its objectives and provides a high-quality education to its students.

**c. Identifies any organizations, agencies, or consultants that are partners in designing and launching the proposed school and provides evidence of the partner's ability to operate a high-quality school.**

**Arizona State University (ASU) Prep Network**

CoLAB will be the first partner school on the East Coast within ASU Prep's innovative network of K-12 schools. This groundbreaking partnership provides:

- Membership in the ASU Prep K-12 Innovation Alliance for sharing best practices
- Comprehensive support from ASU faculty during the planning and launch phases
- Access to ASU's expertise in developing models for college/career readiness

As an ASU Prep partner school, CoLAB will benefit from robust resources, cutting-edge research, and a collaborative network to drive educational excellence.

**Leadership, Empowerment, Action, and Development (LEAD)**

LEAD will be an integral partner in implementing the Community School Model at CoLAB, serving as the primary community-based organization and liaison for community partnerships and programming. Their role includes:

- Providing essential services such as health, wellness, and mental health support through partnerships with local organizations (see partner support letters in Appendix F).
- Coordinating ESL/ENL classes in collaboration with EdAdvance to support English Language Learners.

- Facilitating cultural connectivity through classes, workshops, and events that celebrate Taino and Latino heritage.
- Organizing a variety of after-school programs in partnership with organizations like Arts for Learning.
- Developing workplace readiness and internship opportunities with community businesses and organizations.

With LEAD's extensive resources and expertise, CoLAB will be well-positioned to deliver a comprehensive and enriching educational experience, creating a vibrant community hub that supports both students and their families.

These strategic partnerships with ASU and LEAD provide CoLAB with a powerful foundation for success, combining innovative approaches, proven practices, and a shared commitment to educational excellence for all students.

**2. School Governance and Management**

**a. Provides a viable governance structure and organizational chart showing proper oversight of various functions of the school.**

CoLABs founders have deep understanding and experience in leading effective charter schools. This expertise informs CoLAB's innovative governance structure, which is designed to be responsive to student and community needs while implementing best practices in charter school governance from Connecticut and across the nation.

**Legal and Regulatory Framework**

Upon approval, CoLAB will be recognized as a federally-recognized nonprofit entity. Pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes § 10-66aa (2015), CoLAB's Board of Trustees will hold the charter and legal contract with the Connecticut State Board of Education.

**Board of Trustees**

The CoLAB Board of Trustees will bear the overall legal, financial, and fiduciary responsibilities for the school. The board will provide external accountability, internal oversight, and leadership. Its primary role is to govern CoLAB in a manner that enables the school to achieve its mission.

The board, pursuant to its bylaws found in Appendix D3, will ensure that the standards and goals outlined in the charter application and agreement are met, and that CoLAB operates in compliance with all state and federal laws.

**Executive Director**

The Board of Trustees will hire and oversee the Executive Director, who will be responsible for the day-to-day management and operations of CoLAB.

**Responsibilities**

The Executive Director's key responsibilities will include:

- Overall administration and management of the school
- Implementation of board policies and directives
- Hiring and supervision of administrative staff and faculty
- Ensuring compliance with applicable laws and regulations

**Administrative Hiring**

Administrators will be hired by the Executive Director following standard human resources protocols, including:

- Developing detailed job descriptions and qualifications
- Conducting comprehensive recruitment and screening processes
- Performing background checks and reference verifications
- Negotiating employment terms and conditions

This approach ensures a consistent and rigorous process for building a highly qualified leadership team to support the school's operations and mission.

**Organizational Chart**

The organizational chart found in Appendix E illustrates the governance structure and oversight of various functions within the school over the first four years. The chart begins with the Board of Trustees at the top, followed by the Executive Director. Reporting to the Executive Director in the first year are the Operations Director, Chief Academic Officer, and an Office Assistant. The chart also outlines the reporting structure for all teachers and support staff. It highlights the school's anticipated growth, showing the addition of new positions and expanded roles as the school adds grades and increases student enrollment. This structured growth plan ensures a robust organizational framework to support the school's mission and operations.

**b. Presents a clear picture of the officers and members, terms, election/appointment processes, and committees. Includes resumes of initial council membership, showing a wide range of expertise and experiences.**

CoLAB will operate with a governing board of no fewer than six and no more than ten members. This includes the Executive Director who will serve as an ex-officio/non-voting member. The board members will serve two-year terms, renewable up to two times, allowing for a maximum of six years of service. This term structure promotes regular renewal and infusion of fresh perspectives while maintaining continuity and institutional knowledge. The board shall have the following officers:

- Chairperson
- Vice Chairperson
- Treasurer
- Secretary

**Recruitment and Selection**

CoLAB will utilize a comprehensive and strategic approach to recruit and select members for its Board of Trustees. This process will be guided by a board matrix that evaluates the board's current capacity and identifies any gaps in skills and expertise. Our priority will be to recruit individuals with strong backgrounds in finance, law, education, and connections to the Waterbury community. The founding board is actively seeking candidates from the following groups:

- 1-2 representatives from local/regional youth organizations
- 1-2 representatives from local businesses/organizations related to technology, business development, entrepreneurship, or workforce development

- 1 higher education partner
- 1-2 parents or prospective parents
- 1-2 regional or national partners related to our pathways and/or instructional model
- 1 local or regional community advocacy representative (parent group, youth group, religious leader, or equity-oriented group)
- 1-2 experienced educational leaders with backgrounds in our instructional model (pathways, project-based learning, inquiry-based pedagogy, early college, STEM, technology fields)

The board will not mandate specific roles (teacher, parent, student, Waterbury designee) on the board but will work to ensure diverse voices, including these groups and others, are appropriately represented. This representation will be achieved through formal presentations to the board, open public comments, and the board's active presence at school and community events.

**Board Member Recruitment Process**

CoLAB will follow a structured recruitment process based on best practices from the National Charter School Resource Center's "Charter School Governing Board Recruitment Tools":

1. **Establish a Governance Committee:** This committee will design and execute the recruitment process.
2. **Prepare Recruiting Materials and Interview Process:** Review board member agreements, bylaws, and other key documents.
3. **Determine Desired Board Composition:** Identify necessary skill sets to achieve strategic goals (e.g., real estate, finance, construction).
4. **Launch Recruitment Efforts:** Brainstorm networks and sources for prospective candidates.
5. **Interview and Selection Process:** The Governance Committee will interview top candidates.
6. **Onboarding New Members:** Provide orientation and training materials to new members.

Following the structured recruitment and onboarding process, CoLAB will also ensure ongoing support for board members. This includes orientation, continuous training, and post-award guidance to manage grant funds effectively, ensuring compliance and successful project implementation. To maintain a dynamic and effective board, CoLAB's board will continuously build a pipeline of future members.

**Strategic Committees for Informed Decision-Making**

Committees will support the board by conducting research on critical issues and offering recommendations to enhance the full board's decision-making. Each member will be appointed to sit on a minimum of one committee, led by a chairperson with relevant experience. Board members may sit on more than one committee at a time. Ad hoc committees may be established,

per board discretion, to focus and report on specific, time-sensitive tasks; these committees may be dissolved upon completion of their objectives.

Committee members will receive regular reports on key performance metrics to inform governance of CoLAB. As the board grows, committees may also grow. Three standing committees have been established as part of the permanent structure of CoLAB's proposed board, including:

- **Executive Committee (Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer and Secretary):** This committee will facilitate effective decision-making for the board. Members will be responsible for executing the Executive Director's evaluation. Members will address issues that arise at board meetings and serve as the communication link between regular meetings. This group will also be responsible for overseeing the school's board recruitment strategy and organizational succession plan. Minutes of the executive committee meetings shall be sent to each member of the board.
- **Academic Performance Committee:** This committee will analyze and monitor the academic performance of CoLAB and recommend to the board the adoption of academic policies consistent with CoLAB's vision, mission, and strategic direction. Members are responsible for adopting procedures of board-approved academic policies and protecting and enhancing the quality of the academic programs at all levels while working in conjunction with the Executive Director to monitor and advance the quality of all academic activities. The committee ensures rigor at all levels of CoLAB's academic and student support programs.
- **Finance Committee:** This committee will set and monitor the school's organizational budget. This group will be responsible for establishing and enforcing strong financial controls. Additionally, the finance committee will ensure that the school's operational budget is functioning in support of the school's stated mission and key design elements. The committee will work closely with the Executive Director and school financial staff and/or contractors to ensure that all audits, as well as state and federal reporting, are executed in alignment with the school's legal obligations and best practices for fiscal governance.

CoLAB will have a diverse board composed of members representing key skills and community representation. The executive committee will ensure an adequate size with a healthy subset of members representative of the proposed community. Board members will have backgrounds in law, finance, education, fundraising, business, real estate, and will be deeply connected and committed to Waterbury.

The full board will vote on board officers each year at the trustees' annual meeting. Board members may however join the board within any month of the year upon vote of the trustees. Each trustee will view themselves as an ambassador for the board, which includes serving as a recruiter for additional members.

**Founding Members of the Board of Trustees**

At the time of application, CoLAB has an established board of 4 members. These individuals include:

- **Dr. Adrian Manuel**, Dr. Adrian Manuel is proposed to serve as the Chairperson for the school's Board of Trustees (pending a vote by the CoLAB Board of Trustees upon establishment of 501c3). Dr. Manuel is an Education Leader with more than two decades of experience working in urban education as an educator, leader, and learner. He has experience with students and educators in elementary school, middle school, high school, and college. He has also worked with teams to create new schools and to turn around outcomes in existing schools.
- **Representative Juan Candelaria,** Juan Candelaria has been the State Representative for New Haven's 95th District since 2002. In 2017, he was appointed Deputy Speaker, the first Latino to hold this position. He is an active member of the Appropriations, Education, and General Law Committees.Candelaria is dedicated to improving educational opportunities, supporting undocumented immigrants, and advocating for social justice. His efforts have led to significant legislative advancements in these areas.In 2023, Candelaria was elected President-Elect of the National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators (NHCSL), positioning him to become the future president of this influential organization. He also served as Chair of the Black and Latino Caucus in 2013, driving initiatives to support undocumented immigrants and empower youth.Candelaria holds a Bachelor of Science from Albertus Magnus College and an MBA from the University of New Haven. He is deeply involved in various organizations, including the Connecticut State Hispanic Caucus and the National Conference of State Legislators. His work extends beyond legislative duties, actively supporting community organizations like the Spanish American Merchants Association (SAMA).Candelaria's commitment to his community and extensive professional experience in management and marketing complement his legislative achievements.
- **Steven Hernandez,** Steven Hernández, Esq. is the Executive Director of ConnCAN and has had a distinguished career in public service and education policy. He served the Connecticut General Assembly for 12 years in various capacities. Initially, he was the Director of Public Policy and Research for the Connecticut Commission on Children, focusing on improving children's policy. Subsequently, he became the Executive Director of the Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity & Opportunity. In this role, he led efforts to advocate for equitable policies affecting diverse populations across Connecticut.Hernández's extensive background includes seven years as legislative and budget director in the office of Washington, D.C., Council member Jim Graham. He has also served as a clerk for two judges in the District of Columbia Court of Appeals and as a consultant at the Washington law firm Baker & Miller, PLLC. His educational background includes a Bachelor of Arts from Bennington College and a Juris Doctor from the Washington College of Law at American University.At ConnCAN, Hernández

continues his commitment to enhancing educational access and outcomes, particularly for underserved children, focusing on policy-driven solutions to close the achievement gap and promote educational equity across Connecticut.

- **Jose Lucas Pimentel,** Jose Lucas Pimentel is a seasoned educator and community leader with 25 years of experience. He is the founder and CEO of Latinos for Educational Advocacy and Diversity (LEAD), which has expanded to six cities in Connecticut, providing vital educational resources and support to Latino communities.An immigrant from the Dominican Republic, Pimentel is also the founder of the Dominican Club of Connecticut and the Executive Director of Hope in Action, an organization that builds schools in the Dominican Republic. His dedication to education and community empowerment has earned him prestigious recognition from the President of the Dominican Republic for his outstanding leadership.Pimentel is a graduate of Western Connecticut State University, holding a BA in History, a Master's in Education, and 092 administrative certification. His work focuses on creating educational opportunities and advocating for those in need, reflecting his deep commitment to fostering growth and equity within the Latino community.

CoLAB, in coordination with LEAD, is also working with many organizational supporters in Waterbury to recruit additional members through their vast network. Dr. Manuel and Mr. Clarke have been on the ground meeting with community partners and leaders to solicit their involvement on the committee. Our team anticipates that all founding members will be in place within the next 90-120 days. In recruiting the remainder of members, we will follow the recruitment plans described on the previous page.

See Appendix D for resumes of our founding team members.

**c. Specifies the criteria for selecting officers and members of the governing council detailing the recruitment and removal process**

**Officer Appointment and Annual Election**

The board shall have the following officers:

- Chairperson
- Vice Chairperson
- Treasurer
- Secretary

The board will elect officers by majority vote at the board's annual meeting. Officers will serve for a designated term of one year, with the option for reappointment. This ensures ongoing accountability and alignment with the school's evolving needs.

**Removing Board Members**

CoLAB acknowledges that there are many reasons why effective board members may need to leave. The process to handle these situations includes:

1. **Address Concerns Directly:** Open communication with the member to address issues.
2. **Attempt to Resolve Issues:** Work collaboratively to find solutions.

3. **Recommend Resignation or Leave of Absence:** If unresolved, recommend stepping down or taking a leave.
4. **Initiate Removal Process:** Follow formal procedures if removal is necessary.
5. **Document the Process:** Ensure all steps are well-documented.

Maintaining positive relationships and continuity is essential. To achieve this, the board will recognize and document the contributions of outgoing members. This includes retaining valuable insights into their committee work and organizational history. Where appropriate, the board will also seek to retain their expertise in advisory roles through committee work and other opportunities.

By following these structured procedures, CoLAB will build a strong, effective, and sustainable governing board that will support the school's mission and goals.

**d. Describes how the governing council will exercise its responsibility to oversee the operation of the school including, but not limited to, educational programs, governance and fiscal management, personnel, facility maintenance, and community outreach. Indicates how the governing council will hold the school accountable to families and stakeholders.**

**Governance and Oversight Plan for CoLAB**

The governing council of CoLAB will exercise its responsibility to oversee the operation of the school through comprehensive and active engagement in all aspects of school management, including educational programs, governance and fiscal management, personnel, facility maintenance, and community outreach. Here is how the governing council will hold the school accountable to families and stakeholders:

1. **Active Oversight and Performance Goals:**
    - The board will set annual performance goals in academic success, student engagement, operational performance, and financial performance.
    - Board meetings and the academic performance and finance committees will keep the board informed of CoLAB's progress.
    - These committees will work closely with the Executive Director to fully understand the school's academic and financial performance.
2. **Structured Governance:**
    - The board will maintain a small, focused membership to ensure clarity in roles and teamwork.
    - Key governance areas, including educational programs, fiscal management, personnel, facility maintenance, and community outreach, will be standing items on the board's agenda.
    - Ad hoc committees may be formed as needed and will report to the full board monthly.
3. **Scheduled Updates and Reporting:**
    - Regular updates from key school staff will be scheduled throughout the year. These updates may include:

        - Presentations on student data trends following NWEA or state testing
        - Pathways presentations from students and industry partners
        - Financial updates from the school business manager on audits, 990 completion, or related matters
        - Reports from teachers or academic leaders on Project-Based Assessments of Student Mastery or curricular decisions
        - Attendance, discipline, and other early warning indicator data
    - Monthly updates from the finance committee will review spending, budget vs. actuals, projections, year-over-year comparisons, new purchase considerations, and emergency spending.

4. **Transparent Decision-Making:**
    - The board will follow Robert's Rules of Order for all meetings and decision-making processes.
    - Public comment sessions will be included in each meeting, and the school will comply with transparency, open government, and open meeting laws.
5. **Accountability and Evaluation:**
    - An annual self-evaluation of the board will be conducted to ensure effectiveness.
    - A rigorous "360" evaluation process for the Executive Director will gather feedback from multiple stakeholders to provide a comprehensive assessment of job performance.
    - The school's budget will include funds for an external review by an independent party, such as SchoolWorks, every other year starting in Year 3. This external review, combined with the Executive Director evaluation and student performance evaluation, will provide a holistic view of school progress over time.
6. **Community Engagement:**
    - The board will actively engage with the community, ensuring that families and stakeholders are informed and involved in the school's operations.
    - The board will prioritize communication and transparency, fostering a strong partnership with the community to support the school's mission and goals.

By implementing this governance and oversight plan, CoLAB's governing council will ensure the school operates effectively and remains accountable to its families and stakeholders, driving continuous improvement and success.

**e. Defines the roles, responsibilities, and interaction between council membership, committees, and school administration.**

The board of trustees will delegate the oversight and implementation of the school's daily operations to the school's administrator. The school's administrator will be responsible for overseeing all staff members, managing the school's lottery and enrollment processes, leading the instructional design, ensuring high-quality professional learning opportunities for teachers, and being continuously responsive to student and family needs.

The board chair will collaborate with the school's administrator to set the monthly agenda for each board meeting. The board chair will take responsibility for this action, with the Executive Director informing potential agenda items. The board's bylaws will further delineate the role of the board, focusing on the supervision of the school's strategic vision and Executive Director.

The chart below further enumerates this breakdown of responsibilities:

| Board Role | Shared Responsibilities | Executive Director Role |
|---|---|---|
| ● Establishing policy.<br>● Articulating the school's strategic vision.<br>● Holding the Executive Director accountable.<br>● Hiring Executive Director.<br>● Setting, approving, and monitoring the school's budget.<br>● Setting direction and approving plans for the school facilities. | ● Representing the school to parents, families, and the community. This includes proactive communication and addressing complaints.<br>● Monitoring school activities for equitable practices and outcomes.<br>● Monitoring progress of the school's strategic plan.<br>● Fund Development. | ● Implementing and/or supervising the implementation of the strategic vision set by the board.<br>● Managing day-to-day operations of the school related to:<br>○ Human Resources<br>○ Finance<br>○ Teaching and Learning<br>○ Family Communications<br>○ Academic progress monitoring and decision-making |

The board will rely on best practices in governance, including those from reputable organizations such as Board Source and BoardOnTrack, to guide its operations. Additionally, the board may seek consulting services from these agencies to enhance its governance practices, facilitate training, and support continuous improvement. This structured approach will ensure a cohesive interaction between council membership, committees, and school administration, promoting a collaborative and effective governance model.

**Developing Guiding Policies**

The board acknowledges its crucial responsibility to establish guiding policies that will serve as the foundation for the effective governance and operation of the charter school. Recognizing the importance of a well-defined policy framework, the board is committed to developing the following policies promptly after receiving approval:

- Board Member Agreement
- Code of conduct
- Conflict of Interest
- Documentation Retention and Destruction
- Family Educational Rights Privacy Act Policy
- Gift Acceptance
- Nondiscrimination
- Whistleblower

These foundational policies are recommended by Board Source[7] to ensure that the school operates transparently, ethically, and in compliance with all relevant laws and regulations, fostering a culture of integrity and accountability.

**f. Presents the process by which the governing council will hire and evaluate the school administrator.**

The proposed inaugural Executive Director is a member of the charter's founding/design team. However, it will be up to the school's governing council to finalize the terms of his contract once the school's charter has been awarded. The Executive Director will enter into a contract with the CoLAB board, and the board will formally review the Executive Director's performance annually. His evaluation will be largely based on Connecticut's System for Educator Evaluation and Development (SEED). As such, he will be evaluated as to his progress against the standards established within Connecticut's Executive Directorship Standards. However, CoLAB's administrator evaluation will also include a tracking of progress against specific goals that align to the school's Key Design Elements. The school's governing council will establish these goals annually.

Immediately upon authorization, the CoLAB Board of Trustees will begin a search for a founding Executive Director (see page 69 for the Executive Director's responsibilities).

**4. Evidence of Support**

**a. Provides evidence that the proposed school is welcomed by the local community.**

The founding team at Taino CoLAB Waterbury (CoLAB) has invested extensive time and effort to ensure that the school's design reflects and responds to the needs and aspirations of the Waterbury community. Through continuous outreach, our founding team has garnered a strong base of enthusiastic support from local organizations, community leaders, and families who are eager for an innovative high school option. LEAD, our community-based partner organization, has been instrumental in building these connections and gathering extensive support from various stakeholders. LEAD's recently established community center at 96 Bank St., located in the heart of Waterbury, will further bridge partnerships, offering a central space for community engagement and development of CoLAB's community school model. This broad coalition demonstrates Waterbury's readiness for CoLAB's mission and programs, as documented in Appendix F: Community Partnerships and Support Letters.

**Key Community Partnerships**

- **LEAD**: As a key partner, LEAD will play an essential role in fostering community relationships to support CoLAB's development. Their new community center at 96 Bank St. in downtown Waterbury will serve as a vital hub for community partnership activities, helping to bring local stakeholders together

[7] Board Source (n.d.). Board policies checklist: Charter boards.

and strengthen CoLAB's community school model. Through this central location, LEAD will support ongoing collaboration with local organizations, families, and leaders to ensure CoLAB's approach is deeply rooted in Waterbury's cultural and educational landscape.

- **Brass City Charter School**: As the only charter school in Waterbury serving grades K-8, Brass City Charter School's inquiry-based program is closely aligned with CoLAB's approach. This educational alignment has established Brass City as a natural partner, and we anticipate strong parent support for CoLAB as the high school of choice, allowing students a seamless progression through a similarly focused educational pathway.
- **Grace Baptist Church**: Pastor Reese of Grace Baptist Church has provided his full support and will serve on CoLAB's Community Advisory Board, offering guidance and ensuring CoLAB remains deeply connected to Waterbury's community needs. His endorsement reflects the local commitment to CoLAB's mission and values.
- **State Representative Geraldo Reyes**: Representative Reyes has expressed strong support for Taino CoLAB and has met with our team to discuss potential redevelopment sites across the city. His guidance in exploring impactful locations demonstrates his commitment to CoLAB's success and to expanding educational opportunities for Waterbury's youth.

**Letters of Support**

We have received significant support from a wide range of community stakeholders, each recognizing the value CoLAB will bring to Waterbury's youth. Our letters of support include:

- **18** letters from community organizations, affirming CoLAB's commitment to serving Waterbury's diverse student population and providing innovative, future-focused learning.
- **50** letters from local businesses that support the importance of preparing Waterbury's youth for the local and regional workforce.
- **181** letters from active community members who have voiced their enthusiasm for CoLAB's mission and vision.
- **1,315** signatures from supportive families, showing strong parental demand for a high school model that aligns with their aspirations for their children.
- Additional endorsements from other stakeholders, further emphasizing the breadth of community investment in CoLAB's success.

These endorsements, gathered from a broad spectrum of Waterbury's community, reflect the city's enthusiasm and readiness for CoLAB's innovative approach to high school education.

**Community Surveys and Endorsements**

In addition to formal letters, we have collected extensive community feedback through surveys and personal endorsements. Responses highlight a shared desire for a high school that combines

cutting-edge technology with strong cultural values. Here are a few testimonials from Waterbury community members:

- "I am excited to see a school where my children can connect their heritage with modern technology and future career paths."
- "Waterbury's students need more options like this to succeed, especially one that understands the unique backgrounds and strengths of our kids."
- "Our kids need more high school choices and opportunities like CoLAB here in Waterbury."

**Engagement with Community Organizations**

We have also engaged with numerous community organizations representing diverse constituencies across the city. These conversations have reinforced our understanding of the community's educational priorities and have helped shape our school's design to meet those needs effectively. Many of these organizations will be partners in our community school model.

**Public Testimony and Future Support**

Several community leaders and members are eager to provide public testimony in support of CoLAB prior to its launch. This ongoing community engagement ensures that our school remains responsive to the needs and aspirations of Waterbury's residents.

In summary, the substantial and diverse support for CoLAB is evident through letters of endorsement, survey results, and ongoing dialogues with community organizations. This widespread community backing highlights the strong foundation and positive impact that our proposed school will have on the Waterbury community.

## III. STUDENT COMPOSITION, SERVICES, AND POLICIES

1. **School Demographics**
    a. **Describes the needs of the community, including demographics and student population to be served by the proposed school, and how it will potentially increase student achievement.**

Taino CoLAB Waterbury (CoLAB) aims to serve a diverse and underrepresented student population in Waterbury by extending opportunities for:

- Students with a history of low academic performance
- Students who receive free or reduced-priced lunches
- Students who are English Language Learners
- Students residing in a priority school district
- Students from districts where seventy-five percent or more of the enrolled students are ethnic minorities

Our model and mission align with Connecticut's priorities of reducing economic isolation for students through their educational experiences.

**Community Needs and Demographics**

CoLAB is designed to support the Waterbury community, focusing on expanding

opportunities for its youth in grades 9-12. Waterbury is one of Connecticut's largest urban centers and faces socioeconomic challenges that impact educational attainment and community well-being. Approximately 77.1% of Waterbury Public School students qualify for free or reduced-price meals, highlighting the economic hardship experienced by many families.

Waterbury's diversity is one of its defining characteristics. The student population is predominantly Hispanic or Latino (61.6%) and Black or African American (21.2%), with smaller percentages of White (11.1%) and Asian students. This rich cultural landscape, alongside a growing number of English Learners—18.1% of students—underscores the need for a culturally responsive and inclusive educational approach, which CoLAB's model provides.

Educational attainment and other outcomes vary significantly within Waterbury's community. The district's graduation rate is 83%, below the statewide average of 88.9%, with students with disabilities graduating at a rate of 66.8%. This context is further complicated by high levels of chronic absenteeism, with a district rate of 31.2%, significantly higher than the state average of 20%, and higher rates of absenteeism among Black, Hispanic, economically disadvantaged students, and students with disabilities.

These factors demonstrate the need for a targeted, inclusive, and rigorous educational model like CoLAB, which will empower Waterbury's youth with the skills, knowledge, and resilience to thrive in high school and beyond.

**Student Population and Achievement**

Waterbury Public Schools serves approximately 18,701 students across multiple schools and programs. The district's enrollment is predominantly composed of minority students, with 61.6% identifying as Hispanic or Latino, 21.2% as Black or African American, and 11.1% as White. Reflecting significant economic need, approximately 77.1% of students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch.

A notable percentage of Waterbury students—19.6%—have an Individualized Education Program (IEP), indicating a high demand for specialized instructional support. Additionally, the district faces a high rate of chronic absenteeism at 31.2%, well above the state average of 20%. Absenteeism is especially pronounced among Black and Hispanic students, economically disadvantaged students, and students with disabilities, contributing to achievement gaps that impact long-term educational outcomes.

Student performance in Waterbury reveals considerable gaps in core subjects. The district's average District Performance Index (DPI) scores are 50.7 in English Language Arts, 43.8 in Math, and 46.6 in Science, falling below the state target DPI of 75. These indicators underscore the challenges faced by high-need and minority students, as well as the critical need for targeted support.

CoLAB's student population is expected to mirror the district's demographic, with a majority of students coming from economically disadvantaged and minority backgrounds. Additionally, CoLAB anticipates that a substantial portion of students will require specialized instruction aligned with an IEP or English language support, emphasizing the importance of a robust, inclusive educational model designed to address these needs.

**Increasing Student Achievement**

CoLAB is committed to addressing these challenges and increasing student achievement through a tailored and supportive educational model. By focusing on the specific needs of students with low academic performance, ELL students, and those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, CoLAB aims to provide a robust educational experience that fosters academic success. Key strategies include:

- Implementing individualized learning plans
- Providing targeted interventions and supports
- Offering professional development for staff on best practices for supporting diverse learners
- Engaging with families and the community to create a supportive learning environment

CoLAB's approach is designed to bridge the educational gaps, promote equity, and ensure all students have the opportunity to succeed academically and beyond.

**b. Provides an enrollment plan, including a clear rationale for grades served, enrollment, and growth.**

**Enrollment Plan Summary**

CoLAB is committed to providing a comprehensive high school experience by serving 100 students per grade level. The school will start with grade 9 and will add one grade each subsequent year, ultimately serving grades 9-12 by its fourth year of operation. This enrollment plan ensures a steady and manageable growth, allowing the school to maintain high standards of education and support for all students.

**Projected Student Enrollment:**

| | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **9th Grade** | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| **10th Grade** | 0 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| **11th Grade** | 0 | 0 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| **12th Grade** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 100 | 100 |
| **Total** | **100** | **200** | **300** | **400** | **400** |

By the fourth year, CoLAB will reach its full capacity of 400 students, providing a consistent and supportive learning environment for all grade levels. This structured approach allows the school to scale its operations effectively while maintaining a high-quality educational experience.

**Rationale for Enrollment Plan**

CoLAB's enrollment plan is strategically designed to offer a comprehensive high school experience that prepares students for both college and career success. Our decision to serve grades 9-12 by the fourth year is based on several key factors that align with our innovative educational model.

**1. Comprehensive High School Experience**

CoLAB aims to provide an innovative series of courses that ensure a well-rounded and robust high school education. By focusing on grades 9-12, we can deliver a complete and sequential high school curriculum that meets the developmental and academic needs of our students at each stage of their high school journey.

**2. Pathway Exploration and Engagement**

Our curriculum is designed to offer students exposure to various career pathways through hands-on activities and presentations starting as early as the summer before 9th grade. The CoLAB Summer program introduces students to potential career paths through immersive experiences, setting the stage for informed decisions about their future academic and career choices.

**3. Structured Pathway Exploration Course**

All students will participate in a Pathway Exploration Course, which is central to our educational approach. This course allows students to delve into different career options, understand the skills required for each, and start planning their educational and professional trajectories early on.

By enrolling grades 9-12, CoLAB is positioned to offer a cohesive and comprehensive high school experience that integrates academic rigor with practical career exploration. Our enrollment plan ensures that students are not only prepared for college but are also equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in their chosen careers

**c. Describes procedures for family and community engagement to involve parents and guardians of enrolled students in student learning, school activities and school decision-making.**

**Family and Community Engagement Procedures**

CoLAB places a strong emphasis on family and community engagement, recognizing it as a critical factor in student success. Our procedures for involving parents and guardians in student learning, school activities, and decision-making are designed to foster a collaborative and inclusive school environment.

**Regular Communication**

CoLAB will ensure continuous and transparent communication with families through multiple channels:

- **Newsletters:** Regular newsletters will be distributed to keep families informed about school news, events, and important updates.
- **Website:** The school's website will be a central hub for information, providing easy access to announcements, resources, and contact details.
- **Enrollment Platform Notifications:** Families will receive timely notifications via our enrollment platform, ensuring they are aware of key dates and important information.
- **Learning Management System (LMS) Messaging:** The LMS will facilitate direct communication between teachers and parents regarding student progress and classroom activities.

**Community School Model Integration**

To empower families in supporting their child's education, CoLAB will provide training sessions to help them understand and utilize the data available on the student information system. This will enable parents to monitor their child's academic progress in real-time and engage more effectively in their learning journey.

**Parent and Guardian Representation**

Recognizing the importance of parent/guardian perspectives, CoLAB will ensure that at least one board position is filled by a parent or guardian of a CoLAB student. This will help ensure that the family voice is represented in school governance and decision-making processes.

**School Governance Council (SGC)**

In accordance with Connecticut's education reform law (Public Act 10-111), CoLAB will establish a School Governance Council (SGC). The SGC will serve as a key advisory group, providing critical feedback and recommendations to the school leadership. This council will include parents, teachers, and community members, ensuring a diverse range of perspectives.

**Scheduled Family and Community Events**

In partnership with its community partner, LEAD, CoLAB will host a variety of events throughout the school year to foster community building and family engagement:

- **Open Houses:** Opportunities for families to visit the school, meet teachers, and learn about the curriculum and programs.
- **Community Events:** Events designed to build connections among families, students, and the broader community.
- **Student Showcases:** Public presentations of student work and culminating projects, allowing families to celebrate their children's achievements and engage with their educational experiences.

By implementing these comprehensive procedures, CoLAB will create a supportive and inclusive environment that actively involves families and the community in the educational process. Our community school programs (see framework in Appendix A) will extend family engagement beyond normal school hours and throughout the school year.

**2. Special Education**

**a. Includes a comprehensive plan for educating students with disabilities.**

**Comprehensive Plan for Educating Students with Disabilities**

CoLAB is committed to offering a comprehensive plan for educating students with disabilities, ensuring adherence to all requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as well as applicable state laws and regulations. This plan includes a range of special education supports and related services, with a strong focus on student inclusion.

**Curriculum-Based Supports**

CoLAB ensures that all students, regardless of their IEP/504 status, are held to rigorous standards of achievement. Recognizing that there is no single mode of teaching and learning, CoLAB will provide necessary accommodations and modifications to enable all students to

achieve success. Our curriculum has been intentionally selected for its scaffolding capabilities, designed to support diverse learners.

To further tailor educational experiences, CoLAB will regularly collect formative assessment data, enabling the differentiation of services for each student. This data will be shared with parents, students, and the CoLAB team (within legal and ethical bounds) to ensure the development of a clear support plan for each child. Additionally, CoLAB views project-based assessments of student mastery as an equitable tool to evaluate all learners. When additional scaffolds are needed, accommodations and modifications will be seamlessly integrated within the curriculum and assessment framework.

**Response to Intervention (RTI) and Scientific Research-Based Interventions (SRBI)**

CoLAB will implement Response to Intervention (RTI) and Scientific Research-Based Interventions (SRBI) frameworks to identify and support students with disabilities. These frameworks will allow for early identification and intervention, ensuring that students receive the appropriate level of support as soon as possible.

**Support Services**

CoLAB will integrate a wide range of special education supports and related services into the school day. These services will be designed to meet the diverse needs of students with disabilities and will include, but not be limited to, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and counseling services. The goal is to provide a holistic support system that addresses the academic, social, and emotional needs of each student.

**Inclusion and Collaboration**

The school is dedicated to fostering an inclusive environment where all students feel valued and supported. CoLAB will utilize a combination of AI-powered learning tools and collaboration with parents, students, and specialists to create an inclusive education plan tailored to each student's unique needs.

In summary, CoLAB's comprehensive plan for educating students with disabilities emphasizes rigorous academic standards, individualized support, and a commitment to inclusion, ensuring that all students have the opportunity to succeed.

**b. Plans for Adequate Staffing to Address the Needs of Students with Disabilities and Section 504 Plans.**

CoLAB understands and values its legal responsibilities to meet the requirements of individualized education programs (IEPs) and Section 504 plans. CoLAB has developed a detailed plan to ensure the provision of certified personnel, paraprofessional support, receipt and retention of documentation, student assessments, classroom adaptations, and sufficient professional development for staff.

**Certified Personnel and Staffing**

CoLAB will hire all necessary certified personnel to meet the needs of students with IEPs and Section 504 plans. This includes certified special education teachers, who will ensure proper IEP teams are convened for each student meeting and coordinate placement meetings with the local district in accordance with IDEA and Connecticut law. Certified paraprofessionals will be

provided as needed, based on individual student IEPs. Additionally, CoLAB will employ a certified school nurse to administer medications and will outsource any required services that cannot be provided within the school.

Collaboration is key in special education, and CoLAB will hire certified special educators to meet the needs of our diverse learners, as well as paraprofessionals where appropriate. Counseling and health services will be available to all students, and CoLAB will work with the local district to provide necessary speech, occupational, and physical therapies. Each special educator will assume case manager responsibilities, and the guidance team will oversee compliance with 504 plans.

**Documentation**

CoLAB will maintain all student records in compliance with IDEA, Section 504, state law, and the requirements of students' sending districts. Data management will be conducted through the school's Learning Management System (LMS) ensuring regular submission to the state and students' Planning and Placement Team (PPT) in their sending district. CoLAB will adhere to all FERPA guidelines and best practices regarding record-keeping and confidentiality.

**Student Assessments**

CoLAB will regularly evaluate all students to monitor academic progress and identify potential learning gaps. Additional monitoring will take place for students referred to the school's Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) process. CoLAB will coordinate targeted testing with the student's sending district for those with IEPs or in need of additional support. The school will ensure minimal disruption to instructional time due to evaluations.

**Classroom Adaptations**

CoLAB will ensure that its school facility is accessible and adaptable in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Classrooms will be designed to be flexible and easily reorganized to meet individual and group needs, providing an ideal learning environment for all students, especially those with IEPs and 504 plans. Necessary accommodations, such as sensory items, assistive technology, flexible seating, and screens for larger texts and visuals, will be made available.

**Professional Development**

A significant focus of CoLAB's professional development will be the use of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), which accommodates the needs and abilities of all learners by eliminating unnecessary hurdles in the learning process. Additionally, educators will receive training on engaging with the school's MTSS process and specific differentiation techniques applicable to the school's curricula. CoLAB will provide ample common planning time for collaboration between special educators and other classroom educators.

**Collaboration with Local Districts**

CoLAB will maintain and implement policies to ensure students eligible for special education and related services under IDEA are properly supported. The school will communicate and collaborate with the student's district of residence for evaluations and services. CoLAB will formalize this collaboration through a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Waterbury

school district, based on best practices from the Center for Learner Equity. This MOU will outline the responsibilities of each party for service provision and necessary screenings.

**Responsibilities Chart for Special Education**

| District of Residence | Collaborative | CoLAB |
|---|---|---|
| ● Holding planning and placement team (PPT) meetings for students with disabilities.<br>● Paying on a quarterly basis, an amount equal to the difference between the reasonable cost of educating such students and amounts received by the Charter School to educate such students from state, federal, local, and private sources calculated on a per pupil basis.<br>● Determine student eligibility for Special Education Services.<br>● Develop IEPs. | ● Ensure high-quality services and compliance with the requirements of applicable federal and state law and their accompanying regulations related to the delivery of services to Students with Disabilities attending the Charter School.<br>● Parental engagement, support, and dispute resolution. | ● Ensuring that students with disabilities enrolled in the school receive the services mandated in their individualized education programs (IEPs) whether such services are provided by the Charter School or by the District.<br>● Implement a pre-referral process.<br>● Monitor IEPs and all related data. Share data with district/PPT.<br>● Provide core instructional support to students. |

**c. Articulates a clear system to monitor student data and consider a student's eligibility for Section 504 services. Specifies plans to work with resident school district and proposed school staff for evaluation.**

**Monitoring and Evaluation System for Section 504 Services**

CoLAB is committed to ensuring that all students receive the support and accommodations they need to succeed. Our system for monitoring student data and determining eligibility for Section 504 services is designed to be thorough, responsive, and in compliance with federal and state regulations.

**Identification and Monitoring Process**

In compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004) and related federal and state special education laws, CoLAB will implement the following policies and procedures to identify and support students who may be eligible for Section 504 services:

1. **Student Records Review:** We will regularly review student records to identify any previously documented needs or accommodations.
2. **Communication:** We will maintain open lines of communication with students and parents to identify potential needs for 504 plans. Parents and students are encouraged to share any concerns regarding accommodations and support.
3. **Response to Intervention (RTI):** When necessary, CoLAB will use the RTI process to identify students who may need additional support and to determine the appropriate interventions.

**Evaluation and Referral Process**

If a need for a 504 plan is identified, CoLAB will take the following steps to ensure proper evaluation and support:

1. **Collaboration with Resident School District:** CoLAB will work closely with the student's resident school district to conduct thorough evaluations and determine

eligibility for Section 504 services. This collaboration ensures that all evaluations are comprehensive and meet regulatory standards.

2. **In-School Evaluation:** CoLAB staff, including special education coordinators and school psychologists, will also conduct in-school evaluations to identify students' needs and recommend appropriate accommodations.

**Implementation of Accommodations**

Once a 504 plan is established, CoLAB will provide the necessary accommodations to support each individual learner. Examples of accommodations may include:

- Preferential seating
- Extended time on tests and assignments
- Reduced homework or class workload
- Use of verbal, visual, or technology aids
- Modified textbooks or audio-video materials
- Behavior management support
- Adjusted class schedules or grading
- Verbal testing
- Excused lateness, absences, or missed classwork
- Pre-approved nurse's visits
- Occupational or physical therapy

**Ongoing Monitoring and Support**

CoLAB will continuously monitor the effectiveness of the accommodations and make adjustments as needed. Regular check-ins with students and parents, as well as periodic reviews of the 504 plans, will ensure that the accommodations remain relevant and effective.

By adhering to these policies and procedures, CoLAB ensures that students who may be eligible for special education and related services under IDEA or Section 504 are appropriately identified, evaluated, and supported. Our commitment to best practices in charter school leadership and support for students with disabilities will foster an inclusive and equitable learning environment for all students.

**d. Presents a plan to engage the parents of students with disabilities.**

At CoLAB, we recognize that parents are invaluable partners in the educational journey of their children, especially for students with disabilities. Our comprehensive plan to engage parents of students with disabilities ensures that they are involved in every aspect of their child's education and well-being.

**Regular Communication and Engagement**

- **Digital Family Communications Platform:** Teachers will use the school's digital platform to provide regular updates on student progress, achievements, and areas of concern. This platform will allow for consistent, two-way communication between teachers and parents.
- **Direct Communication:** Teachers will make periodic phone calls to keep parents informed and to discuss any specific concerns or achievements related to their child.

- **Parent-Teacher Conferences:** Students with disabilities and their families will be invited to attend all parent-teacher conferences to discuss academic progress and to address any concerns or needs.

**Informed Consent and Participation**

- **Informed Consent:** CoLAB will seek informed consent from parents before evaluating a student for special education services, when placing a student in special education, and prior to any re-evaluations. This ensures that parents are fully aware and supportive of the steps being taken.
- **Participation in Planning and Team Meetings (PPTs):** Parents will be invited to participate in district Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meetings, ensuring their involvement in decision-making processes regarding their child's education.
- **Notification of Disciplinary Actions:** In accordance with state and federal regulations, CoLAB will notify parents if a student is suspended for 10 days or more during the school year, ensuring transparency and parental involvement in disciplinary matters.

**Involvement in School Activities and Celebrations**

- **Student Demonstrations of Learning:** Parents will be invited to attend student demonstrations of learning and mastery-based exhibitions. These events provide opportunities for parents to celebrate their child's achievements and to engage with the school community.
- **Cultural and Neurodiversity Celebrations:** CoLAB will host events that celebrate cultural diversity, neurodiversity, and the unique strengths of all students. These celebrations foster an inclusive environment and provide opportunities for parents to connect with the school community.

**Additional Support and Resources**

- **Workshops and Training:** CoLAB will offer workshops and training sessions for parents to help them understand their child's learning needs and to provide strategies for supporting their child's education at home.
- **Parent Support Groups:** The school will facilitate support groups for parents of students with disabilities, providing a space for sharing experiences, resources, and mutual support.
- **Community School Partnerships:** family and student services will be extended and enriched through the robust programming of our year round community school model (see Appendix A).

By implementing these strategies, CoLAB ensures that parents of students with disabilities are engaged, informed, and actively involved in their child's education. This partnership between the school and families is essential for creating a supportive and successful learning environment for all students.

**3. English learners/Multilingual learners (EL/ML)**

**a. Presents a plan to engage the parents of students with disabilities.**

Taino CoLAB Waterbury (CoLAB) is committed to supporting English Learners/Multilingual Learners (EL/MLs) through a comprehensive plan that ensures full and meaningful access to the general education curriculum. Recognizing the diverse learning needs of our student population, we will implement the following strategies and programs to support EL/ML students:

**Philosophy and Framework**

CoLAB values diversity and views multilingualism as an asset. Our instructional framework incorporates cultural competence, ensuring that faculty appreciate and support the linguistic and cultural diversity of our students. This approach is particularly important in Waterbury, where we anticipate enrolling many multilingual students, students with interrupted formal education (SIFE), and newcomers.

**Identification and Assessment**

1. **Initial Identification:** Upon enrollment, all students will complete a home language survey to identify potential EL/ML students.
2. **Language Proficiency Assessment:** Identified students will undergo the Language Assessment Scale (LAS) Links assessment to determine their English proficiency level.
3. **Ongoing Assessment:** Annually, EL/ML students will be re-assessed using the LAS Links to monitor their progress in English language acquisition.

**Instructional Strategies and Supports**

1. **Inclusion Model:** EL/ML students will remain in the general classroom, receiving support to master the same content as their peers. This model fosters inclusivity and peer interaction.
2. **Curricular Adaptations:** Our curriculum is designed with multilingual learners in mind, incorporating verbal and visual aids, technology-based support, and project-based assessments to provide multiple avenues for demonstrating learning.
3. **Scaffolding and Differentiation:** CoLAB will provide necessary scaffolds, such as preferential seating, extended time on assignments, and modified instructional materials, to support EL/ML students in mastering English.
4. **Peer-to-Peer Interaction:** We will emphasize heterogeneous groupings and group work to enhance oral and written communication skills through collaboration and teamwork.
5. **AI-Enhanced Support:** Utilizing AI tools, CoLAB will provide dynamic formative assessments, personalized learning supports, and individualized tutoring to advance and accelerate learning for EL/ML students, ensuring they receive tailored educational experiences.

**Support Programs and Resources**

1. **Reading Programs:** During non-core instructional time, EL/ML students may receive additional support through the Wilson Reading program or the Sonday Reading program, both aligned with the Science of Reading to develop phonetic skills, fluency, and comprehension.

2. **Professional Development:** Ongoing professional learning for faculty will focus on best practices for supporting EL/ML students, ensuring that teachers are equipped to meet their diverse needs.

**Monitoring and Exiting Process**

1. **Data-Driven Instruction:** CoLAB will use data from assessments to inform instruction, ensuring that teaching strategies are effective and responsive to student needs.
2. **Exiting Criteria:** Students will exit the EL/ML program when they achieve proficiency on the LAS Links assessment and demonstrate the ability to succeed in the general curriculum without additional language support.
3. **Post-Exit Monitoring:** CoLAB will monitor the progress of exited EL/ML students to ensure they continue to thrive academically, providing additional support if necessary.

**Family and Community Engagement**

1. **Parent Communication:** Regular communication with parents through newsletters, the school's digital platform, community school programming, and parent-teacher conferences will keep families informed and engaged.
2. **Workshops and Training:** CoLAB will offer workshops for parents to understand how to support their child's language development and academic success at home.
3. **Cultural Celebrations:** We will host events that celebrate the cultural diversity of our school community, fostering an inclusive environment for all students and families.

By implementing this comprehensive plan, CoLAB will ensure that EL/ML students receive the support they need to succeed academically while valuing their linguistic and cultural backgrounds. This approach aligns with best practices in charter school leadership and supports the academic and linguistic success of multilingual learners.

**b. Describes how the proposed school will meet the learning needs of all EL/ML students and provide access to the general education curriculum.**

CoLAB is dedicated to providing all students, including English Learners/Multilingual Learners (EL/MLs), with access to the general education curriculum through a responsive and inclusive educational environment. Our plan ensures that EL/ML students receive high-quality instruction and the necessary supports to achieve academic success, in alignment with charter school best practices and Connecticut state law for English Learners.

**Identification and Assessment**

1. **Home Language Survey:** Upon enrollment, all students will complete a home language survey to identify potential EL/ML students.
2. **Language Proficiency Testing:** Students identified through the survey will take the LAS Links assessment to determine their English proficiency level. The WIDA Model assessment will also be administered twice per year to monitor progress.
3. **Record Review and Family Interviews:** Student records and family interviews will be conducted to confirm the dominant language and identify any additional support needs.

**Instructional Strategies and Supports**

1. **Tier 1 Instruction:** All students, including EL/MLs, will participate in Tier 1 instruction, which provides high-quality, standards-aligned instruction in the general education classroom.
2. **Supplemental Instruction:** EL/ML students identified through LAS Links and WIDA assessments will receive additional support using research-based intervention curricula, such as the Wilson Reading System and the Sonday System. These programs address the phonological and comprehension needs of EL/ML students.
3. **ESL Push-In Model:** Certified TESOL teachers, trained paraprofessionals, and tutors will provide targeted English language supports within mainstream classrooms, focusing on reading, writing, and discourse.
4. **ESL Co-Teaching Model:** TESOL and content area teachers will collaborate to integrate language and content standards within mainstream courses, ensuring that language instruction is embedded in all subject areas. Collaborative planning will ensure seamless integration of these supports.

**Access to General Education and Beyond**

1. **Inclusive Environment:** CoLAB will ensure that EL/ML students have full access to the general education curriculum and participate in all school activities, including electives, arts, physical education, field trips, social activities, and community events.
2. **High Expectations and Equity:** CoLAB holds high expectations for all students, including EL/MLs, and provides accommodations to help them master rigorous tasks without reducing academic expectations.

**Progress Monitoring and Exit Criteria**

1. **Ongoing Assessment:** EL/ML students will participate in all CoLAB assessments, such as NWEA, to monitor their academic progress and adjust instructional strategies as needed.
2. **Exit Criteria:** In alignment with Connecticut's guidance, students must score a 4 or higher overall on the LAS, a 4 or higher in the reading subtest, and a 4 or higher in the writing subtest to exit the EL/ML program. Students meeting these criteria will continue to receive services until the end of the academic year, and their progress will be monitored throughout their time at CoLAB.
3. **Notification and Record Updates:** Families of students exiting the EL/ML program will be notified in writing, and student records will be updated to reflect the change in status.

**Family and Community Engagement**

1. **Communication:** CoLAB will regularly communicate with families through newsletters, the school's digital platform, and parent-teacher conferences to keep them informed about their child's progress and school activities.
2. **Workshops and Training:** We will offer workshops for parents to help them support their child's language development and academic success at home.
3. **Cultural Celebrations:** CoLAB will host events that celebrate the cultural diversity of our school community, fostering an inclusive environment for all students and families.

By implementing this comprehensive plan, CoLAB ensures that EL/ML students receive the support they need to succeed academically while valuing their linguistic and cultural backgrounds. This approach aligns with best practices in charter school leadership and supports the academic and linguistic success of multilingual learners.

**c. Describes how the school will report and address progress in both language development and academic content, in the same manner and frequency as general education reporting, including translation services.**

CoLAB is committed to ensuring that parents and guardians of English Learners/Multilingual Learners (EL/MLs) receive clear and comprehensive reports on their child's progress in both language development and academic content. These reports will be provided with the same frequency and in the same manner as those for general education students, ensuring equal access to information and support for all families.

**Reporting Progress**

1. **Frequency and Manner:** EL/ML students will receive report cards and progress reports at the same intervals as general education students. These reports will address progress in both language development and academic content, providing a holistic view of each student's achievements and areas for improvement.
2. **Student Information System:** Student progress will be tracked through a student information system to be identified by school leaders. The school plans to set overarching and individual student goals, tracking progress towards graduation requirements, including course completion, test scores, and required student activities.
3. **Data Integration:** The student information system will integrate LAS Links data with general academic data to provide a comprehensive view of each student's progress. This ensures that both language development and academic content mastery are monitored and reported accurately.

**Translation Services**

1. **Written Translations:** To ensure accessibility for all families, CoLAB will provide written translations of essential documents and communications, including:
    - Student handbook
    - MTSS guidance
    - Discipline policy and notices
    - Report cards and academic notes
    - Permission forms
    - Grievance procedures
    - Bullying notices
    - Enrollment and school choice information
    - Nondiscrimination notices
    - Change of address forms
    - Reason for absence forms
    - Request for conference forms

- Early dismissal forms

2. **Verbal Interpretive Services:** CoLAB will offer verbal interpretive services for critical interactions and events, including:
    - Registration and enrollment process
    - Counseling on eligibility for the ESL program
    - Disciplinary hearings
    - Orientation and back-to-school events
    - Family-teacher conferences
    - Medical emergencies and nurse calls
    - Special education meetings (in partnership with the local district)
    - Reporting absences
    - Establishing and providing appropriate testing accommodations

**Family Engagement and Support**

1. **Consistent Access:** Parents and educators will have consistent access to the student information system, enabling them to monitor student progress in real time.
2. **Family Meetings and Training:** CoLAB will host family meetings and training sessions to help families understand the student information system, the reporting process, and the ways that grades and progress are communicated. This ensures that families are well-informed and can effectively support their children's education.
3. **Best Practices for Translation and Interpretation:** CoLAB will follow best practices for translation and interpretation, as outlined by the Southern Poverty Law Center (2017), ensuring that all communications are accessible and understandable for families who speak languages other than English.

By implementing these comprehensive measures, CoLAB ensures that all parents and guardians, including those of EL/ML students, are well-informed about their children's progress in both language development and academic content. This approach aligns with charter school best practices and Connecticut state law for English Learners, fostering an inclusive and supportive educational environment for all students.

**d. Presents a plan that addresses how the academic and linguistic needs of EL/ML students will be monitored and how that process will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the program and ensure that the needs of EL/ML students are met.**

CoLAB is committed to effectively monitoring the academic and linguistic needs of English Learners/Multilingual Learners (EL/MLs) to ensure their success and evaluate the effectiveness of our program. This plan outlines our comprehensive approach to assessing, supporting, and continuously improving our services for EL/ML students.

**Assessment and Monitoring**

1. **Core Assessments:**
    - **LAS Links:** Used to assess language proficiency and monitor progress.

- **Wilson Reader:** A program focused on phonological and growing comprehension needs.
- **Annual SAT Assessment (Grade 11):** Evaluates college readiness.
- **NGSS (Grade 11):** Assesses science proficiency.
- **Classroom-Based Formative Assessments:** Regular, ongoing assessments to monitor academic progress in real time.

2. **WIDA Model Screener:** Administered twice per year (Middle of Year and End of Year) to all identified EL/ML students to monitor language development.
3. **Sonday System**: Provides structured literacy support, helping educators teach in a systematic, cumulative, explicit, diagnostic, sequential, and multisensory manner. Ongoing formative data from the Sonday System will track ML progress in reading over time.

**Data Review and Utilization**

1. **Regular Review:** Data from the above assessments will be reviewed systematically three times per year to ensure services are aligned with student goals and needs. This regular review will help adjust instructional strategies and interventions as needed.
2. **Individual Support:** Throughout the academic year, individual student data will be used to provide targeted support, ensuring that each EL/ML student receives the necessary resources and interventions to succeed.
3. **Professional Development:** A SPED-certified Director of Student Supports will provide ongoing professional development for staff based on trends in EL/ML student performance. This ensures that educators are equipped with the latest strategies and best practices for supporting EL/ML students.
4. **Annual Evaluation:** The Director of Student Supports will collaborate with the Executive Director to review aggregate performance data for EL/ML students annually. This evaluation will determine if significant changes are needed to enhance the school's EL/ML instructional support design.

**Continuous Improvement**

1. **Data-Driven Decision Making:** All instructional decisions will be based on data from the various assessments and screeners. This ensures that the support provided is evidence-based and tailored to the specific needs of each student.
2. **Feedback Loop:** The continuous review and evaluation process creates a feedback loop, allowing CoLAB to refine and improve its EL/ML program continually. This iterative process ensures that the program remains effective and responsive to student needs.

**Note:** CoLAB understands that WIDA is not required for Connecticut schools. However, we are committed to ensuring that we have the best possible data to support our ELL students, and therefore, we intend to include this nationally recognized assessment.

By implementing this comprehensive plan, CoLAB ensures that the academic and linguistic needs of EL/ML students are consistently monitored and met. This approach aligns

with charter school best practices and Connecticut state law, fostering an inclusive and supportive educational environment that promotes the success of all students.

**e. Plans for adequate staffing to address the needs of EL/ML students, including properly state-certified staff.**

CoLAB is dedicated to ensuring that our English Learners/Multilingual Learners (EL/ML) receive the support they need to succeed. Our staffing plan is designed to meet Connecticut's bilingual education requirements and federal regulations for EL/ML students. Here's how we plan to achieve this:

- **Certified TESOL Teachers:** Connecticut requires at least one certified TESOL teacher once an LEA reaches an enrollment of 40 EL students. Given Waterbury's 18.1% district-wide percentage of multilingual learners, we anticipate reaching a similar percentage of English Learners (ELs) and Multilingual Learners (MLs) by year three. CoLAB is committed to proactive support and will include a 0.5 FTE TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) educator from our first year. This ensures that we are prepared to meet the needs of EL/ML students from the outset.
- **Recruitment and Professional Development:** We will actively recruit TESOL educators before reaching the 40 EL student threshold. Additionally, best practices for supporting multilingual students will be a core component of professional development for all staff. Strategies recommended by Teaching Tolerance and the Southern Poverty Law Center, such as anchor charts, realia, and shared reading, will be emphasized to create an inclusive and supportive learning environment.
- **Language Development Plans:** CoLAB will create individual language development plans for each EL/ML student. These plans will be tracked in the student information system and will include:
    - Demographic information
    - English Language proficiency levels and scores
    - Other performance levels in reading and math
    - Academic strengths and assets
    - Goals aligned with CELP standards in each language domain
    - Supports for classroom instruction and assessment

**Implementation and Monitoring**

- The effectiveness of our staffing plan and support strategies will be regularly evaluated to ensure that the needs of EL/ML students are being met.
- CoLAB is committed to providing ongoing professional development to staff to enhance their ability to support EL/ML students effectively.

By implementing this staffing plan and support framework, CoLAB will create a nurturing and inclusive environment where EL/ML students can thrive academically and linguistically.

**4. Admission Policy and Criteria**

**a. Provides a clear and coherent admissions policy and plan that complies with C.G.S. § 10-66bb. Includes a plan for admission lottery, explains how the proposed school will enroll students during the year if spaces become available.**

CoLAB will comply with all national and state laws regarding an open lottery and enrollment process which does not discriminate based on disability, athletic performance, or proficiency in the English language. While CoLAB's admissions policy prioritizes high-need students, we seek a waiver from the specific lottery-based enrollment process outlined in C.G.S. § 10-66bb. This waiver is essential to achieve our mission of serving a diverse student population and maximize the effectiveness of our educational model.

**Admissions Policy and Plan**

CoLAB is committed to an admissions policy and plan that adheres to Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.) § 10-66bb. Our policy ensures a fair and transparent process that is inclusive and non-discriminatory, aligning with state and national laws.

**Admissions Lottery**

CoLAB will conduct an open lottery for admissions in compliance with all legal requirements. The lottery will ensure that no student is discriminated against based on disability, athletic performance, or proficiency in the English language. The lottery process will be as follows:

1. **Application Period:** The application period for the upcoming school year will be announced well in advance and will be open for a specified duration. Information about the application process will be widely disseminated to ensure that all interested families have the opportunity to apply.
2. **Lottery Process:** If the number of applicants exceeds the available spaces in any grade, a random lottery will be conducted to determine admissions. This process will be overseen by an independent third party to ensure fairness and transparency.
3. **Lottery Date and Location:** The date, time, and location of the lottery will be publicly announced, and families will be invited to attend. Attendance is not required for selection.
4. **Notification:** Families will be notified of the lottery results in a timely manner. Accepted students will receive detailed information on the next steps for enrollment.
5. **Waitlist:** Students not selected in the lottery will be placed on a waitlist in the order they were drawn. If spaces become available, students on the waitlist will be offered admission based on their position on the list.

**Mid-Year Enrollment**

If spaces become available during the school year, CoLAB will fill these vacancies using the existing waitlist. Should the waitlist be exhausted, CoLAB will reopen the application process to fill the available spaces through another fair and open lottery.

**b. Provides a viable plan to attract students and families from a diverse student body and avoid discrimination. Describes how the proposed school will**

**enroll, and retain students with a history of low academic performance; students who receive free or reduced-price lunches, students with a history of behavioral and social difficulties and students identified as requiring special education.**

**Attracting and Enrolling a Diverse Student Body**

CoLAB is dedicated to creating a diverse and inclusive student body, ensuring equal access to educational opportunities for all students, including those with a history of low academic performance, those who qualify for free or reduced-price lunches, students with behavioral and social difficulties, students requiring special education, EL/ML students, and students from diverse ethnic and language backgrounds.

**Recruitment Process and Timetable**

**Recruitment Strategy**

To reach high-need students, CoLAB, with support from LEAD, will actively recruit in areas of high poverty and ethnic/language diversity within Waterbury. We will collaborate with local community organizations, such as the Brass City Charter School, YMCA, social service providers, churches, grocery stores, and pediatricians' offices, to share information about our school and its mission. Additionally, we will recruit from local K-8 schools, especially those with inquiry-based or aligned instructional philosophies, to connect with families who are seeking innovative high school options.

**Public Information Campaign:** CoLAB will launch a comprehensive public information campaign to ensure broad awareness and access to our school. This campaign will include:

1. **Community Outreach:**
    - Distributing flyers and brochures in English and Spanish, with translations available upon request, to ensure non-discrimination based on home language.
    - Hosting informational sessions at community centers, libraries, and local events.
    - Partnering with local media, including radio stations, newspapers, and social media platforms, to reach diverse populations.
    - We will actively cultivate relationships with our growing list of organizational supporters. These partnerships will be instrumental in promoting CoLAB within the community and attracting a diverse student body.
2. **Application Availability:**
    - Making the application package and informational materials available at the school, on the school's website, and through an enrollment management and family communication portal such as SchoolMint.
    - Providing application materials to community partners and youth-serving organizations.

**Recruitment Timetable:**

1. **Application Window:**
    - **Opens:** January 1

- **Closes:** April 1
- During this period, CoLAB will accept applications for the upcoming school year and provide multiple opportunities for families to learn about the school through open houses, informational sessions, and community events.

2. **Lottery:**
   - **Date:** Early April
   - **Process:** If the number of applicants exceeds the available seats, a random lottery will be conducted in compliance with Connecticut General Statutes.
   - **Post-lottery:** Students not selected will be placed on a waitlist, which will be used to fill any seats that become available during the academic year. The waitlist will not carry over from year to year.
3. **Enrollment:**
   - Following the lottery, families of selected students will be invited to enroll. To complete enrollment, parents must submit proof of identification, health records, residency, education records, and a home language survey.
   - Families will also receive information about the school's optional pre-entry summer learning program, designed to support new students' transition to CoLAB.

**Plan for Retaining Students from High-Need Populations**

**Support Systems:**

1. **Academic Support:**
   - Implementing personalized learning plans for students with a history of low academic performance, providing targeted interventions and additional resources to help them succeed.
   - Offering tutoring, homework help, and academic enrichment programs.
2. **Nutritional Support:**
   - Ensuring students who qualify for free or reduced-price lunches receive nutritious meals to support their overall well-being and academic performance.
3. **Behavioral and Social Support:**
   - Establishing a positive school culture with a strong emphasis on social-emotional learning.
   - Providing access to school counselors, social workers, and behavioral specialists to support students with a history of behavioral and social difficulties.
4. **Special Education Services:**
   - Offering individualized education plans (IEPs) for students identified as requiring special education.
   - Ensuring compliance with all federal and state regulations regarding special education services.
5. **EL/ML Support:**

- Providing English Language Learners with specialized instruction and support services to help them achieve language proficiency and academic success.
- Ensuring that communication with ELL families is in their preferred language.

**Compliance with Non-Discrimination Laws**

CoLAB will strictly adhere to the provisions of C.G.S. § 10-15c and all relevant laws to ensure that there is no discrimination based on disability, athletic performance, or proficiency in the English language. Our admissions policy and practices will be transparent and equitable, promoting a diverse and inclusive learning environment for all students.

By implementing this comprehensive recruitment, enrollment, and retention plan, CoLAB aims to attract and support a diverse student body, providing high-quality education and opportunities for all students to thrive academically and personally.

**c. Shows a commitment to reduce racial, ethnic, and/or economic isolation. Describes relevant programs (e.g., curricular and extracurricular and/or student teacher recruitment), the school plans to implement.**

At CoLAB, we are deeply committed to reducing racial, ethnic, and economic isolation. We recognize the historical and ongoing disparities highlighted by the Sheff v. O'Neill case and are dedicated to creating a learning environment that fosters diversity, equity, and inclusion.

**Holistic and Targeted Recruitment**

Our efforts to mitigate isolation begin with a robust recruitment process designed to attract students from various neighborhoods within Waterbury. We will:

- **Community Outreach:** Partner with local community organizations, social service providers, and schools to reach families from diverse backgrounds.
- **Multilingual Materials:** Provide application materials and school information in multiple languages to ensure accessibility for non-English speaking families.
- **Targeted Recruitment:** Focus on enrolling students from underrepresented neighborhoods and communities with high economic needs.

**Inclusive Curriculum and Pathways**

We have developed a curriculum that appeals to students from diverse backgrounds by offering three distinct pathways in the humanities, mathematics, and science. These pathways provide students with opportunities to explore their interests and develop skills in areas that align with their passions and career goals.

**In-School Practices**

To support the mitigation of subgroup isolation, CoLAB will implement the following practices:

- **Heterogeneous Groupings:** Use an inclusion model to group students heterogeneously, promoting diverse interactions and collaboration.
- **Sheltered English Instruction:** Provide tailored support for EL/ML students to ensure they can fully participate in all aspects of school life.

- **Peer Collaboration:** Emphasize peer collaboration in classroom activities, projects, and group work to encourage students to learn from one another and appreciate diverse perspectives.

**Extension Practices**

Our commitment to reducing isolation extends beyond the classroom through various extracurricular activities and community partnerships (see Appendix A for community school model programming):

- **Field Trips and Internships:** Organize field trips to colleges, cultural institutions, and local employers, as well as provide internship opportunities to expose students to diverse environments and career possibilities.
- **Extracurricular Partnerships:** Explore partnerships with local organizations to offer extracurricular activities that connect students with their broader community.
- **Interscholastic Athletics:** Ensure students have access to interscholastic athletics by allowing them to participate in sports programs at their sending school if CoLAB does not offer the desired program, in accordance with CIAC Eligibility Rules (2022).

**Commitment to Diversity**

At CoLAB, we believe that a diverse learning environment enriches the educational experience for all students. Our comprehensive approach to recruitment, curriculum design, and extracurricular activities is designed to create an inclusive community where every student feels valued and supported.

Through these efforts, we aim to not only reduce racial, ethnic, and economic isolation but also to prepare our students to be compassionate, informed, and engaged citizens in a diverse world.

**5. Student Discipline Policies**

**a. Provides a clear behavior management system that encourages positive behaviors and integrates restorative practices into the SRBI or MTSS framework.**

At CoLAB, we are committed to creating a positive, supportive, and inclusive school culture that empowers all students to thrive. Here's how we'll achieve this:

**The CoLAB Code:**

- We will establish a clear and consistent behavior management system known as "The CoLAB Code." This code outlines expectations for daily behavior, integrating CoLAB's core values, principles from James Clear's "Atomic Habits," positive discipline practices, and restorative approaches to addressing misbehavior.
- The CoLAB Code will be followed by all students and modeled daily by adults, fostering a culture of shared responsibility and mutual respect.

**Community School Model with a Focus on Wellness:**

In partnership with LEAD, CoLAB will be able to embrace a comprehensive community school model that extends beyond academics to encompass student well-being. This model provides a strong foundation for supporting student success. Key elements include:

- **The CoLAB Wellness Center:** A dedicated space offering social-emotional learning opportunities, individual and group counseling services, and access to additional therapeutic services as needed.
- **Partnership with Community Organizations:** Collaboration with local organizations will further expand the range of resources available to support student mental health and well-being.
- **Restorative Practices:** We believe in restorative justice practices as a way to address conflicts and build a more positive school climate.

**Benefits:**

By fostering a positive and inclusive learning environment, CoLAB aims to:

- Promote student growth and academic achievement.
- Create a safe and supportive space where students feel valued and respected.
- Equip students with social-emotional skills necessary for success in school and beyond.

For more details, see Appendix G: Student Services and Discipline.

**Atomic Habits Integration**

Embedded in our instruction, beginning in the summer prior to entry, students will practice habit-building using an 11-step process from James Clear's Atomic Habits. These lessons, captured in a workbook and delivered during our Basecamp period, help students earn badges for each completed step, reinforcing positive behaviors.

**Parental Involvement and Support**

To reinforce the CoLAB Code, parents and family members will sign a letter of agreement and commitment. CoLAB will host workshops to educate families on supporting the code at home. Continuous efforts will be made to support parent adoption of the code, with annual updates to policies and practices.

**Restorative Practices**

The CoLAB Code includes policies for bullying, harassment, discrimination, and violent or disruptive acts that could lead to expulsion. Restorative approaches are integral to addressing misbehaviors, ensuring consistency across the CoLAB community. During the first year, a student advisory council will help identify relevant and equitable restorative practices, ensuring student voices are considered. Students will have opportunities to participate in restorative justice processes, hearing cases, debating outcomes, and consulting with school leadership.

**Training and Continuous Improvement**

CoLAB will provide teachers with training on restorative practices and positive discipline approaches. This training will support the successful implementation of the CoLAB Code in classrooms. The code will be a key focus during the school's planning year, with opportunities for feedback and revision from educators, parents, and students.

**Integration with SRBI/MTSS Framework**

**Tier 1: Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)**

To support all students, including those identified for special education, CoLAB will use Tier 1 interventions within the SRBI/MTSS framework:

- School-Wide Expectations: Clearly define and teach behavioral expectations to all students.
- Recognition and Rewards: Implement a system to acknowledge and reward positive behaviors consistently.
- Data-Driven Decisions: Regularly review behavioral data to identify trends and inform interventions.

**Tier 2 and Tier 3 Interventions**

For students requiring additional support, CoLAB will implement Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions:

- Targeted Group Interventions: Small group sessions for students needing extra behavioral support, focusing on skill-building and positive behavior reinforcement.
- Individualized Support Plans: Develop individualized behavior intervention plans for students with significant needs, including regular monitoring and adjustments as necessary.

**Support for Special Populations**

CoLAB is committed to supporting students with diverse needs, including those with low academic performance, behavioral and social difficulties, special education needs, and those who qualify for free or reduced-price meals:

- **Inclusive Practices:** Use an inclusion model to support diverse learners within the general education setting.
- **Tailored Interventions:** Provide targeted interventions and supports based on individual student needs, ensuring access to the full curriculum and positive school experience.

By integrating restorative practices into our SRBI/MTSS framework, CoLAB aims to create a supportive, inclusive environment that encourages positive behaviors, addresses misbehavior constructively, and supports the holistic development of all students.

**b. Offers educational alternatives for students who are expelled or suspended, including strategies to prevent or reduce the number of suspensions and expulsions (non-exclusionary practices for those suspended).**

**Attention to Equity: Addressing High Suspension Rates**

The sending community for our school, Waterbury, has been identified by the state as a high-need district with elevated suspension rates, particularly impacting African American and Hispanic students. In the 2022-23 school year, Waterbury's overall suspension rate was 14.4%, more than double the state average of 7%. Disparities are especially pronounced for Black students, with a suspension rate of 19.1%, and Hispanic or Latino students, at 14.0%. CoLAB is committed to ensuring these patterns do not persist within its model. Through restorative practices, culturally responsive teaching, and proactive behavioral supports, CoLAB will foster a positive, inclusive school climate that prioritizes equity and minimizes suspensions.

**Suspension and Expulsion: Consequences and Prevention**

**Acts Leading to Discipline**

CoLAB recognizes suspension and expulsion as serious consequences, reserved for significant violations of the CoLAB Code. The following Behaviors and Consequences chart outlines these acts and the corresponding consequences. Our approach focuses on addressing the root causes of problematic behavior and involving students in preventing repeat offenses. The goal is to repair harm rather than apply punitive measures for minor or unintentional actions. Regular reviews of disciplinary data will ensure no disproportionality across subgroups (gender, race/ethnicity, IEP status, etc.).

**Behavior and Consequences Chart**

CoLAB will formalize its disciplinary policy with the support of the school's founding governing board. Our approach to appropriate consequences is structured to address various levels of student infractions with a range of outcomes. A comprehensive behavior and consequences chart is provided in Appendix G, detailing specific consequences for various behaviors and outlining the hearing and appeals process for infractions, categorized from Level 1 to Level 4.

Level 1 infractions, such as unexcused tardiness or minor disruptive behavior, may result in verbal reprimands, short-term detention, or alternative restorative practices, overseen through informal hearings. Level 2 behaviors, including insubordinate absences or disrespectful conduct, involve more severe consequences, such as family conferences, behavioral improvement plans, and up to three days of alternative placement. Level 3 infractions, like bullying or vandalism, can lead to out-of-school suspensions or restorative conferencing, with potential criminal or civil actions for severe cases. Finally, Level 4 infractions, including possession of weapons or substance abuse, warrant long-term suspensions or expulsions, coupled with mandatory re-entry meetings and potential legal consequences. A detailed behavior and consequences chart, outlining specific actions and outcomes, is provided in Appendix G: Student Services and Discipline.

**Suspension Practices**

CoLAB encourages a positive school culture that discourages problematic behavior. Restorative acts are preferred over formal punishments wherever possible. However, suspensions (in-school or out-of-school) may be necessary in certain situations. Strong communication between staff, students, and guardians will be maintained, ensuring students return to class promptly. During suspension, students will receive their coursework and are expected to complete assignments. Access to CoLAB's virtual extension school and related online services will be provided during their absence. Teachers will confer with students before and after suspension to minimize the impact of lost instructional time.

**Expulsion Policies**

CoLAB's primary goal is to keep students enrolled and engaged in education. However, expulsion may be necessary for severe violations, particularly those related to safety. According to CT law, expulsion will be considered for students who bring weapons to school, possess or use

illegal drugs, or inflict serious bodily injury. Expulsion may also be applied to students who are significantly disruptive and unresponsive to supports, or who endanger persons or property.

**Students with Disabilities**

CoLAB will consult with a student's internal case manager to ensure that special needs are not mistaken for intentional misbehavior. According to CT law, suspensions of 10 or more consecutive days for special education students will be reported to the sending district and PPT.

**Non-Exclusionary Practices and Educational Alternatives**

**In-School Suspension**

For misconduct that does not pose danger or severely disrupt the learning environment, students may receive in-school suspension. This involves placement in another area within the school where they will receive equivalent alternative instruction. Students will be suspended from extracurricular activities during this time. An informal conference with the Academic Director and/or Dean can be requested by students or guardians to discuss the misconduct and penalty.

**Short-Term Out-of-School Suspension**

If a short-term suspension is imposed, the following procedures will be followed:

- **Charge Notification:** Students will be informed of the charges and given an opportunity to explain their side.
- **Written Notice:** A notice will be sent to the guardian within 24 hours, with a description of the incident, violated rules, and suspension duration. An attempt to notify by phone will also be made.
- **Alternative Consequences:** In appropriate cases, students may be offered restorative consequences to support reflection and decision-making.
- **Resolution Conference:** A post-suspension conference with the guardian and Academic Director and/or Dean will be required.

**Restorative Conferences**

Restorative conferences may be held as an alternative to suspension or for first-time infractions. These involve reflection and discussion among all involved individuals, with actions identified for restitution and restoration. Senior students trained in peer mediation may facilitate these conferences under certain circumstances.

**Long-Term Suspension and Expulsion**

For severe infractions, students may face long-term suspension (more than 10 days) or expulsion (permanent removal). Procedures include:

- **Written Notice:** Guardians will receive notice of the suspension or expulsion and due process rights within 24 hours.
- **Hearing Rights:** Students have the right to representation, question witnesses, present evidence, and obtain a hearing recording.

**Preventing Suspensions and Expulsions**

CoLAB is committed to reducing suspensions and expulsions through:

- **Positive School Culture:** Fostering a positive environment that discourages problematic behavior.
- **Restorative Practices:** Implementing restorative approaches to address misbehavior and promote positive behaviors.
- **Educational Alternatives:** Providing alternative educational opportunities for suspended or expelled students, ensuring they continue their education.
- **Community School Resources:** Leveraging the comprehensive supports and services provided by our Community School Model to address the underlying causes of behavioral issues and support students' overall well-being.

Through these measures, CoLAB aims to create an equitable and supportive educational environment, minimizing exclusions and maximizing student success.

**c. Provides due process safeguards for all students, including those with disabilities.**

**Policies on Expulsion and Suspension**

CoLAB recognizes the importance of ensuring that all students, including those with disabilities, are provided with due process safeguards. The school's policies regarding student expulsion and suspension (both in and out-of-school) are designed to be fair and transparent, ensuring that educational alternatives are available for students who are expelled or suspended.

**General Policies**

For general education students and those identified as special education, CoLAB's policies include clear guidelines on the procedures for suspension and expulsion. These policies adhere to state and federal laws, ensuring that the rights of all students are protected.

**In-School and Out-of-School Suspensions**

- **In-School Suspension:** Students may be assigned in-school suspension for minor infractions. During this time, they will complete their schoolwork in a supervised setting, ensuring they continue to receive educational instruction.
- **Out-of-School Suspension:** For more severe infractions, students may be suspended out of school. In such cases, CoLAB will provide assignments and instructional materials to ensure that students continue their education at home.

**Educational Alternatives for Suspended or Expelled Students**

CoLAB is committed to providing educational alternatives for students who are expelled or suspended. This includes:

- **Access to Instructional Materials:** Ensuring that suspended or expelled students receive assignments and materials to keep up with their studies.
- **Online Learning Platforms:** Utilizing online resources to allow students to continue their education remotely.
- **Tutoring Services:** Offering tutoring support to help students keep up with their coursework.

**Due Process Procedures for Discipline**

The due process procedures at CoLAB ensure that all students, including those eligible for special education, are treated fairly and given the opportunity to defend themselves. The following outlines the steps involved in the due process for long-term suspensions and expulsions.

**Due Process for Long-Term Suspensions and Expulsions**

When CoLAB seeks to impose a long-term suspension (more than ten days) or expulsion, the following procedures are followed:

1. **Written Notice:** The school provides written notice to the student and their parent(s)/guardian. This notice includes the reasons for the proposed disciplinary action and details about the hearing process.
2. **Hearing Officer:** The Executive Director, Academic Director, or Dean will serve as the hearing officer for the hearing.
3. **Presentation of Evidence:** The school presents its case for suspension or expulsion, including introducing evidence and calling witnesses. The student has the right to be represented by counsel and to defend against the charges.
4. **Defense by Student:** The student may introduce evidence and call witnesses on their behalf. Both parties can cross-examine witnesses.
5. **Hearing Duration:** The hearing is limited to two hours unless the hearing officer decides to extend it.
6. **Audio Transcript:** An audio transcript of the proceedings is made and provided to the student upon request.
7. **Decision:** The hearing officer issues a written decision within five school days.

**Appealing Suspensions or Expulsions**

If a student wishes to appeal a disciplinary ruling, the following steps are followed:

1. **Request for Appeal:** The student submits a written request for appeal to the school's Board of Trustees within three school days of the ruling.
2. **Appeal Committee:** A committee of no less than three trustees, who were not involved in the initial hearing, promptly hears the appeal.
3. **Statements:** Each party has twenty minutes to make a statement during the appeal.
4. **Scope of Appeal:** The appeal is limited to the positions and record established during the original disciplinary hearing. The committee may consult the transcript and any evidence submitted.
5. **Written Ruling:** The committee provides a written ruling within five school days.

**Special Considerations for Students with Disabilities**

For students identified as eligible for special education, CoLAB ensures compliance with IDEA and Section 504. This includes:

- **Manifestation Determination Reviews:** Before a long-term suspension or expulsion, a review is conducted to determine if the behavior was a manifestation of the student's disability.

- **IEP/504 Plan Adherence:** Ensuring that disciplinary actions do not violate the student's IEP or 504 plan and that appropriate accommodations are provided.

CoLAB is dedicated to maintaining a fair and just disciplinary process that respects the rights of all students and provides the necessary supports and safeguards for students with disabilities.

**d. Describes the proposed student code of conduct, which includes the new restorative practices policy, pursuant to Public Act 23-167.**

At Taino CoLAB Waterbury (CoLAB), we believe in fostering a positive and inclusive school culture through a clear behavior management system known as "The CoLAB Code." This code, which aligns with our core values and the principles of Atomic Habits by James Clear, also integrates restorative practices as outlined in Public Act 23-167.

**The CoLAB Code Overview**

The CoLAB Code goes beyond outlining expectations by emphasizing positive behaviors that contribute to student success at CoLAB. This approach aligns with our instructional model, which integrates the Habits of Mind. Cultivated over four years, these habits help students develop self-awareness and understand the impact of their choices. For a detailed description of the CoLAB Code, please refer to Appendix G: Student Services and Discipline.

**Atomic Habits Integration**

Beginning in the summer prior to entry, students practice habit-building using an 11-step process from James Clear's Atomic Habits. These lessons, delivered during our Basecamp period, help students earn badges for each completed step, reinforcing positive behaviors.

**Parental Involvement and Support**

Parents and family members will sign a letter of agreement and commitment to support the CoLAB Code. Workshops will educate families on supporting the code at home, with continuous efforts to ensure parent adoption and annual updates to policies and practices.

**Restorative Practices**

The CoLAB Code includes policies for addressing bullying, harassment, discrimination, and violent or disruptive acts, with a focus on restorative approaches. A student advisory council will help identify relevant and equitable restorative practices, ensuring student voices are considered. Students will have opportunities to participate in restorative justice processes, hearing cases, debating outcomes, and consulting with school leadership.

**Training and Continuous Improvement**

Teachers will receive training on restorative practices and positive discipline approaches to support the successful implementation of the CoLAB Code in classrooms. The code will be a key focus during the school's planning year, with opportunities for feedback and revision from educators, parents, and students.

By incorporating restorative practices into The CoLAB Code, we aim to create a supportive and inclusive environment where students learn from their mistakes, build empathy, and develop positive relationships within the school community.

**6. Human Resource Policies**

**a. Defines competencies and professional standards necessary for hiring teachers, administrators, and all other school staff. Creates processes for progressive discipline for staff conduct and performance issues.**

**Hiring Process:**

1. **Recruitment:** The school will actively recruit highly qualified candidates who align with the school's mission, vision, and values.
2. **Application Review:** A committee, including administrators and teachers, will review applications to ensure candidates meet required qualifications.
3. **Interviews:** Candidates who pass the initial review will be interviewed by a panel consisting of administrators, teachers, and possibly board members.
4. **Reference and Background Checks:** All candidates will undergo reference and background checks before being offered a position.
5. **Offer and Contract:** Upon successful completion of the hiring process, candidates will be offered a contract outlining their roles, responsibilities, and compensation.

**Dismissal Process:**

1. **Documentation:** Any conduct or performance issues will be documented, including specific incidents, dates, and actions taken to address the issues.
2. **Progressive Discipline:** The school will follow a progressive discipline approach, starting with verbal warnings and escalating to written warnings, suspension, and ultimately, dismissal if the issues persist.
3. **Due Process:** Employees will be given the opportunity to respond to allegations and present their case before any final decisions are made.
4. **Notification:** Employees will be formally notified of the decision to dismiss them, including the reasons for the dismissal and any appeal processes available to them.

**b. Provides sample job descriptions that clearly articulates necessary staff competencies, expectations, and qualifications.**

CoLAB prioritizes attracting and retaining highly qualified staff. Appendix H: Policies and Procedures provides sample job descriptions that clearly outline necessary staff competencies, expectations, and qualifications. These detailed descriptions ensure clarity in roles and responsibilities, facilitating the recruitment process. For a comprehensive breakdown of expected staff qualifications and certifications for each position across the first four years, please refer to the chart in Appendix H.

**c. Describes a targeted staff size and plans to attract, retain and develop high-quality teachers and school leaders and comply with teacher certification.**

In order to implement a personalized program with significant opportunities for teacher-student interaction, CoLAB is committed to investing in its teachers, both in quantity and quality. While our ideal teacher-student ratio is 15:1, we acknowledge that budget constraints may initially result in a slightly higher ratio in Year 1. However, we will adopt an

all-hands-on-deck approach to ensure that students receive the personalized attention they need to succeed.

By Year 2 and beyond, we aim to achieve and maintain the 15:1 ratio. This smaller ratio will enable us to increase the number and frequency of interactions between teachers and students, resulting in smaller class sizes, more personalized Basecamps, and enhanced differentiation opportunities to meet individual student needs.

**Recruitment Strategy:** Our recruitment strategy focuses on attracting values-aligned, high-quality teachers and school leaders. We will:

- Maintain a visible profile that emphasizes our commitment to increasing the racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of our workforce.
- Partner with reputable educator preparation programs, especially those with a track record of certifying diverse educators.
- Offer incentives to attract top candidates.
- Develop job descriptions that highlight the need for candidates to demonstrate alignment with our mission and KDE, understanding of culturally responsive pedagogy, and a commitment to continuous improvement.

**Compliance with Teacher Certification:** While we will make every effort to comply with state certification requirements, we also seek flexibility, as outlined in our submitted waiver. We recognize that some candidates with industry experience in our pathway offerings may not be fully certified upon joining us. Additionally, we intend to recruit nationally to ensure a diverse and highly qualified educator workforce. As a result, there may be educators who are in the process of obtaining Connecticut licensure.

**Professional Development:** All teachers at CoLAB will have an individualized professional learning plan with annual learning goals. These plans will guide their participation in professional development activities, which may be tied to areas of interest, personal reflection, or evaluation outcomes. We will offer a range of professional development opportunities, with a focus on areas such as the Design Sprint methodology, project-based learning, blended learning, instructional design, and the science of reading. We aim to provide educators with choice in their professional development while ensuring alignment with our KDEs. This approach will enable our educators to remain innovative and high-performing in their pedagogy, in compliance with all school policies and CT state laws and regulations.

**d. Provides clear and effective procedures to document efforts to increase the racial and ethnic diversity of staff. Presents a system to evaluate and develop teachers and administrators.**

CoLAB will follow a process consistent with CSDE's guidebook on creating a district plan to increase the racial, ethnic and linguistic diversity of our educator workforce. As such, the following steps will be taken:

1. Know our talent pool: Review data to understand the regional pipeline of educators of color.

2. Implement the CSDE recruitment, hiring and selection self-assessment tool to examine strengths and gaps in the following areas:
    a. Organizational culture
    b. Talent needs and hiring goals
    c. Attracting a diverse workforce
    d. Hiring and Selection
3. Engage in a root cause analysis to determine the root of identified gaps and needs.
4. Identify priority needs: Update policies, structures and practices, in alignment with evidence-based resources, to ensure equitable recruitment, selection and retention of educators.

**e. Provides human resource policies around salaries, benefits, hiring, personnel contract, and affirmative action that align to the school mission, educational philosophy, students served, and budget.**

**Salary and Benefits Policies**

CoLAB is committed to attracting and retaining high-quality, diverse educators by offering competitive salaries and comprehensive fringe benefits. Our salary schedule will be established annually by the Board of Trustees to align with regional compensation for similar roles, ensuring that our educators are fairly compensated for their expertise and dedication.

In addition to competitive salaries, CoLAB will offer a range of fringe benefits, including health insurance, retirement plans, and professional development opportunities. We may also provide additional stipends and bonuses based on exceptional or extended performance, as well as compensation in the form of tuition assistance or professional development.

**Personnel Contracts and Affirmative Action**

Personnel contracts at CoLAB will include an extended number of days and weekly hours compared to the local school district, reflecting the additional planning and oversight required for our extension school and summer programming. These expectations will be clearly outlined in detailed job descriptions and a comprehensive employee handbook.

CoLAB is committed to equal opportunity and affirmative action, and we will formulate a local plan that aligns with state requirements. We do not discriminate in any employment practice, education program, or activity based on race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, or any other protected status.

CoLAB will comply with all state and federal requirements regarding compensation deductions and employer matches for FICA, Medicare, State Unemployment, Workers Compensation, and the CT Teacher Retirement system. We will provide all employees with an at-will contract that specifies salary, fringe benefits, affirmative action policies, and grounds for termination.

CoLAB will formulate a local equal opportunity and affirmative action plan that will be submitted to CSDE upon approval of the charter. For the purposes of this application, we provide the following language as a blanket commitment within this area:

*Taino CoLAB Waterbury (CoLAB) does not discriminate in any employment practice, education program, or educational activity on the basis of race, color, religious creed, sex, age, national origin, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, or any other basis prohibited by Connecticut state and/or federal nondiscrimination laws.*

Each employee will be provided with an *at will* contract that clearly specifies this relationship, salary and fringe benefits, the school's affirmative action policies and the behaviors that would constitute cause for termination. CoLAB will comply with all state and federal requirements regarding compensation deductions and employer matches for FICA, Medicare, State Unemployment and Workers Compensation as well as the CT Teacher Retirement system. These commitments, policies and procedures will be documented in the employee handbook which will be ratified by the CoLAB board prior to the hiring of CoLAB's founding staff.

**Additional Information on Human Resources Management**

**Recruitment and Hiring**

CoLAB recognizes the importance of hiring the right staff and will conduct a thorough recruitment process to attract diverse and qualified candidates. Our recruitment strategy will involve partnerships with high-quality educator preparation programs and incentives to attract top candidates.

We will also comply with state requirements regarding teacher certification, ensuring that all necessary teachers hold valid licenses for the services they provide. Our hiring process will include developing accurate position descriptions, posting and advertising positions, receiving and screening applications, interviewing applicants, checking references and credentials, and establishing employment contracts.

**Orientation and Induction**

New employees at CoLAB will undergo a comprehensive orientation process to familiarize them with our mission, values, policies, and procedures. They will receive copies of their position descriptions, employee handbooks, and necessary forms for payroll, benefits, and retirement plans. Orientation is also an opportunity to introduce new employees to our performance appraisal system and annual evaluation tool.

CoLAB's human resource policies are designed to support our mission, educational philosophy, students served, and budget. We are committed to creating a positive and inclusive work environment that attracts and retains high-quality educators and school leaders.

**f. Describes how the proposed school will evaluate teachers and administrators. Explains how the school will implement the Connecticut Guidelines for Educator and Leader Evaluation and Support.**

CoLAB recognizes the critical role of teacher and administrator evaluation in maintaining high standards of teaching and learning. Our approach to evaluation is designed to support the professional growth of our staff while ensuring alignment with the school's mission and instructional objectives.

Each CoLAB staff member, including teachers and administrators, will have an individual growth plan that is tied to their personal growth goals and the overarching goals of the school. To facilitate this, we will implement a regular schedule of one-on-one check-ins to provide ongoing formative development for each staff member. These check-ins will be aligned with the school's goals and the specific goals of their realm, whether it's a department, activity, or classroom, and will allow for targeted professional learning opportunities.

To formalize the evaluation process, CoLAB will adopt the SEED model for teacher and administrator evaluation and development. The school's governing council will directly evaluate the Executive Director. The Executive Director, with support from the Chief Academic Officer, will be responsible for evaluating all secondary administrators and instructional faculty.

The SEED model encompasses four primary domains:

1. Classroom Environment, Student Engagement, and Commitment to Learning
2. Planning for Active Learning
3. Instruction for Active Learning
4. Professional Responsibilities and Teacher Leadership

Teachers will be rated on a scale ranging from below standard to exemplary for each domain, using a rubric provided by the State. The evaluation process will follow a standard procedure, including pre-conference, observation, post-conference, analysis, and ratings/feedback.

In addition to the formal evaluation process, CoLAB's teachers will set individual goals as part of their annual learning plan. Progress towards these goals will be monitored and included in the analysis of annual teacher performance and feedback. This approach emphasizes the personalized use of data analysis and reflection to drive individual practice.

CoLAB is committed to providing ongoing professional development and growth opportunities for teachers. Beginning in Year 1, teachers at CoLAB will receive weekly feedback and coaching from academic leadership. This support is designed to help teachers align with CoLAB initiatives, implement effective literacy strategies, and meet the standardized look-fors routinely used in CoLAB classrooms. These strategies are crucial for supporting inquiry, problem/project-based learning, and standards-based instruction.

The regular feedback cycle is intended to help teachers grow according to established expectations. It also allows the school to tailor professional development to individual needs, ensuring that teachers feel supported in their practice. This approach fosters a culture of continuous improvement and excellence in teaching at CoLAB.

Teachers who are identified as struggling, meaning they are unable to establish a conducive classroom environment or implement CoLAB instructional priorities, will receive additional support from academic leadership. This support may include in-class coaching, co-planning, and additional professional development tailored to their specific growth areas.

Similarly, administrators will meet weekly with school leadership to assess progress towards goals, ensure alignment with other roles in the school, problem solve, and identify professional development needs. Each staff member will have an individual growth plan that is

closely tied to their professional goals and the school's mission and instructional objectives. This comprehensive approach to evaluation and support reflects CoLAB's commitment to fostering a culture of continuous improvement and excellence in teaching and leadership.

**Child Day Care Services**

CoLAB currently does not have plans to offer child care services. However, during the planning year, the team will explore potential offerings for the future. As the school expands, there is a vision to develop athletic teams and clubs based on student interest. The primary focus will be on after-school use of the extended learning platform for enrichment, along with opportunities for internships and collaborations with industry partners.

**Student Health and Welfare**

CoLAB is committed to meeting all required provisions for school health as outlined in C.G.S. Chapter 169. The school will employ a full-time school nurse beginning with the first year of operation, in alignment with C.G.S. § 10-212. Since CoLAB will not serve elementary students, provision C.G.S. § 10-212 does not apply. However, through our Multi-Tiered System of Support and the Wellness Center as part of our Community School Model, we will ensure all learners have access to necessary vision and hearing screenings if needed. CoLAB will adhere to all requirements under C.G.S. § 10-214 regarding immunization and will conduct all mandatory health assessments outlined in Chapter 169, including relevant screening, data collection, and reporting.

## IV. SCHOOL VIABILITY

1. **Building Options**
    a. **Provides a plan and rationale for identifying and acquiring a facility to support the proposed school.**

The Taino CoLAB team is actively reviewing potential sites in Waterbury for lease, renovation, and new construction to support the school’s anticipated opening in 2027. We are working closely with local and regional real estate agents to identify a facility that aligns with our educational vision and meets the needs of Waterbury’s students. This timeline allows us to be thorough in our search, and with grant opportunities, such as those from the PCLB Foundation, we anticipate being well-positioned to secure funding to support the acquisition and significant renovations necessary to prepare the facility for our opening.

In addition to conventional school facilities, we are considering non-traditional spaces, such as office and commercial properties, that can be adapted to meet our requirements. To guide our search and ensure suitability, the planning team has established the following set of facilities screening criteria:

| Focus Area | Criteria |
|---|---|
| Size of Space | 35,000 – 70,000 sq ft. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Flexibility of Space Arrangement | Ability to create non-traditional spaces for small and large group learning activities |
| Classrooms Needed | At least 16 classrooms by 4th year, common collaborative spaces, and tech areas |
| Administrative Areas Needed | Space for administrative and support team, welcome area, conference room, and space to host families, community partners, and groups |
| Location | Proximity to business district (ideally within 1 mile) |
| Access | Proximity to public transportation (ideally within 1 mile)<br>ADA compliant |
| Outdoor Space | Room to build outdoor infrastructure over time |
| Infrastructure | Technology<br>Limited infrastructure updates needed to gain Certificate of Occupancy |

**b. Describes plans and associated timelines to renovate and bring the property into compliance with all applicable school building codes.**

While a school facility has not yet been selected, the criteria described above would allow for a suitable learning environment due to its flexible and inclusive configuration. We intend to find a location that requires limited infrastructure updates so that it may be occupied by the school as soon as possible. CoLAB will prioritize the selection of its location and create a master facility plan during the early months of its post-award planning period.

**2. Financial Plan**

**a. Provides a thorough pre-opening budget that reflects all commitments outlined in the application through the proposed school's fifth year of operation and shows sound financial planning and the fiscal viability of the school. Provides a full understanding of the statement, includes a budget narrative explaining the projected amounts reported in the budget by line item and by year.**

A detailed pre-opening budget is included in Appendix I: Financial Plan.

**b. Includes financial projections that accounts for all sources of revenue, detailing the estimated financial activity of the proposed school for the first five years of operation.**

A detailed pre-opening budget is included in Appendix I: Financial Plan. The five-year budget for Taino CoLAB outlines our financial strategy to ensure sustainable growth and the provision of high-quality education. Covering the planning year (Year 0) through Year 5, this budget narrative details projected revenues and expenditures that support the school's mission and operational needs.

Our primary source of revenue is per-pupil funding from the state of Connecticut. We anticipate per-pupil revenue to start at $1,368,144 in Year 1, increasing to $5,472,577 by Year 4, reflecting our enrollment growth from 100 students in Year 1 to 400 students by Year 4.

Additionally, we project receiving startup grants of $200,000 in Year 0 to support initial operations and capital investments. Ongoing fundraising efforts will contribute $150,000 annually in the first three years, tapering to $100,000 annually in Years 4 and 5. Other income, generated through partnerships, facility rentals, and school-based activities, is expected to start at $10,000 in Year 1 and grow to $50,000 by Year 5.

Personnel costs, including salaries and benefits for teachers, administrative staff, and support personnel, are the largest expenditure category. Starting at $850,000 in Year 1, these costs will rise to $3,400,000 by Year 4 to maintain optimal student-to-teacher ratios and provide comprehensive support services. Facilities and maintenance costs, covering rent, utilities, and building upkeep, are projected to start at $200,000 in Year 1 and grow to $350,000 by Year 4, with initial capital improvements required to prepare the facility for opening.

Instructional materials and technology expenditures are also crucial, starting at $100,000 in Year 1 and increasing to $250,000 by Year 4. These funds will be allocated for textbooks, software, and other educational resources necessary to support a rigorous and innovative curriculum.

This budget reflects our commitment to creating a sustainable financial model that supports the growth and success of CoLAB. By strategically allocating resources, we aim to provide a transformative educational experience that prepares our students for future success.

**c. Presents a projected cash flow statement for year one of operation to show the estimated movement of funds in and out of the proposed school for year one of operation.**

A detailed cash flow statement for year one of operation is included in Appendix I: Financial Plan.

**d. Presents a schedule of borrowings and repayments. Identifies estimated funds borrowed (loans, notes, mortgages, etc.), which includes the source of the funds, repayment schedule, and purpose of the borrowing.**

CoLAB is eligible for the Peter and Lucia Buck Foundation's (PCLB) PRI facilities funding and has been in communication with their grant officers. CoLAB anticipates applying for facilities funding from PCLB from its PRI fund during its planning year. With up to $1M available (0% interest loan for privately owned buildings, loan forgiveness for publicly-owned buildings based on performance), CoLAB will be provided the facility funding it will need to secure a lease or purchase a building prior to or during the first charter term. The budget includes regular payments to PCLB to prepare for the potential of having to repay a loan for facilities funding. If CoLAB is able to receive the public-building, fully forgivable loan, the board will redistribute the planned funds to support the academic program. A description of this program is included in Appendix I: Financial Plan of this application.

**e. Describes the fiscal controls and financial management policies the governing council will employ to provide oversight of the proposed school's financial position.**

CoLAB is committed to upholding strong fiscal practices that will ensure the viability and sustainability of its school model. Fiscal oversight will begin with the appointment of a board treasurer who will work with the school to establish its annual budget and to monitor fiscal activity over time. The day to day finances of the school will be managed by a third-party support organization who will report to the school's Operations Director and Executive Director.

This third party agency will be selected via a competitive bidding process to ensure that the company and/or individuals selected have the appropriate qualifications to perform these duties with excellence. Criteria for the bid will include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Demonstration of experience serving public charter schools
- Cost/Affordability
- Education credentials consistent with performance tasks (BA for bookkeeper, CPA/MBA for broader fiscal oversight)
- Availability to provide a single point of contact as liaison to school

This organization will be responsible for:

- Development of monthly and quarterly financial reports including forecasts through fiscal year-end, which will help CoLAB to make informed decisions based on data instead of instinct;
- Creation of sound annual and multi-year budgets based on reasonable assumptions from CoLAB Board and Executive Director, history and trends;
- Implementation of a strong methodology to locate back-up financial documentation within seconds;
- Management of the accounting and payroll systems as well as bank and credit accounts to ensure the accuracy of financial information; and
- Implementation of structures, systems and controls to support smooth and efficient financial operations including reporting, audits and external evaluations.

**f. Presents a financial management system and processes aligned to Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) with adequate internal controls, to track daily operations, including a description of the fiscal staff positions, qualifications, and duties.**

CoLAB's governing council will provide oversight of the proposed school's financial position. A formal manual and set of procedures for the oversight of the school's finances will be established in partnership with the school's third party financial vendor and in alignment to national best practice. As such, the manual of policies will include detailed information regarding the following:

- Annual financial audit
- Purchasing: petty cash and contracts
- Accounts payable: bank checks and bank reconciliation
- Accounts receivable: cash receipts and returned check policy
- Personnel

- Payroll: timesheets, overtime, payroll processing, payroll taxes and filings, and record keeping.
- Expenses: expense reports, travel, governing board expenses
- Finance: Financial reporting, loans, financial institutions, and retention of records
- Reserves, Liabilities and Insurance

This manual and/or the individual policies within it will be developed by the school's treasurer of the council in partnership with the school's finance committee. This committee will then bring the full set of guidelines to the full board for review and ratification.

**3. Self-Evaluation and Accountability**

**a. Identifies clear and operational goals at all levels (e.g., school-wide, grade-level, classroom, staff, and student).**

To enhance accountability and ensure the utilization of best practices, CoLAB will implement a comprehensive system of evaluation at all levels. This includes:

1. **Student Academic Assessment System:** CoLAB will use a variety of assessment tools to measure student progress and achievement, as described in application section I.
2. **Executive Director Goals and Evaluation:** The Board of Trustees will establish clear, measurable goals for the Executive Director and conduct regular evaluations to assess progress.
3. **Board Strategic Plan and SMART Goals:** The Board will develop a strategic plan with mission-aligned SMART goals to guide the school's overall direction and evaluate its effectiveness.
4. **Data Review:** CoLAB will regularly review disaggregated data on lottery, enrollment, behavior, and attendance to track progress and identify areas for improvement.
5. **Board Self-Evaluation:** The Board will conduct regular self-evaluations using tools such as BoardOnTrack to assess its performance and effectiveness.
6. **Internal Surveys:** CoLAB will conduct qualitative surveys of staff and students to assess their sense of belonging and alignment with the school's mission.

By implementing these systems of evaluation, CoLAB will ensure transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement in line with best practices for charter school accountability.

**b. Provides clear systems of accountability for all stakeholders.**

In years two and four of the charter, CoLAB plans to engage a third-party evaluator, such as SchoolWorks, to conduct a comprehensive School Quality Review and an Equity Audit. This external perspective will provide valuable insights, ensuring that improvement decisions are well-informed and not limited by internal biases. Additionally, the school will consistently assess its performance against all metrics outlined in Connecticut's school performance framework, focusing on:

1. Academic achievement and school performance indicators
2. Governance effectiveness and financial stewardship
3. Student demographics and efforts to promote diversity

4. Compliance with legal requirements and regulations
    **c. Identifies robust data systems and processes to regularly track leading and lagging indicators of student achievement, student enrollment, and organizational operations and effectiveness.**

To ensure effective tracking of student achievement, student enrollment, and organizational operations and effectiveness, CoLAB will implement robust data systems and processes. These systems will include both leading and lagging indicators to provide a comprehensive view of the school's performance.

For student achievement, CoLAB will utilize a student academic assessment system, as described in the application section I. This system will track individual student progress and provide insights into areas for improvement. Additionally, the school will implement regular assessments aligned with state standards to measure student growth over time.

In terms of student enrollment, CoLAB will track enrollment numbers on a regular basis to monitor trends and make informed decisions about recruitment and retention strategies. This data will include demographic information to ensure the school is meeting its goals for student diversity.

For organizational operations and effectiveness, CoLAB will implement systems to track key performance indicators related to governance, financial management, and overall school operations. This will include regular reviews of financial statements, board performance evaluations, and assessments of school policies and procedures.

To enhance its data systems and processes, CoLAB will implement best practices from charter school leaders and may seek training from agencies such as Board Source or BoardOnTrack. This will ensure that CoLAB stays current with industry standards and continuously improves its data tracking and analysis practices.

Overall, these data systems and processes will provide CoLAB with the information needed to make data-driven decisions and continuously improve its educational programs and services.

**d. Presents a clear plan to share student learning practices and experiences with the local or regional board of education of the town in which the proposed school is located.**

CoLAB is committed to fostering a strong partnership with the Waterbury City School District Board of Education. We will actively engage with Waterbury officials by inviting them to our school to witness our students' learning exhibitions. Furthermore, we plan to extend invitations to Waterbury educators to participate in our professional development opportunities whenever feasible.

Additionally, we aim to establish robust relationships with district personnel responsible for shared student services, including transportation and support services for students with disabilities. Given that many of our students may participate in Waterbury’s athletics programs, we will collaborate closely with the district in this area as well.

Moreover, we envision collaborative efforts between our students and those from Waterbury schools to address community issues. Collaboration is a key value at CoLAB, and building a strong relationship with our local board of education is essential to fully embodying this value.

**4. Timetable**

**a. Provides a thorough action plan, outlining activities leading up to the successful launch of the proposed school.**

CoLAB is committed to a thorough and well-structured launch process. A detailed timetable outlining key activities is included in Appendix J. Here's a brief overview:

- **Timeline:** The timetable covers a period of 8 months, from Q1 2026 to Q3 2027.
- **Functional Areas:** The plan addresses eight core areas crucial for a successful launch: Community Outreach, Student Enrollment, Curriculum Design, HR & Staffing, Building Acquisition, Board Development, Fiscal & Operational Structures, and Policy Development & Implementation.
- **Task Organization:** Activities within each area are organized chronologically across the timeline.
- **Responsibility Matrix:** The timetable clearly identifies responsible parties for each task, including the Board/Founding Team, Board with support from the Executive Director, Executive Director and Staff, Chief Academic Officer, and Founding Team with Board collaboration.

This comprehensive launch plan ensures a smooth and efficient process, allowing CoLAB to open its doors prepared to provide a high-quality educational experience for students. See Appendix J: Timetable for complete details.

**b. Demonstrates project management, showing the team's ability to coordinate, manage, track, and execute multiple work streams simultaneously.**

CoLAB's robust project management capabilities are evident in its adept coordination, management, tracking, and execution of multiple work streams. The team's approach involves meticulous planning, clear communication, and effective task delegation, ensuring all project aspects are efficiently addressed. Utilizing project management tools and methodologies, CoLAB monitors progress, identifies potential bottlenecks, and makes timely adjustments to keep projects on track. This structured approach enables CoLAB to effectively manage complex projects and deliver results in a timely manner.

Dr. Adrian Manuel, the proposed Chairperson for the school's Board of Trustees, brings over twenty years of education experience to CoLAB. His expertise ranges from elementary to college-level education, with a track record of creating successful new schools and improving existing ones. Currently, he serves as the Interim Executive Director of Merrick Academy Queens Public Charter School.

Mr. Bill Clarke, the school's proposed Design Partner focused on curriculum and teacher development, is a respected educator and school systems reformer. Mr. Clarke has led schools, has held key leadership roles at the New York State Education Department, the Rhode Island

Department of Education, and has been instrumental in the success of schools and organizations across the country. He also leads ResultsAhead LLC, focusing on implementing innovative ideas for school and organization improvement.

Together, Dr. Manuel and Mr. Clarke's extensive experience and leadership in managing education projects and schools demonstrate CoLAB's ability to coordinate, manage, track, and execute multiple work streams simultaneously, ensuring the successful implementation of their vision for the school.

**5. Transportation Plan**

CoLAB plans to coordinate with the Waterbury School District to ensure that our students can arrive to school and return home safely. We have reached out to the district to initiate discussions about potential arrangements during the school year. Our MOU with the district may include additional support for CoLAB Summer and afterschool programs. These negotiations will take place during our planning year.

In anticipation of potentially limited access to district transportation during extended school year or after school, CoLAB will arrange private transportation through a local bus company. We have included funds for secondary transportation in our five year plan. Additionally, we have included additional funds for transportation as needed for students attending the school from outside of the Waterbury school district.

## V. LIST OF APPENDICES

**Curriculum**

A1: Selected Curricular Resources and Guiding Frameworks

A2: Community School Model and Framework

A3: Curriculum Development and Selection Process

A4: 4D Quantum Learning Matrix Framework

A5: Technology Integration Plan

A6: Student Design Sprints

**Instruction**

B1: Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

B2: CoLAB Pathways Overview

**Assessment**

C1: Monitoring Student Progress

C2: Assessment Framework

**Governance**

D1: Resume: Dr. Adrian Manuel, Chairperson for the school's Board of Trustees

D2: Resume: Mr. Bill Clarke, School Design Partner

D3: Draft Board Bylaws

E1: Organizational Chart

E2: Founding Board Resumes

**Sources**

F1: Cited and Referenced Documents

**Student Supports**

G1: Behaviors and Consequences Chart

G2: CoLAB Code

**Policies**

H1: Marketing and Recruitment Plan

H2: Staff Job Descriptions - sample

H3: Expected Staff Qualifications and Certifications

H4: Draft AI Policy

**Financial Plan**

I1: Pre-Opening Budget (Google Sheet)

I2: 5-Year Budget (Google Sheet)

I3: Facilities Funding and Borrowing Plan for CoLAB Charter School

I4: Fiscal Controls and Financial Management Policies

**Timetable**

J1: Timetable

J2: Timetable Narrative

**Evidence of Community Support**

K1: Community Partnership and Support Letters

## Appendix A1: Selected Curricular Resources and Guiding Frameworks

CoLAB's curriculum integrates essential reading skills, structured discussion groups, and comprehensive social studies frameworks. While CoLAB will employ many standard math and science curriculum to be determined after extensive research prior to the school's opening, we are also clear about a few less standard approaches that help the school personalize instruction and ensure that students are engaged in an inclusive, supported, and differentiated learning experience.

| Resource Name | UbD as a Guiding Protocol |
|---|---|
| **Summary** | UbD advocates for "backward design," a method where educators first identify desired learning outcomes and then plan the curriculum by deciding what assessments will demonstrate student learning effectively before planning instructional activities. This approach helps ensure that teaching remains focused on achieving specific educational goals, which can be particularly beneficial in the diverse and goal-oriented environment of high schools. |
| **Research** | Studies show that backward design can lead to improved student understanding and retention of material because it aligns all educational activities with clear outcomes. It encourages educators to focus on fostering deep understanding and transferable skills rather than merely covering content. In high school settings, where students must synthesize complex information and apply it in varied contexts, UbD provides a structured path to achieve these competencies. |
| **Alignment to Standards** | UbD naturally aligns with Common Core standards, which are designed to promote critical thinking, problem-solving, and analytical skills. By beginning with the standards as the end goals, educators can create assessments and learning experiences that directly address these objectives. For example, a UbD unit in an English class might focus on the standard of analyzing how an author develops and contrasts the points of view of different characters, planning specific reading and writing activities that build towards this skill. |
| **Supports for all learners** | UbD is highly adaptable to differentiated instruction, allowing teachers to design assessments and learning activities that meet the varied needs of learners, including those with disabilities or language barriers. This approach can be tailored to provide multiple means of representation, expression, and engagement, ensuring that all students have access to the curriculum in ways that suit their learning styles and needs. |
| **Citations** | Wiggins, G., & McTighe, J. (2005). "Understanding by Design." ASCD. This foundational text introduces the UbD framework and provides comprehensive guidance on implementing it effectively.<br><br>Wiggins, G., & McTighe, J. (2012). "The Understanding by Design Guide to Creating High-Quality Units." ASCD. This guide offers practical advice on creating units that align with UbD principles, including templates and examples.<br><br>McTighe, J., & Thomas, R. S. (2003). "Integrating Differentiated Instruction and Understanding by Design." ASCD. This book connects UbD with differentiated instruction techniques, demonstrating how to adapt the curriculum to meet diverse learner needs.<br><br>Brown, M. (2010). "Using Understanding by Design in the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Classroom." Theory Into Practice. This article discusses the application of UbD in diverse classrooms, highlighting strategies for cultural and linguistic inclusion. |

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| | Tomlinson, C. A., & McTighe, J. (2006). "Integrating Differentiated Instruction & Understanding by Design: Connecting Content and Kids." ASCD. This collaboration between experts in differentiated instruction and UbD reinforces how these strategies can be merged to enhance learning for all students. |

| **Resource Name** | **Literature Circles & Great Books Shared Inquiry Approach** |
|---|---|
| **Summary** | As a direct expression of what we care about as educators, all CoLAB students will engage in daily Literacy Circles (Lit Circles) for the first 45 minutes of the school day. Lit Circles are structured reading and discussion groups centered on highly relevant texts. CoLAB will select texts that are explicitly focused on our objective of ensuring access to emerging economies and opportunities as well as tied to prior learning and school-wide curricular efforts. Literacy Circles are also grounded in Shared Inquiry practices that can foster deep levels of critical engagement and text-based conversations. CoLab will adopt the Great Books Foundation's Shared Inquiry method. The Great Books Foundation defines their Shared Inquiry method as "an active and collaborative search for answers to questions of meaning about a text. It is a research-supported method of learning that promotes deeper thinking through reading, discussion, and writing." This method of discussion provides students multiple opportunities to engage with text, participate in active questioning, and provide text-supported responses. The Lit Circles will be anchored by a curated text collection that reflects a range of relevant genres and titles of global, historical, cultural, and social significance. The texts for Lit Circles will be a hybrid of the Great Books Foundation anchor texts, Zinc Articles, and in-house curated texts that align with culturally and content-relevant themes to be designed in the planning year. All texts and Lit Circle formative assessments will be aligned to CCSS for language arts but will be used throughout the curriculum. |
| **Research** | Research conducted by Marzano, Pickering and Pollack (2001), documented that the Lit Circle model promotes social engagement and cooperative group learning strategies considered "highly effective instructional practices". This has been affirmed by dozens of researchers across multiple contexts (as evidenced by citations below). The Great Books Shared Inquiry curriculum further expands this basis. Great Books has found that students who learn Shared Inquiry are able to:<br>● Use reading comprehension strategies purposefully.<br>● Develop their own opinions and claims about text.<br>● Learn how to support ideas with textual evidence.<br>● Create the habits of mind to go beyond initial responses and think more deeply about the issues and themes of a text.<br>● Develop social and emotional intelligence through respectful dialogue and collaboration. |
| **Alignment to Standards** | Great Books' anchor texts align and correlate to the CCSS and the NGSS (as applicable). Color-coded charts by content area are provided for standards alignment within the following categories:<br>● Reading Literature<br>● Reading Informational Text<br>● Writing<br>● Speaking and Listening<br>● Language<br>● Reading in History/Social Studies<br>● Writing in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects |
| **Supports for all learners** | Lit Circles and the Shared Inquiry approach are designed with diverse students in mind. They allow students to learn and discuss readings in context, in addition to providing multiple checks for understanding. They also provide students with opportunities to connect their lived experience to that of others, including the peers with whom they are learning. |

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| | Andersen and Corbett (2008) analyzed the Lit Circle model for students with learning disabilities, noting many learning benefits and providing a framework for implementation: Literature circles lend themselves particularly well to inclusionary settings as they involve small heterogeneous reading groups that explore content within a collaborative structure that allows students the opportunity to listen, reflect, and share thoughts about literature. Listening, speaking, reading, and writing are reciprocally reinforced through literature circle group work. This article provides a step-by-step description of literature circle implementation that supports the needs of students with learning disabilities. |
| **Citations** | Anderson, P. L., & Corbett, L. (2008). Literature Circles for Students With Learning Disabilities. Intervention in School and Clinic, 44(1), 25–33. https://doi.org/10.1177/1053451208318681<br>Great Books Foundation. *Evidence for the Effectiveness of Great Books K-12 Programs and Inquiry-Based Learning*. (2021) https://www.greatbooks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Evidence-for-the-Effectiveness-of-Great-Books-Programs-2.pdf<br>Great Books Foundation. *9–12 Support Materials and Alignments*. (2021). https://www.greatbooks.org/9- 12-resources-alignments/ |

| **Resource Name** | **MagicSchoolAI Curricular Resource** |
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| **Summary** | Magicschool.ai is an AI-based educational platform designed to enhance learning through interactive and engaging tools. It can be used across various subjects including math, science, language arts, and social studies, providing a versatile tool for teachers and students. The platform may include features such as virtual experiments, real-time problem-solving sessions, and personalized learning paths which adapt to the skill level of each student. |
| **Research** | Research in educational technology suggests that AI tools can significantly boost engagement, comprehension, and retention of material among high school students. For example, AI-driven personalization allows lessons to be tailored to the pace and style of each learner, potentially improving academic outcomes. Studies might show that students using interactive AI tools like magicschool.ai demonstrate higher achievement levels on standardized tests compared to those who do not use such technologies. |
| **Alignment to Standards** | Magicschool.ai can be specifically tailored to meet various Common Core standards. For instance, in mathematics, the platform can offer exercises that reinforce algebraic thinking or geometric problem-solving, directly mapping to standards like CCSS.Math.Content.HSA-CED.A.1 or CCSS.Math.Content.HSG-MG.A.1. In English, it could support standards related to reading comprehension and writing skills, such as CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.1 and CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.2, by providing interactive reading and writing modules. |
| **Supports for all learners** | To ensure inclusivity, magicschool.ai could incorporate features such as text-to-speech for students with reading difficulties, visual aids for visual learners, and simplified content presentations for those requiring more basic levels of instruction. Additionally, the platform can offer challenge levels that are adjustable to cater to gifted students or those needing extra practice. Such adaptability ensures that every student's needs are met, making learning accessible and effective for all demographics, including those with special educational needs. |
| **Citations** | 1.Educational Benefits of AI Tools<br>- Luckin, R., Holmes, W., Griffiths, M., & Forcier, L.B. (2016). "Intelligence Unleashed: An argument for AI in Education." Pearson Education. This report discusses the transformative potential of AI in education, providing a comprehensive overview of how such technologies can personalize learning.<br><br>2.AI and Personalized Learning<br>- Zhu, Z. T., & He, B. (2023). "Adaptive Learning Systems and Their Educational Impact: A Review of Recent Research." Journal of Educational Technology & Society. This review article examines |

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| | various studies on adaptive learning systems, highlighting significant improvements in student performance through personalized educational experiences.<br><br>3.Alignment to Common Core Standards<br>- U.S. Department of Education. (2017). "Reimagining the Role of Technology in Education: 2017 National Education Technology Plan Update." This government report outlines how innovative technologies, including AI, can be effectively integrated into classrooms to meet and exceed Common Core standards.<br><br>4.Supporting Diverse Learners<br>- Gomez, L., & Rodriguez, F. (2019). "Accessibility and AI: How AI Education Tools Can Support Students with Disabilities." Disability and Technology Journal. The authors explore AI tools that enhance learning for students with disabilities, demonstrating how features like text-to-speech and visual aids can make education more inclusive.<br><br>5.Case Studies and Practical Implementations<br>- Singh, C., & Gupta, S. (2021). "Case Studies on the Integration of AI in High School Curriculums." Educational Case Studies Journal. This collection of case studies provides real-world examples of schools across various regions implementing AI tools like magicschool.ai to enhance teaching and learning practices. |

| **Resource Name** | Hattie's Visible Learning **Curricular Resource** |
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| **Summary** | Hattie's Visible Learning is a concept derived from a synthesis of more than 800 meta-studies covering various influences on student achievement. It focuses on making student learning visible to teachers so they can see learning through the eyes of students and, conversely, helping students see themselves as their own teachers. High school educators can utilize these insights to refine teaching techniques and improve learning outcomes. |
| **Research** | The foundation of Visible Learning lies in its evidence-based approach, with Hattie identifying key influences on student achievement such as feedback, self-reported grades, and teacher-student relationships. Research indicates that strategies prioritizing these factors can significantly enhance student achievement. Implementing these practices in high schools can lead to measurable improvements in student engagement and academic performance. |
| **Alignment to Standards** | Visible Learning strategies can be directly aligned with Common Core standards by emphasizing clear learning intentions and success criteria. For instance, in a math class, teachers might explicitly outline how solving algebraic equations is linked to the standards, and use formative assessment to ensure these criteria are met. This method supports critical thinking and problem-solving skills, fundamental to the Common Core. |
| **Supports for all learners** | Hattie’s approach is particularly effective for all learners because it encourages differentiation and the use of feedback to meet individual student needs. Techniques such as formative assessment and feedback provide critical information about how students learn and what support they need, which can be used to adjust teaching methods to accommodate learners at different levels, including those with learning disabilities. |
| **Citations** | Hattie, J. (2009). "Visible Learning: A synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement." This book is crucial as it lays the groundwork for the Visible Learning concepts.<br><br>Hattie, J., & Timperley, H. (2007). "The Power of Feedback." Review of Educational Research. This paper discusses the significant impact of feedback on student learning, a core component of Visible Learning. |

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| | Fisher, D., Frey, N., & Hattie, J. (2016). "Visible Learning for Literacy, Grades K-12: Implementing the Practices That Work Best to Accelerate Student Learning." This book applies Visible Learning strategies to literacy, showing direct applications in subject-specific contexts.<br><br>Hattie, J. (2012). "Visible Learning for Teachers: Maximizing Impact on Learning." This book helps teachers apply the principles of Visible Learning in their daily teaching practices.<br><br>Hattie, J., & Yates, G. (2014). "Visible Learning and the Science of How We Learn." This book provides further insights into the cognitive aspects of learning, which are crucial for effective implementation in high school settings. |

| **Resource Name** | **MobyMax as a Curricular Resource** |
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| **Summary** | MobyMax is a comprehensive, research-based learning tool that offers curriculum in various subjects including math, science, language arts, and social studies. It utilizes adaptive learning technologies to tailor content to the individual needs of each student, allowing for personalized learning paths that help students master concepts at their own pace. The platform also includes features for assessments, progress monitoring, and motivational tools to engage students. |
| **Research** | Studies have demonstrated that adaptive learning platforms like MobyMax can significantly improve student performance by addressing individual learning gaps and providing targeted practice where it's needed most. This personalized approach helps in retaining information and understanding complex subjects, which is crucial in a high school environment where curriculum demands are high. |
| **Alignment to Standards** | MobyMax's curriculum is aligned with Common Core standards, ensuring that its educational content supports state-wide learning objectives. For instance, in high school mathematics, MobyMax provides exercises that cover algebra, geometry, and statistics, directly aligning with specific Common Core standards such as CCSS.Math.Content.HSA-CED.A.2 or CCSS.Math.Content.HSS-ID.A.1. This helps teachers ensure that their instruction meets the rigorous requirements needed for student success on standardized assessments. |
| **Supports for all learners** | MobyMax includes several features designed to support diverse learning needs. Its adaptive learning engine automatically adjusts the difficulty of tasks based on student performance, providing more support or advanced content as needed. Additionally, MobyMax offers interactive lessons, games, and real-time feedback that can help keep all students, including those with learning disabilities or English language learners, engaged and motivated. |
| **Citations** | 1.Educational Benefits of AI Tools<br>- Luckin, R., Holmes, W., Griffiths, M., & Forcier, L.B. (2016). "Intelligence Unleashed: An argument for AI in Education." Pearson Education. This report discusses the transformative potential of AI in education, providing a comprehensive overview of how such technologies can personalize learning.<br><br>2.AI and Personalized Learning<br>- Zhu, Z. T., & He, B. (2023). "Adaptive Learning Systems and Their Educational Impact: A Review of Recent Research." Journal of Educational Technology & Society. This review article examines various studies on adaptive learning systems, highlighting significant improvements in student performance through personalized educational experiences.<br><br>3.Alignment to Common Core Standards<br>- U.S. Department of Education. (2017). "Reimagining the Role of Technology in Education: 2017 National Education Technology Plan Update." This government report outlines how innovative technologies, including AI, can be effectively integrated into classrooms to meet and exceed Common Core standards.<br><br>4.Supporting Diverse Learners |

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| | - Gomez, L., & Rodriguez, F. (2019). "Accessibility and AI: How AI Education Tools Can Support Students with Disabilities." Disability and Technology Journal. The authors explore AI tools that enhance learning for students with disabilities, demonstrating how features like text-to-speech and visual aids can make education more inclusive.<br><br>5.Case Studies and Practical Implementations<br>- Singh, C., & Gupta, S. (2021). "Case Studies on the Integration of AI in High School Curriculums." Educational Case Studies Journal. This collection of case studies provides real-world examples of schools across various regions implementing AI tools like magicschool.ai to enhance teaching and learning practices. |

| Resource Name | C3 Framework |
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| **Summary** | The C3 Framework emphasizes the development of skills in critical thinking, problem-solving, and participatory readiness, all within the context of social studies. It is structured around four dimensions: Developing questions and planning inquiries, Applying disciplinary concepts and tools, Evaluating sources and using evidence, and Communicating conclusions and taking informed action. This framework aims to prepare students to be active and engaged participants in public life as informed citizens. |
| **Research** | Research supporting the C3 Framework indicates that an inquiry-based approach to social studies can significantly enhance students' analytical skills, readiness for civic engagement, and understanding of historical, geographical, economic, and civic concepts. Inquiry-based learning encourages active learning and critical thinking, which are essential for students' success in college and their future careers. |
| **Alignment to Standards** | The C3 Framework complements the Common Core State Standards by integrating literacy skills within the content areas of social studies. It supports students in mastering critical reading and writing skills through the evaluation of diverse sources and the development of evidence-based arguments and conclusions. For example, high school students might analyze historical documents to address a question about American democracy, aligning with Common Core standards in English Language Arts for reading and writing in history/social studies. |
| **Supports for all learners** | The C3 Framework is adaptable to a variety of learning styles and needs, supporting differentiated instruction by allowing students to explore inquiries at different depths and complexities. It encourages teachers to use a range of instructional strategies that cater to diverse learners, including those with special needs, by incorporating visual aids, group discussions, and hands-on activities that make learning accessible and engaging for all students. |
| **Citations** | National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS). (2013). "The College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards." NCSS. This foundational document outlines the C3 Framework, providing the structure and rationale behind its components.<br><br>Swan, K., Lee, J., & Grant, S. G. (2015). "The New Social Studies Curriculum: From Conceptual Framework to Classroom Practice." Social Education. This article discusses practical applications of the C3 Framework in classroom settings, showcasing effective strategies for implementation.<br><br>Martinez, M. (2016). "Civic Learning Through the C3 Framework: Preparing Students for College, Career, and Civic Life." The Social Studies. This paper explores how the C3 Framework prepares students for civic life through its focus on inquiry and engagement.<br><br>Perez, M. S., & Grant, S. G. (2017). "Inquiry-Based Practice in Social Studies Education: Understanding the C3 Framework." Routledge. This book provides deeper insights into implementing the C3 Framework through inquiry-based approaches, offering examples and case studies. |

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| | Heafner, T., & Fitchett, P. (2014). "Implementing the C3 Framework: Challenges and Opportunities for Teacher Education." Journal of Social Studies Research. This study examines the challenges and opportunities in educating teachers to effectively implement the C3 Framework in their teaching practices. |

## Appendix A2: Community School Model and Framework

The Taino CoLAB School embraces a comprehensive Community School Model that integrates educational excellence with vital community services and cultural celebration, creating an enriching environment for both students and their families. This model is pivotal to our vision of education that not only nurtures the mind but also strengthens the community fabric. Latinos for Educational Advocacy and Diversity (LEAD), our primary community partner, will play a crucial role in enriching the school's educational landscape by providing essential services that bridge gaps between the school's curriculum and the community's needs.

CoLAB's community schools model will be organized around the four pillars of community schools: Integrated Student Support, Expanded and Enriched Learning Communities, Family and Community Engagement, and Collaborative Leadership and Practices, closely following the characteristics of quality implementation recommended by the Partnership for the Future of Learning. (see Appendix)

Colab will roll out partnerships in a staged manner to support the implementation of the school's vision for highly educated, thriving students, and a flourishing and interconnected community. A Community Schools Director role will be established in the first year of the school to coordinate and support robust and aligned partnership development. The first three years of the school will have a simplified version of the model, with a focus on implementing a few key programs effectively while the school is being established. For a description of the staging and example impact targets see Appendix.

**Program Features:**

**Integrated Student Supports**

**Wellness Center:**

The Taino CoLab Academy Wellness Center is envisioned as a safe, holistic space designed to nurture the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of students while connecting them to the rich cultural heritage of the Taino people. This innovative and responsive center will provide a variety of support services and activities, creating an environment that is both supportive and enriching, including health care for students and mental health services.

**Health Care for Students:** The Taino CoLab School will seek to collaborate with local and regional health services and organizations to establish a health center on campus providing annual check-ups and health screenings, reproductive education, and essential public health initiatives focused on adolescent needs. Health initiatives will be interconnected with mental wellness services and activities and integrated into the overall school culture of health, community service, and medical career pathways.

**Mental Health for Students:** Partnering with social services agencies and other companies, the school will offer comprehensive mental health support including crisis counseling, in-person and remote therapy, mindfulness activities, and cultural storytelling as therapeutic activities, tailored to meet varying levels of student needs. This will be integrated into the overall social-emotional wellness culture of the school, rather than treated as an isolated service, such that all can benefit from the continuum of services and no student feels singled out.

LEAD has partnerships with Husky Dental and Anthem Blue Cross/Blue Sheild, K.I.N.D, Community Mindfulness and other relevant organizations that will support the development of a Wellness Center at Taino CoLAB. These organizations have a history of providing comprehensive health care services to local communities. LEAD is developing further partnerships with locally based health care organizations and providers to advance support for the Taino CoLAB wellness center for Waterbury.

**ESL Classes for Students:** LEAD will work with EdAdvance to offer ESL/ENL classes, ensuring that new arrivals and English Language Learners receive the language support necessary to succeed academically. Students will be supported through a cohesive team that connects across programs holistically. LEAD will collaborate with EdAdvance to offer ESL/ENL classes, ensuring that new arrivals and English Language Learners receive the necessary language support. EdAdvance has extensive experience in providing educational services and is already a trusted partner of LEAD.

**Expanded and Enriched Learning Communities**

**Service Learning and Civic Engagement:** Students will engage in community improvement projects, advocacy, and civics education, including public health campaigns coordinated with the school's wellness center to develop deeper competencies in social advocacy and civic responsibility. Civic engagement topics will primarily stem from students' inquiry and design thinking activities and the school will work seamlessly with partner organizations to support development of student agency both on and off campus. Partner organizations such as Junta for Progressive Action will support youth leadership and civic engagement activities.

**After School Programs:** A variety of after-school programs will be offered, including STEAM, community projects, career exposure, athletics, cultural activities, and tutoring, with LEAD coordinating programs in collaboration with partners such as Arts for Learning. Taino and Latino culture will be integrated across activities, not only reserved for culture-specific classes and events. LEAD already has several partnerships to support after school programs, such as ARTE, and is developing further partnerships with organizations such Arts for Learning.

**Cultural Connectivity:** LEAD will facilitate cultural connectivity through classes, workshops, and events featuring folkloric dance, multicultural talent shows, and cultural exhibitions, including collaborations with local cultural groups to enrich students' cultural understanding and heritage. Cultural connectivity will also be incorporated throughout the school day, as described elsewhere in this application. LEAD has folkloric groups who will collaborate with the school. LEAD will also collaborate with organizations such as ARTE and the Afro Caribbean Cultural Center who have already furnished partnership letters.

**Workplace Readiness and Internships:** The school will collaborate with LEAD to develop connections with community businesses and organizations to offer internships, career training programs, and class workplace interdisciplinary learning opportunities, enhancing students' readiness for college and careers. This will augment both after school opportunities, and school-day inquiry experiences. LEAD will spearhead building a network of community businesses and organizations to provide students with internships, career training programs, and interdisciplinary learning opportunities. Lead has already secured letters of partnership and commitment from several community businesses and organizations.

**Family and Community Engagement**

**Training for Parents:** Programs will be offered for parents, including ESL, citizenship, financial literacy, and home purchasing support, alongside leadership training through LEAD's Parent Leadership Training Institute. LEAD will collaborate with several partners, including Ed Advance, MIRA USA, Latinos United for Progress in Waterbury, and Catholic Charities, all of which have a history of providing comprehensive support services to families. These partnerships will ensure that parents receive the necessary training and resources to support their children's education and improve their own skills.

**Health Services for Families:** Families will be offered health screenings, and dental and vision services through community partners, as well as public health initiatives focused on diet, mental health, and other issues, promoting overall family wellness and cohesion. LEAD will work with organizations like Husky Dental, Anthem Blue Cross/Shield, and other healthcare providers to offer these essential services. These organizations have a proven track record of supporting community health initiatives. LEAD's Women and Men's Empowerment programs will also be offered to Taino CoLAB families.

**Cultural Events:** LEAD will partner with the school to organize cultural events and workshops for families and community members, fostering a sense of community and cultural pride. Students and family members will take lead roles in designing these events and the school will serve as a cultural hub for the community. Collaborations with local cultural groups such as Arte and the Afro Caribbean Cultural Center as well as LEAD's folkloric groups will enrich these events. These organizations have extensive experience in cultural education and community engagement.

**Collaborative Leadership and Practices**

**Student Leadership and Advocacy:** All aspects of the CoLAB Community Schools model will be driven by real-time assessment of community needs, and co-created with students as an integrated part of our four pillars of Inquiry, Design Thinking, Creative Arts, and Service Learning. LEAD will ensure that students have leadership roles in curricular and programmatic choices, fostering a sense of ownership and empowerment. Lead has already secured letters of partnership and commitment from various community organizations to support student leadership and advocacy.

**Collaborative Leadership:** LEAD will collaborate closely with school leaders to identify and manage community partnerships in collaboration with an on-site Community Coordinator, ensuring the successful implementation of the community school model. There will be a strong emphasis on communication, cohesion, and collaborative decision making. Partners to support this include Mindtrust, which has extensive experience in charter school advocacy, leadership development, and support.

**Community Engagement for Program Design and Evaluation:** An advisory board will contribute to program design. The school will host community town halls or forums regularly to evaluate and refine programs based on community feedback. This inclusive approach ensures that the school's initiatives are aligned with community needs and aspirations. LEAD will play a key role in the formation of advisory boards and community forums.

**Cohesion Between School-Driven and Community Partner Activities:** Extended day instructors, community partners, and service providers will all receive training in methods related to CoLAB's Quantum Learning Matrix in order to ensure a cohesive experience for students and to share CoLAB's best-practices for the benefit of the community. This includes Design Thinking, Inquiry-Based Learning, AI-Augmented

practices, and an SEL-informed approach to communication and student behavior. For a description of criteria for community partners, see Appendix.

**Overview of Support Partners for the Community School Model**

LEAD will be Taino CoLAB's lead community partner, and will support the development of other partnerships. LEAD already has a wealth of programs that will benefit students and families, and throughout the time of the application, LEAD and Taino CoLAB's leaderships are continuing to build relationships with an increasing network of organizations to support our shared vision.

The work to formalize these partnerships and add to this list will continue as we await approval. During the initial planning year, we plan to engage partners in targeted action planning. The partnerships below reflect the support we have earned for the Taino CoLAB School of both Waterbury (anticipated opening 2027) and New Haven (anticipated opening 2026 pending approval by CTSED).

**Below is the list of organizations that have already expressed interest in partnership, either through a formal letter or informally. The list is organized by the Four Pillars of Community Schools** (see appendix).

**Potential Community Partners for Integrated Student Supports**

| **Name of Partner, Location** | **Type of Service** | **Status at the time of Submission** |
|---|---|---|
| **Fairhaven Clinic (Yale)**<br>*New Haven* | Health support, check ups; Mental Health | Partnership Letter (see appendix) |
| **K.I.N.D**<br>*Waterbury* | Holistic Services for immigrant families | MOU signed with LEAD |
| **Access Health Conn.**<br>*Statewide* | Healthcare | Already a LEAD Partner |
| **Husky Dental**<br>*Statewide* | Dental services | Already a LEAD Partner |
| **Anthem Blue Cross/Shield**<br>*Statewide* | Healthcare - Free clinics and vaccines | Already a LEAD Partner |
| **UConn Heath**<br>*Statewide* | Healthcare | Already a LEAD Partner |
| **APEX Community Care**<br>*Waterbury* | Public health, mental health substance abuse prevention and treatment | Already a LEAD Partner |
| **Raices**<br>*Virtual Services* | Coaching for teens; Personal, mental, professional coaching; leadership council for HS youth | Already a LEAD Partner |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Community Mindfulness Project**<br>*Statewide* | Programs in schools and teacher training re: Stress reduction program; Trauma, mental health | Already a LEAD Partner |
| **Hazel**<br>*National* | Remote mental health services | Desired Partnership |
| **Connected for Wellness**<br>*National* | Mental health app | Desired Partnership |
| **LEAD / Ed Advance**<br>*Statewide* | ESL classes | Already a LEAD Partner |

**Potential Community Partners for Expanded and Enriched Learning**

| Partner | Type of Service | Level of Readiness |
|---|---|---|
| **Afro Caribbean Cultural Center**<br>*Waterbury* | Art and music programs | Partnership Letter |
| **Junta for Progressive Action**<br>*New Haven* | Youth leadership development (Also wrap around services and adult ed.) | Partnership Letter |
| **ARTE Inc.**<br>*New Haven* | Latino art, culture, education | Partnership Letter |
| **Peabody Museum,Yale**<br>*New Haven* | Museum, Conuco Project, Taino collection | Desired Partnership |
| **New Haven Firefighters**<br>*New Haven* | Training and career opp'ys in FD | Partnership Letter |
| **Arts for Learning**<br>*Statewide* | Arts and character development programs | Partnership Letter |
| **YMCA**<br>*Waterbury* | Extracurricular activities, afterschool programs | They have expressed interest in partnering |
| **Scouts of America**<br>*Waterbury, New Haven* | Youth leadership | Partnership Letter |

**Potential Community Partners for Family and Community Engagement**

| Partner | Type of Service | Level of Readiness |
|---|---|---|
| **LEAD / Ed Advance**<br>*Statewide* | ESL classes | Already a LEAD Partner |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **LEAD Women and Men Empowerment**<br>*Waterbury, New Haven* | Mental health, cohort model, support groups | Already a LEAD Partner |
| **LEAD - NEST**<br>*Waterbury* | Help parents to buy homes | Already a LEAD Partner |
| **LEAD / Financial Institutions**<br>*Waterbury, New Haven* | Financial training | Already a LEAD Partner |
| **LEAD / MIRA USA**<br>*Statewide* | Citizenship classes | Already a LEAD Partner |
| **LEAD's Folkloric Groups**<br>*Waterbury, New Haven* | Cultural events | Already a LEAD Partner |
| **Latinos United for Progress**<br>*Waterbury* | Computer literacy classes for parents | Partnership letter |
| **Catholic Charities**<br>*Waterbury* | Programs for elementary siblings | Partnership letter |
| **Community Agency of New Haven**<br>*New Haven* | Family support services such as assistance with utility bills, health literacy, tax preparation, housing, support for single mothers | Partnership letter |
| **CPAC Conn.Parent Action Committee**<br>*Statewide* | Parent organizing | Already a LEAD Partner |
| **CTFSN (Conn. Family Support Network)**<br>*Statewide* | Support families of children with disabilities | Already a LEAD Partner |
| **Lulac Head Start**<br>*New Haven* | Early childhood learning | Partnership Letter |

**Potential Community Partners re. Collaborative Leadership Practices**

| Partner | Type of Service | Level of Readiness |
|---|---|---|
| **Mindtrust / LEAD**<br>*Statewide* | Legal support, and other training for school leaders and support staff | Northstar fellowship staring in June (with LEAD) 4 fellows |

As a Community School, Taino CoLAB will be a vibrant community hub, leveraging deep interconnection with local organizations and services for the benefit of both students and the community at large. Latinos for Educational Advocacy and Diversity (LEAD), our primary community partner, will play a crucial role in enriching the school's educational landscape by providing essential services that bridge gaps

between the school's curriculum and the community's needs.  A broad variety of partnerships have already been established to support this, as described elsewhere in the application.

**Engaging New Haven's Community Organizations**

CoLAB's founding board members as well as design support partners have spent time meeting with local community organizations and their leadership to explore partnerships for student 4D projects as described in the appendix A4. Meetings have also been held to discuss the student wellness center, explore potential MOUs for planning and preparation for school launch and explore resources that could enrich the learning ecosystem of the Taino CoLAB High School.

**The foundation of community schools rests upon four essential pillars:**

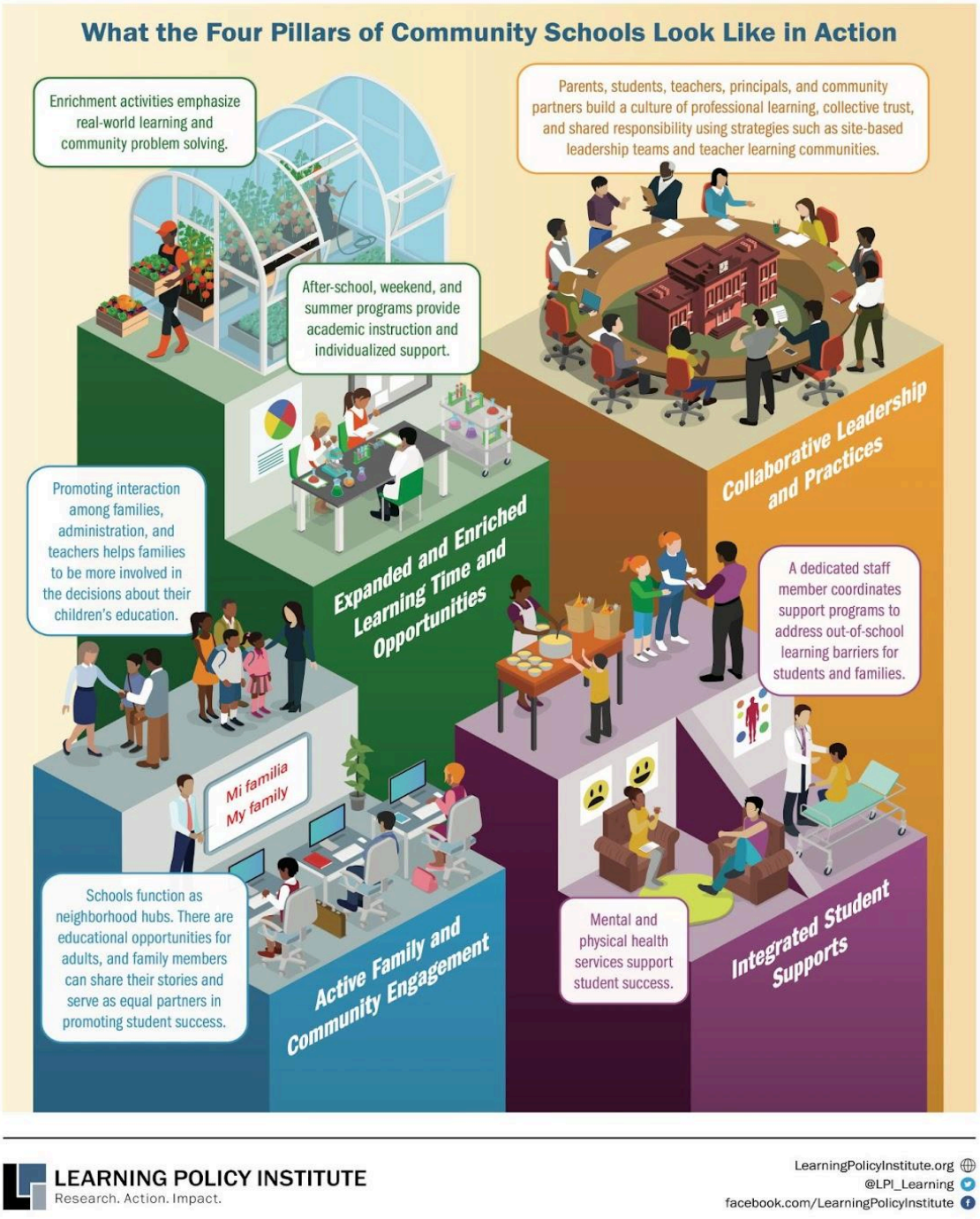
1. **Integrated Student Supports:** This encompasses a range of services including healthcare, behavioral health, and dental care, ensuring that students' non-academic needs are met to facilitate their learning and overall well-being.

2. **Expanded and Enriched Learning Time and Opportunities:** This pillar extends beyond traditional classroom hours, encompassing initiatives like longer school days or years, after-school and summer programs, and a curriculum enriched with community-based learning experiences, providing students with diverse educational opportunities.

3. **Family and Community Engagement:** Actively involving families and the broader community in the educational process fosters a sense of belonging and collaboration within the school community, enhancing support for students and creating a culture of shared responsibility for their success.

4. **Collaborative Leadership and Practices:** Shared goal-setting and decision-making among students, families, educators, school administrators, and community partners promote a culture of trust, respect, and collaboration within the school community, ensuring that everyone works together towards common objectives.

Partnership for the Future of Learning. *Community Schools Playbook*. Institute for Educational Leadership, 2021. https://iel.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/community-schools-playbook.pdf. Accessed April 2024.




**Criteria for Partners**

CoLAB and LEAD will identify partners based on four key criteria which ensure that partnerships are not only effective in addressing the immediate needs of the school community but also aligned with the long-term vision and educational philosophy of CoLAB and LEAD.

1. **Alignment with Community Needs:**
    - Partnership meets specific needs of our students and community as identified through multiple data points, such as community forums, surveys, and interviews.

- Student interest also drives the assessment of partnership needs to ensure relevance and engagement.

2. **Integration with Educational Model:**
   - Partner organization staff are willing and able to participate in training and adopt key aspects of the school's inquiry-based model and social-emotional culture.
   - This ensures a cohesive tone and approach across all interactions, aligning with the school's educational philosophy and practices.
3. **Commitment to Reflective Practice:**
   - Partner organization leadership is willing and able to participate in cycles of reflection around implementation.
   - This involves using both quantitative and qualitative data to assess key metrics related to service benchmarks and the integration of the school's model in all relevant services.
4. **Cultural Competency and Community Engagement:**
   - The partner organization demonstrates cultural competency and respect for the diverse backgrounds of students and families.
   - Engagement with the broader community is beneficial, with a history of collaborative initiatives and a commitment to supporting community-driven goals.

**Staging of CoLAB's Community School Model:**

Colab will roll out partnerships in a staged manner to support the implementation of the school's vision for highly educated, thriving students, and a flourishing and interconnected community. The first three years of the school will have a simplified version of the model, with a focus on implementing a few key programs effectively while the school is being established.

| **Component** | **Year 1** | **Year 2** | **Year 3** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Wellness Center** | Establish initial partnership for off-site health services.<br><br>Create a resource space for support and sign-ups.<br><br>Train school and partnership staff in trauma-informed practices and social-emotional learning.<br><br>**Impact Vision:**<br><br>All Students at CoLAB who need medical screening or referrals will have access. Counseling services will be available off site on a limited basis. | Add health and counseling partnerships for on-site and off-site services. Expand the wellness center to offer health screenings and counseling. Integrate social-emotional practices across all programs.<br><br>**Impact Vision:**<br><br>Students will have comprehensive access to health services. | Fully implement on-site wellness center with comprehensive health and mental health services. Launch student-driven public health advocacy programs.<br><br>**Impact Vision:**<br><br>Wellness services will be seamlessly integrated into the school culture. A high percentage of students will participate in wellness programs and/or health advocacy. |

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|---|---|---|---|
| **ESL Classes for Students** | Assess student needs and provide small group support during and after school hours. Initial ESL classes with focused support.<br><br>**Impact Vision:**<br><br>ESL students will demonstrate improved language proficiency and classroom engagement. | Expand ESL programs based on evolving student needs. Increase collaboration with community partners to enhance ESL offerings.<br><br>Impact Goal: 80% of ESL students will advance at least one proficiency level.<br><br>**Impact Vision:**<br><br>ESL students will advance in proficiency levels. Collaborative projects among ESL students will increase. | Offer a diverse range of ESL classes for varying proficiency levels. Integrate adult ESL classes during extended hours for holistic family support.<br><br>Impact Goal: 90% of ESL students will advance at least one proficiency level.<br><br>**Impact Vision:**<br><br>All eligible students will receive tailored ESL support beyond the academic day. Academic performance among ESL students will improve based on year-over-year metrics. |
| **After School Programs** | Collaborate with two community partners to offer arts and technology programs. Provide informal sports activities based on student interests. Offer academic support through school staff.<br><br>**Impact Vision:**<br><br>Many students will participate in after-school programs, extending the school day and providing enrichment and engagement. | Partner with four community organizations to expand STEAM classes. Establish a sports league based on student interests. Pilot after-school internships for a select group of students.<br><br>**Impact Vision:**<br><br>Most students will actively participate in after-school programs. Academic performance, social-emotional well-being will improve as a result of programs. | Implement a comprehensive after-school program including STEAM, community projects, career exposure, athletics, cultural activities, and tutoring. Ensure programs reflect Taino and Latino culture.<br><br>**Impact Vision:**<br><br>Nearly all students will participate in after-school programs. Student interest will be a strong factor in designing programs and student leadership will be evidenced by student-designed programs, and projects in the after school. |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Workplace Readiness and Internships** | Initiate community collaborations for real-world projects in classes. Engage all students in interdisciplinary workplace learning experiences driven by the curriculum and their interests.<br><br>**Impact Vision:**<br><br>Students' career awareness will increase, as well as their sense of agency. | Continue interdisciplinary workplace learning as part of the school-day curriculum. Expand pilot after-school internships. Develop partnerships with local businesses for more robust career training.<br><br>**Impact Vision:**<br><br>Students' career awareness will broaden, as well as their sense of agency. Community partners will be actively engaged. | Provide a wide range of internships aligned with student career interests. Launch comprehensive career training programs within and outside school hours, some may be linked to community school partnerships, while others will be through university partners.<br><br>**Impact Vision:**<br><br>Most 11th graders and many 10th graders will engage in an individual or group internship with a local or national business or organization outside of school hours.<br><br>Students gain workplace skills, critical thinking, and agency related to their sense of possibility in careers. |
| **Services for Families** | Offer ESL, citizenship training, and enrichment programs.<br><br>Health services offered off site through LEAD's existing partners.<br><br>Conduct initial needs assessment to tailor programs.<br><br>**Impact Vision:**<br><br>Families will actively participate in training programs. Family skills in relation to targeted programs will improve. | Expand family support offerings based on ongoing assessments.<br><br>Introduce additional programs to address specific needs identified by families.<br><br>**Impact Vision:**<br><br>Family engagement in support programs will grow, and family-school communication will improve. Family skills in relation to targeted programs will improve based on year-over-year metrics. | Continue to broaden family support programs.<br><br>Develop a comprehensive suite of services including healthcare, financial literacy, home purchasing support, and leadership training.<br><br>**Impact Vision:**<br><br>Family involvement in training and support programs will be extensive. Family financial stability will improve. |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Cultural Events** | Organize at least two cultural events and workshops for families and community members.<br><br>Foster community and cultural pride through these activities.<br><br>**Impact Vision:**<br><br>Students and families will actively participate in cultural events. | Increase the number of cultural events to at least three.<br><br>Engage a student club in planning and organizing events.<br><br>Promote inclusive participation in cultural activities.<br><br>**Impact Vision:**<br><br>Participation in cultural events will grow and students and families will play a key role in planning events, building a sense of community and connection to the school. | Ensure students and families lead the design and implementation of cultural events. Establish the school as a central cultural hub for the community. Continuously celebrate cultural heritage and diversity.<br><br>**Impact Vision:**<br><br>Participation in cultural events will be extensive. Cultural appreciation will thrive, giving a sense of empowerment and joy. Students and families will lead the design and implementation of cultural events. |
| **Collaborative Leadership and Community Engagement** | Appoint a Community Schools Director to develop aligned partnerships. Establish student leadership through Design Sprints. Initiate regular communication channels with stakeholders.<br><br>**Impact Vision:**<br><br>Regular informal and formal communication between the school's leadership and LEAD's leadership creates cohesive planning and shared decision-making. As a result, programs run smoothly with desired outcomes and obstacles are addressed thoughtfully to the satisfaction of both partners. | Hold semi-annual advisory board meetings to guide program design. Deepen engagement with community stakeholders through structured forums.<br><br>**Impact Vision:**<br><br>Establishment of advisory boards and community forums ensures community input and . This results in a high degree of support and buy in from all stakeholders and effective alignment of the school's programs to community needs. | Foster a culture of shared leadership and collaborative decision-making, further establishing systems and structures to support the growing partnership. Conduct community town halls or forums bi-annually for program evaluation and feedback. Continuously refine programs based on community input.<br><br>**Impact Vision:**<br><br>Communication and decision-making processes will be transparent and collaborative. Stakeholder involvement in leadership processes will be extensive. Programs will be refined based on stakeholder input. |

**Examples of Quantified Targets**

These targets represent our initial aspirations and provide an example framework for measuring progress. As we move forward, the partner organizations will engage in comprehensive planning and ongoing assessments to create and refine targets. This will involve collaboration with stakeholders, data-driven decision

making, and adaptability to ensure that all goals are realistic, achievable, and aligned with the evolving needs of our students and community.

| Component | Year 1 Example Impact Targets | Year 2 Example Impact Targets | Year 3 Example Impact Targets |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Wellness Center** | 1. 50% of students participate in medical screenings.<br>2. 30% reduction in absenteeism due to health issues<br>3. 100% staff trained in trauma-informed practices | 1. 70% of students use on-site or off-site health services.<br>2. 40% increase in preventive health visits.<br>3. 60% reduction in health-related absences.<br>4. 100% integration of social-emotional practices in curriculum | 1. 80% participation in wellness programs.<br>2. 60% improvement in overall student health indicators.<br>3. 50% of students involved in health advocacy<br>3. 90% student satisfaction with wellness services. |
| **ESL Classes for Students** | 1. 60% advance in proficiency levels among those served.<br>2. 60% of ESL students participate in school events. | 1. 70% advance in proficiency levels among those served.<br>2. 50% increase in ability to engage in collaborative projects.<br>4. 50% improvement in academic performance among those served. | 1. 100% of eligible students receiving tailored ESL support<br>2. 90% advance in proficiency levels among those served.<br>3. 50% increase in engagement in additional extracurricular activities among those served. |
| **After School Programs** | 1. 40% of students participate in after school programs.<br>2. 65% attendance in after school programs for those signed up. | 1. 60% of students participate in after school programs.<br>2. 40% of students report improved confidence.<br>3. 40% decrease in behavioral issues. | 1. 80% participation<br>2. 80% attendance in after school programs. |
| **Services for Families** | 1. 30% of families participate in relevant trainings and supports.<br>2. 80% satisfaction with training programs and health supports.<br>3. 100% needs assessment completion. | 1. 50% of families participate in relevant trainings and supports.<br>2. 60% improvement in family-school communication. | 1. 60% of families participate in relevant trainings and supports. 2. 90% satisfaction with financial literacy programs.<br>3. 85% improvement in parental involvement in school activities. |

## Appendix A3: Curriculum Development and Selection Process

CoLAB prioritizes a well-structured curriculum that fosters deep learning and student engagement. The selection process is guided by a series of essential questions that ensure the chosen programs:

| **Indicator** | **Aligned Questions** |
|---|---|
| Is the resource standards-aligned? | What evidence (as applicable) do we have the the resource is aligned to:<br>● CCSS<br>● ISTE Standards<br>● National School Library Standards<br>● CT State framework for all other areas of study<br>● C3 Standards |
| Is the resource evidence-based or grounded in strong theory? | Is there pre-existing research which suggests that the resource, if implemented with fidelity, will yield student achievement and growth? If there is not a formal evidence basis for the full program established through the What Works Clearing House, EdReports, or an equivalent, are there elements of the curriculum which are aligned to evidence-based best practices that suggest a strong likelihood of program efficacy? |
| Is the resource compatible with CoLAB's Quantum Matrix? | Does the resource allow for:<br>● Skill development?<br>● Rigor and extension?<br>● Personalization?<br><br>Does the resource align to the grade-level cross curricular themes? |
| Is the resource compatible with CoLAB's Core Beliefs? | Is the resource:<br>● Aligned to the future of work?<br>● Aligned to CoLAB's definition of social justice & cultural competence?<br>● Structured to support mastery based performance assessments?<br>○ Can students earn industry or other recognized credentials as a result of the resource?<br>● Structured to allow for student choice and voice as well as self-directed learning? |
| Is the cost of the resource sustainable for the school to implement? | ● Can CoLAB sustain the cost of the program over time given the school's financial projections in all other areas? |
| Which types of professional development are established to support implementation of the resource? | ● Does a framework for professional learning around the resource already exist?<br>● Are there models of strong implementation which CoLAB can learn from? |
| Will use of the resource allo CoLAB to provide an educational course of study that is different than those courses and tools already leveraged by Waterbury City School District? | ● Does the resource allow for innovation?<br>● Does the resource allow for CoLAB to differentiate its program from other school options? |
| Was the resource designed with diverse learners in mind? In particular, are there supports for non-native English speakers? | ● Does the resource prioritize diversity?<br>● Does the resource provide opportunities for student choice?<br>● Can best practice approaches to supporting students with disabilities and English Learners to be easily integrated into the resource? |
| Are there opportunities to integrate concepts from CoLAB's pathways? | As applicable…<br>● Does the resource allow for the integration of computer science or computational thinking? |

| | |
|---|---|
| | ● Does the resource allow for the integration of discussions of digital literacy?<br>● Does the resource allow for integration of design and/or design thinking? |
| Will students' engagement with the curriculum or course of study make CoLAB graduates more competitive for university admission and/or employment? | ● Does the curriculum/course of study lead to an advanced academic credential?<br>● Does the curriculum/course of study lead to an advanced workforce credential? |

# CoLAB 4D Quantum Learning Matrix: An Innovative Model for Education 4.0

**Introduction**

In the rapidly evolving landscape of Education 4.0, CoLAB's 4D Quantum Learning Matrix (4DQLM) represents a pioneering framework designed to equip high school students with the skills and mindsets necessary for success in an interconnected, complex world. Inspired by quantum theory and grounded in contemporary pedagogical research, the CoLAB 4D Quantum Learning Matrix integrates four foundational pillars: Inquiry, Design Thinking, Creative Arts, and Service Learning.

At the heart of this model are two guiding principles: **Agile Co-Construction** and **Generative Practices**. Agile Co-Construction emphasizes active, collaborative knowledge creation, where students function as creators and co-thinkers, applying knowledge flexibly and effectively. Generative Practices encourage a continuous flow of ideas, fostering a growth mindset and entrepreneurial thinking. Together, these elements provide a dynamic, modern educational approach, preparing students to adapt and innovate.

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## The Four Pillars of the Quantum Learning Matrix

### 1. Inquiry

Inquiry lies at the heart of the CoLAB 4D Quantum Learning Matrix, serving as a catalyst for deep, meaningful learning across all disciplines. Inquiry-based teaching and learning practices encourage students to actively question, explore, and construct knowledge rather than passively receive information. This approach fosters a mindset of critical thinking, discovery, and curiosity—skills essential for thriving in a complex, rapidly changing world. Inquiry is not confined to any one subject; it is a versatile framework adaptable to every academic area, allowing students to engage deeply with content, make connections between concepts, and apply their understanding to real-world problems.

In an inquiry-based classroom, students are encouraged to ask thoughtful questions and seek answers through investigation, discussion, and analysis. This approach nurtures intellectual curiosity and independence, guiding students to develop their ideas and understand multiple perspectives. By employing techniques such as Shared Inquiry and Socratic Teaching, CoLAB teachers facilitate discussions where students critically examine assumptions, explore alternative viewpoints, and learn to build well-supported arguments. These methods challenge students to engage actively with ideas, encouraging a collaborative search for truth and understanding. Through Socratic seminars and structured dialogues, students experience learning as an interactive, dynamic process, where questioning and reflection are central to growth.

Inquiry-based learning also emphasizes critical thinking and problem-solving by prompting students to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information rather than simply recalling facts. This skill set is crucial for students as they navigate a world flooded with information, much of which requires careful scrutiny and discernment. In CoLAB's inquiry-based environment, students learn to distinguish credible sources, question biases, and recognize complexities in the topics they study. This inquiry process empowers them to approach knowledge with a skeptical, analytical lens and fosters a habit of lifelong learning, where curiosity becomes the driving force behind intellectual and personal development.

Inquiry-based practices cultivate a multi-perspective approach that prepares students to navigate diverse viewpoints in an increasingly globalized society. In CoLAB classrooms, students are exposed to a range of perspectives on historical, scientific, social, and ethical issues, learning to appreciate the complexity of the human experience. Through inquiry, they explore cultural, social, and personal contexts, which deepens their empathy and understanding of others. This ability to consider multiple perspectives enables CoLAB students to become open-minded thinkers and empathetic leaders, skills that are essential in both personal and professional realms.

Inquiry-based learning is more than a teaching strategy at CoLAB; it is a philosophy that shapes how students see themselves and the world. By creating an environment that values questions as much as answers, CoLAB instills a profound respect for the learning process itself. Inquiry invites students to become active participants in their education, guiding them toward self-discovery and empowering them to tackle complex issues with confidence and curiosity. This foundation of inquiry is not only adaptable across all subjects but is a driving force in cultivating thinkers, problem-solvers, and compassionate citizens who are equipped to meet the challenges of the future.

## 2. Design Thinking

Design Thinking is a core pillar of the CoLAB 4D Quantum Learning Matrix, equipping students with a structured, yet flexible approach to problem-solving that is essential in today's world. Design Thinking empowers students to take a hands-on, iterative approach to tackling complex challenges by understanding the needs of users, brainstorming innovative solutions, prototyping, and testing ideas. Rooted in empathy and creativity, this approach not only promotes technical skills but also cultivates a growth mindset where students learn to view challenges as opportunities for discovery and growth.

At CoLAB, Design Thinking is woven into the fabric of every subject, making it an adaptable tool for exploring problems across disciplines—from science and technology to the humanities and arts.

In a Design Thinking-driven classroom, students are encouraged to identify and investigate real-world issues that resonate with their lives and communities. By connecting academic concepts with practical applications, students develop a deeper understanding of how knowledge can be used to make a tangible impact. This approach is particularly relevant in the Fourth Industrial Revolution, where adaptable problem-solving skills are critical. Through Design Thinking, students gain confidence in their ability to innovate, embracing ambiguity and complexity as they work towards meaningful solutions.

The Design Thinking process at CoLAB is structured around key stages: Empathy, Define, Ideate, Prototype, and Test. Starting with empathy, students learn to understand the needs and perspectives of others—an essential skill in creating human-centered solutions. They then define the problem clearly, ensuring they are addressing real needs. In the ideation phase, students brainstorm a wide range of ideas, pushing the boundaries of traditional thinking and embracing creativity. Prototyping allows them to bring their ideas to life in tangible ways, while the testing phase provides an opportunity for iterative improvement. This cyclical process encourages resilience, as students learn to refine and improve their ideas based on feedback and experimentation.

Design Thinking fosters collaboration and interdisciplinary learning. Students work together in teams, combining diverse skills and perspectives to co-create solutions. This collaborative environment teaches them how to communicate effectively, negotiate ideas, and respect differing viewpoints. They also integrate knowledge from various fields, such as combining scientific principles with design aesthetics or applying mathematical reasoning in prototype development. This interdisciplinary aspect of Design Thinking mirrors real-world problem-solving, where solutions require input from multiple domains and often benefit from varied perspectives.

Through Design Thinking, CoLAB students develop a mindset of continuous improvement and adaptability, learning that failure is not a setback but a valuable part of the learning journey. This approach nurtures innovators who are prepared to face the uncertainties of the modern world with confidence and creativity. As students engage in Design Thinking projects that address issues both local and global, they gain a sense of purpose, realizing that they can be agents of change in their communities and beyond. This empowering pillar of the 4D Quantum Learning Matrix transforms students into proactive problem-solvers and creative thinkers who are ready to make a difference in an ever-evolving world.

## 3. Creative Arts

Creative Arts at CoLAB represents a powerful and expansive approach to learning that goes far beyond traditional art forms. This pillar positions creativity as central to human experience, giving students a voice, agency, and a means of expression in multiple dimensions. At CoLAB, creativity is not confined to the visual and performing arts; it is a dynamic, interdisciplinary practice that encourages students to be creators in every subject. Whether they are crafting a story, designing a science experiment, coding a digital project, or developing a social initiative, CoLAB students engage in creative processes that empower them to explore, innovate, and express their unique perspectives.

Creativity in the CoLAB framework is essential for deep, engaging learning. When students participate in creative processes, they are actively constructing knowledge, forming connections, and engaging with content on a personal level. This type of learning fosters emotional resonance and ownership, transforming students from passive recipients of information into active creators of ideas and solutions. The Creative Arts pillar is designed to nurture each student’s curiosity and individuality, allowing them

to approach learning as an immersive and expressive experience. In this way, creativity becomes a vehicle for discovery, critical thinking, and meaningful engagement across all disciplines.

At CoLAB, creativity is also recognized as a multifaceted skill set that can be cultivated and applied in diverse forms—visual, linguistic, digital, technological, and even scientific. Students explore a wide range of mediums and modes of expression, from traditional art forms like drawing, painting, and performance, to digital media, interactive storytelling, and scientific modeling. This multidimensional approach allows students to discover and develop their strengths, fostering a sense of agency and capability in expressing ideas in ways that feel authentic to them. For example, a science student might create an infographic to explain complex ecological concepts, while a history student might produce a documentary on community history, blending research and creative storytelling.

Creative Arts also emphasize collaboration and community-building, helping students learn from each other's diverse perspectives and talents. In many projects, students work in teams to co-create, critique, and refine their work, developing essential skills in communication, feedback, and collaborative problem-solving. By sharing their creations with peers and audiences, students gain confidence, learn to appreciate diverse forms of expression, and understand the power of creativity to build connections and inspire change. This shared creative process fosters empathy, cultural awareness, and a sense of belonging, as students learn to respect and value each other's voices.

The act of creating helps students develop a growth mindset, as they learn to embrace challenges, take risks, and view failure as a natural part of the creative journey. Creative Arts encourage experimentation and open-mindedness, allowing students to explore unconventional ideas, question assumptions, and push beyond traditional boundaries. This mindset is critical for adapting to a rapidly evolving world, where innovation and flexibility are paramount. Through the Creative Arts, CoLAB students learn that creativity is not a fixed talent but a practice they can develop and apply in countless ways, making them resilient thinkers and adaptable problem-solvers.

By integrating Creative Arts into every subject, CoLAB redefines creativity as a core competency for learning and personal growth. Students are empowered to express their understanding in authentic, impactful ways, reinforcing that creativity is not only a source of personal fulfillment but a powerful means of engaging with the world. Whether they are designing, performing, storytelling, or innovating, CoLAB students are encouraged to see themselves as creators who have the agency to shape their lives, their communities, and their futures. In this way, the Creative Arts pillar is not just about artistic expression—it is about cultivating empowered, creative thinkers who see learning as an active, expressive, and transformative process.

## 4. Service Learning

Service Learning at CoLAB is more than just community involvement—it is a deeply integrated educational practice that empowers students to engage with real-world issues, fostering a sense of purpose, social responsibility, and empathy. Through service learning, students connect their academic experiences to meaningful opportunities to make a difference, initially within their local community

and progressively expanding to state, national, and global contexts by the time they graduate. Service Learning at CoLAB is a direct extension of the community school model, where learning is a collaborative effort that includes local organizations, stakeholders, and broader societal needs, creating a rich ecosystem that enhances students' learning while positively impacting the community.

At CoLAB, Service Learning is designed to accelerate students' academic and personal growth by providing relevant, purpose-driven projects that bring classroom knowledge to life. Research shows that when students engage in service learning connected to their academic work, their motivation, engagement, and retention of knowledge increase significantly. This pillar supports academic development across subjects by embedding essential skills—such as research, communication, critical thinking, and project management—into real-world applications. For example, a science class studying environmental science might partner with a local organization to conduct water quality testing, applying NGSS standards in a hands-on way that directly benefits the community. This purpose-driven approach allows students to see the immediate relevance of their studies, deepening their understanding and making learning a powerful, lived experience.

Service Learning projects at CoLAB are structured as a progressive journey that begins with the local community and gradually expands students' awareness of service at broader levels. In their early years, students engage in projects that address local needs, such as supporting neighborhood sustainability efforts, partnering with local food banks, or working with city organizations on civic initiatives. These early projects build students' connection to their community, helping them recognize the impact they can have close to home. As they advance through high school, students are introduced to service learning opportunities at the state and national levels, engaging with regional and societal issues that require broader collaboration and an understanding of larger social systems. By senior year, students have the option to work on service projects with global implications, such as environmental conservation efforts or international human rights advocacy, preparing them to be informed global citizens.

CoLAB's approach to Service Learning is grounded in the belief that students thrive when they have authentic opportunities to make an impact. Each service project is a partnership with local, state, or global organizations, allowing students to collaborate with real-world experts and community members. This network of partnerships enriches students' experiences, exposing them to a variety of perspectives and professional insights that deepen their understanding and broaden their horizons. Service Learning also allows students to work independently, developing leadership, initiative, and resilience as they navigate their projects and manage their contributions. By working alongside community members and organizational partners, students build essential interpersonal skills, learning to communicate, empathize, and collaborate with people from diverse backgrounds and experiences.

Service Learning at CoLAB emphasizes cultural awareness and empathy, as students are encouraged to consider how issues affect different communities and how they can make a difference through thoughtful, culturally responsive service. By engaging in this progression—from local to global service—students gain a comprehensive understanding of the interconnectedness of societal challenges and develop the skills needed to address them on multiple levels. Through these

experiences, students become not only active community members but also empowered leaders who understand that service is a lifelong commitment and an essential part of responsible citizenship.

In a world where challenges are increasingly global and interconnected, CoLAB's Service Learning pillar provides students with the foundation and tools to make meaningful contributions. It instills a deep sense of agency, empathy, and responsibility, helping them recognize that even as students, they have the power to drive positive change. This approach ensures that CoLAB graduates leave with a profound understanding of service—rooted in local impact and extended to global consciousness—ready to contribute thoughtfully and purposefully to society.

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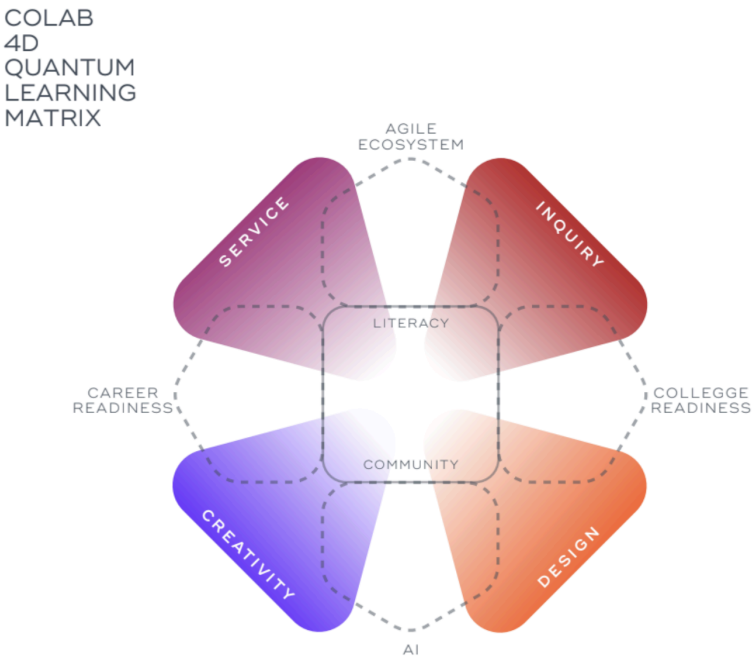
## The Five Core Elements (5E) of the 4D Quantum Learning Matrix

1. **Omni Literacy**
    - **Beliefs**: Omni Literacy expands traditional literacy to include digital, media, and information literacy, essential for the modern, informed individual. This holistic approach promotes critical engagement with varied information forms, aligning with the Inquiry pillar and supporting CCSS ELA standards.
    - **Practices**: Integrates Digital Literacy, Media Literacy, Community Literacy and Information Literacy across disciplines.
    - **Outcomes**: Graduates are proficient, discerning users of diverse media, equipped to navigate and analyze the digital world critically.
2. **Dynamic Pathways for College and Career Readiness**
    - **Beliefs**: Preparing students for varied future paths, including higher education and career entry, with a focus on high-demand fields.
    - **Practices**: Diverse electives, self-paced learning, early college courses, and industry credentialing.
    - **Outcomes**: Graduates equipped with both academic foundations and practical skills.
3. **AI-Augmented Teaching, Learning, and Leadership**
    - **Beliefs**: Integration of AI across educational practices prepares students for an AI-driven world.
    - **Practices**: AI tools for feedback, instructional insights, and administrative decision-making.
    - **Outcomes**: Proficient users of AI technology, ready to navigate and create within an AI-integrated society.
4. **Agile Ecosystem**
    - **Beliefs**: Embraces continuous learning and adaptability, essential for problem-solving in a changing world.
    - **Practices**: Workshops, collaborative teaching, and adaptable structures.
    - **Outcomes**: Lifelong learners and adaptable problem-solvers.
5. **Community Investment**
    - **Beliefs**: Emphasizes civic responsibility and engagement, aligning with Service Learning.
    - **Practices**: Community-based research, internships, partnerships with local organizations.
    - **Outcomes**: Informed, engaged citizens committed to community and social impact.

## The CoLAB 4D Quantum Learning Matrix: A Model for Education 4.0

In the CoLAB 4D Quantum Learning Matrix, each of the four pillars—Inquiry, Design, Creativity, and Service—works together to cultivate an environment of growth, engagement, and meaningful learning. Each pillar represents a vital component of modern education, supporting high school students as they develop the skills and mindsets required to thrive in an era defined by rapid technological change and global interconnectivity, often referred to as the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

At the core of this matrix lies a powerful concept: the **Liminal Space**, the center where all pathways intersect. This is more than just a meeting point; it's a **zone of unlimited potential**, reminiscent of the quantum state's superposition—a place where multiple possibilities coexist, and where students can access new dimensions of growth, self-realization, and intellectual development. This central zone represents the dynamic interplay of Literacy and Community, binding together academic rigor and social engagement in ways that empower students to become thoughtful, capable leaders in their communities and beyond.




In this **Liminal Space**, students experience the limitless potential of their development, an idea central to CoLAB's innovative approach. Here, they are free to explore their identities, refine their perspectives, and expand their understanding of the world and their role in it. This journey includes Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), where students gain resilience, empathy, and self-awareness. It's a space where intellectual and personal growth converge, giving students the framework to envision and shape their futures.

As a forward-thinking model for high school education, the CoLAB 4D Quantum Learning Matrix equips students to become **Agile Co-Constructionists** and **Generative Thinkers**. With AI integration, a focus on college and career readiness, and the flexibility of an Agile Ecosystem, this model is built to respond to the evolving needs of Education 4.0. In a world where adaptability, creativity, and collaboration are paramount, CoLAB students are prepared to navigate complexity, embrace innovation, and make a meaningful impact.

The 4D Quantum Learning Matrix isn't just a framework—it's a launchpad into a new kind of education where every student can explore their unlimited potential. This model prepares students not only to excel academically but also to thrive as empowered, socially responsible, and forward-thinking leaders in a rapidly changing world.

## Thematic Integration in the 4D Quantum Learning Matrix

In the CoLAB 4D Quantum Learning Matrix, themes serve as the foundational threads that connect students' learning experiences across disciplines, ensuring that their education is cohesive, relevant, and deeply rooted in real-world applications. Each theme is carefully selected to resonate with the developmental stage of students, progressively building on previous knowledge and broadening students' perspectives as they advance through high school. This approach places students within a 4D learning ecosystem daily, where each lesson, project, and discussion is integrated with the year's themes, bridging inquiry, design, creativity, and service.

The daily CoLAB period is the centerpiece of this thematic integration. During this dedicated time, students work on performance-based projects that connect the theme of the semester to real-world challenges, encouraging them to apply their knowledge and skills in impactful ways. This is not isolated learning; instead, it's a transdisciplinary approach, modeled after the International Baccalaureate (IB) program, where concepts and performance skills are taught in context and applied across subjects. Teachers consistently incorporate the 4D practices into their instruction, weaving together Inquiry, Design Thinking, Creative Arts, and Service Learning within the theme, fostering a holistic learning experience. By doing so, CoLAB ensures that students engage with the core concepts of each theme not only academically but personally and socially, enriching their intellectual and emotional connection to what they're learning.

This concept-based learning model is essential in today's high school environment, where students are no longer preparing for isolated careers but rather for a complex, interconnected world. Through transdisciplinary learning and performance-based assessments, the CoLAB model prepares students to become critical thinkers, innovators, and community leaders, able to adapt to and shape a future marked by rapid change.

**Why Concept-Based, Transdisciplinary, and Performance-Based Learning Matters**

The CoLAB approach to thematic integration within the 4D framework offers significant educational benefits:

1. **Fosters Deep Understanding of Complex Ideas**: Concept-based learning allows students to focus on big ideas rather than isolated facts, building a deeper understanding that can be applied across different contexts. This depth is particularly important in today's information-rich environment, where students need to think critically about complex issues rather than just memorize information.
2. **Encourages Transferable Skills**: Transdisciplinary learning enables students to see connections between subjects, fostering skills that are transferable and adaptable. This aligns with research that shows students who learn in integrated contexts are better able to apply knowledge and skills in new situations, a crucial ability in a rapidly evolving job market.
3. **Promotes Student Agency and Motivation**: Performance-based assessments, especially within the framework of meaningful themes, increase student engagement by allowing them to take ownership of their learning. Projects that are relevant to students' lives and communities cultivate intrinsic motivation, resilience, and a sense of purpose.

4. **Builds Real-World Problem-Solving Skills**: Thematic, performance-based projects prepare students for real-world challenges, moving beyond rote knowledge to application, analysis, and synthesis. This approach develops problem-solving, collaboration, and critical thinking skills, aligning with the demands of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.
5. **Supports Social and Emotional Learning (SEL):** Themes in the CoLAB 4D Matrix are chosen not only for their academic relevance but also for their potential to deepen students' social and emotional awareness. By connecting learning to broader societal themes, students develop empathy, self-awareness, and an understanding of diverse perspectives—key components of SEL that are increasingly recognized as essential for success in both life and work.
6. **Ensures Consistency in 4D Practices:** The thematic approach within the 4D Quantum Learning Matrix ensures that teachers integrate 4D practices daily, creating a learning environment where inquiry, design, creativity, and service are not isolated activities but interwoven into a consistent, cohesive educational experience. This creates a school culture where students and teachers are continually engaged in the process of co-constructing knowledge.
7. **Prepares Students for College and Career:** By emphasizing performance-based assessments that align with college and career readiness standards, students graduate with practical experience in applying their knowledge to real-world situations. These experiences develop college-level competencies and professional skills, preparing them to succeed in higher education and the workforce.

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## The Transformative Power of Themes Within the 4D Framework

The CoLAB thematic approach—integrated into the 4D Quantum Learning Matrix and supported by the Five Core Elements—creates a powerful, transformative educational experience. Through this model, students are not only mastering academic standards but also developing the intellectual, social, and emotional skills needed to excel in the modern world. In a time when adaptability, innovation, and a sense of global responsibility are paramount, CoLAB's thematic, transdisciplinary, and performance-based approach prepares students to step confidently into the future as lifelong learners and leaders.

This visionary model goes beyond traditional learning frameworks to create an education system that is truly future-ready, providing students with the skills, knowledge, and mindsets necessary for thriving in a dynamic, interconnected world.

## Four-Year Thematic Structure and Essential Questions

Each grade level in Taino CoLAB's curriculum is anchored by semester-based themes, designed to deepen students' conceptual knowledge in alignment with CoLAB's four pillars and state and national standards. This thematic progression fosters an interconnected learning approach that builds on prior knowledge, promoting inquiry and problem-solving skills that align with CCSS, NGSS, ISTE, and C3 standards.

1. **Grade 9**: *Identity & Community*
    - **Themes**: “Identity” and “Community” focus on self-exploration and understanding one’s place within society.
    - **Essential Questions**:
        - *Who am I, and what shapes my identity?*
        - *How do individual actions impact communities?*
    - **Focus**: Foundational projects that align with CCSS literacy standards, NGSS introductory inquiry, and civic engagement through C3.
2. **Grade 10**: *Change & Systems*
    - **Themes**: “Change” and “Systems” explore transformation and interconnected systems.
    - **Essential Questions**:
        - *How and why do things change over time?*
        - *What role do I play in impacting systems I am part of?*
    - **Focus**: Design projects that incorporate NGSS engineering standards, fostering complex problem-solving through a 4D approach.
3. **Grade 11**: *Global Issues & Sustainability*
    - **Themes**: “Global Issues” and “Sustainability” address contemporary challenges and environmental consciousness.
    - **Essential Questions**:
        - *What are the greatest challenges our world faces?*
        - *How can sustainable practices shape the future?*
    - **Focus**: Design Thinking and Service Learning projects align with ISTE standards for responsible digital citizenship and NGSS ecological concepts.
4. **Grade 12**: *Innovation & Leadership*
    - **Themes**: “Innovation” and “Leadership” support students’ transition to college and career, focusing on ethical leadership.
    - **Essential Questions**:
        - *How do innovators solve complex challenges?*
        - *In what ways can I contribute meaningfully to society?*
    - **Focus**: Senior capstone projects align with CCSS, ISTE, and C3 standards, demonstrating applied skills in real-world contexts.

## Alignment with Taino Cultural Values

The themes woven throughout the Taino CoLAB curriculum are purposefully aligned with the core values of Taino culture, creating an educational experience that resonates with students’ heritage and fosters a profound sense of cultural pride and understanding. Each theme—**Identity, Community, Change, Systems, Global Issues, Sustainability, Innovation, and Leadership**—reflects an aspect of Taino values, ensuring that students engage with both academic knowledge and the wisdom of their cultural legacy. This alignment not only strengthens students' connection to their heritage but also provides a unique and powerful lens through which they can approach modern challenges.

- **Identity**: Rooted in Taino values, the theme of Identity allows students to explore their personal and cultural heritage, honoring their roots and understanding their place within a broader community and natural world. This foundation instills pride and self-awareness, central to personal growth.
- **Community**: Taino culture emphasizes interconnectedness and collective well-being, ideals that are mirrored in the theme of Community. Through this theme, students explore relationships, mutual respect, and collaboration, reflecting the Taino belief that individuals thrive within a strong, supportive community.
- **Change**: Resilience and adaptability are intrinsic to Taino history. By examining Change, students learn to navigate societal transformations, understanding change as a natural and cyclical part of life, much as the Taino viewed life's seasons and cycles.
- **Systems**: The Taino worldview embraces the complex systems of nature and community. The theme of Systems allows students to study these intricate structures, reinforcing the Taino respect for the balance of life and interconnectedness within natural and social ecosystems.
- **Global Issues**: With a holistic understanding of impact and responsibility, Taino values align with the theme of Global Issues, encouraging students to consider their roles as global citizens. This theme reflects the Taino ethic of stewardship and collective responsibility in a globalized world.
- **Sustainability**: Taino culture deeply values harmony with the environment, viewing the earth as a living entity. Through the theme of Sustainability, students explore ecological responsibility, directly connecting to Taino principles of environmental stewardship and respect for natural resources.
- **Innovation**: While the Taino people were grounded in tradition, they were also adaptive and creative. The theme of Innovation celebrates this spirit, encouraging students to explore new possibilities while honoring traditional knowledge, and fostering a mindset that blends resilience with curiosity.
- **Leadership**: In Taino society, leadership was community-centered and ethically driven. The theme of Leadership encourages students to develop these same values, guiding them to become leaders who are mindful of their responsibilities to others and who care for their communities.

By anchoring these themes in Taino values, Taino CoLAB offers a culturally enriched, forward-thinking educational experience. This approach allows students to connect academic exploration with their cultural heritage, reinforcing a profound sense of identity, purpose, and responsibility. The result is a curriculum that prepares students not only for college and career but for meaningful, empowered lives that honor the legacy of their ancestors and contribute positively to their communities and the world.

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## 4D Practices and Standards Integration in Instruction

To ensure comprehensive standards alignment, all CoLAB teachers will integrate 4DQLM practices into lesson and unit planning:

- **Standards-Based Alignment**: Teachers will co-plan units that align CCSS, NGSS, ISTE, and C3 standards with 4D practices and thematic inquiries.
- **Collaborative Planning Time**: Dedicated time for teachers to create standards-aligned instructional strategies, fostering innovative teaching that supports concept-based learning.

- **Project-Based and Performance-Based Assessment**: Students engage in rigorous, standards-based assessments that include 4D projects, ensuring both proficiency and mastery in required competencies.

This structured approach ensures students achieve standards proficiency while developing critical 4D competencies, aligning with Connecticut's educational policy requirements.

## Performance-Based Assessments and Standards Integration in the 4D Quantum Learning Matrix

The CoLAB 4D Quantum Learning Matrix (4DQLM) emphasizes **performance-based assessments** as a core component of evaluating student learning. In this model, assessments are not limited to traditional tests but instead involve real-world applications that allow students to demonstrate their skills, understanding, and competencies through projects and hands-on experiences. This approach is **standards-based**, ensuring that all assessments align with state and national standards, including the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), C3 Framework for Social Studies, and the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) standards.

#### How Standards Are Integrated into Performance-Based Assessments

Each performance-based assessment in the 4D Quantum Learning Matrix is crafted to meet specific standards across core disciplines. The process of standards integration in assessments works as follows:

1. **Collaborative Planning with Standards in Focus**: Teachers co-plan units and projects that align with CCSS, NGSS, C3, and ISTE standards. During this planning process, educators identify the essential standards and competencies for each theme and build performance tasks that allow students to demonstrate mastery of these standards. For example:
    - **CCSS ELA Standards**: Inquiry-based projects require students to read, analyze, and synthesize information from multiple sources, developing literacy skills in argumentative reasoning, research, and communication.
    - **NGSS Standards**: Design Thinking projects engage students in scientific and engineering practices, asking them to prototype, test, and refine solutions to local and global problems.
    - **C3 Framework**: Service Learning projects incorporate civic engagement, where students investigate community issues, collaborate with stakeholders, and develop actions that promote civic responsibility.
    - **ISTE Standards**: Creative Arts projects integrate digital literacy and responsible digital citizenship, fostering students' ability to use technology effectively and ethically.
2. **Rubric-Based Assessments Aligned to Standards**: CoLAB's performance-based assessments utilize detailed rubrics that outline the criteria for mastery in each standard. These rubrics are standards-aligned, ensuring that each assessment component, whether research, analysis, presentation, or product creation, is directly connected to the targeted standards. Rubrics provide transparency for students and teachers alike, offering clear indicators of success that support growth and improvement.
3. **Thematic Integration with Standards-Driven Goals**: By anchoring assessments within thematic units, students experience learning that is conceptually rich and relevant. Each theme provides a context in

which standards are applied, making abstract skills and knowledge concrete and personally meaningful. For instance, a theme like “Global Issues & Sustainability” may incorporate NGSS standards related to ecosystems and environmental science, combined with C3 standards for understanding global interdependence, resulting in projects that allow students to explore sustainability solutions in their community.

4. **Feedback and Reflection Aligned with Standards**: A critical component of performance-based assessment is the continuous feedback loop, which supports student reflection and growth. Teachers use formative assessments to provide ongoing feedback on standards mastery, helping students understand their strengths and areas for improvement. This feedback-driven process allows students to revisit, refine, and deepen their understanding, reinforcing standards proficiency in an iterative manner.

## The Power of Performance-Based Assessments in an Education 4.0 Model

Performance-based assessments are at the core of Education 4.0, aligning with the needs of a modern educational landscape where students must be prepared not only to memorize facts but to apply knowledge in complex, dynamic environments. The CoLAB approach to assessment recognizes that traditional assessments alone cannot measure the full scope of student learning and potential in the 21st century. Performance-based assessments are transformative in this model for several reasons:

1. **Real-World Application of Knowledge and Skills**: Performance-based assessments allow students to demonstrate their learning through practical application, bridging the gap between classroom learning and real-world skills. By engaging in projects that mirror real-world challenges, students become adept at problem-solving, critical thinking, and adapting to new information—skills that are essential for success in the Fourth Industrial Revolution.
2. **Holistic Measurement of Student Growth**: These assessments provide a more holistic view of student development by measuring not only cognitive skills but also social, emotional, and creative abilities. In the CoLAB framework, this is essential for preparing students to be Agile Co-Constructionists and Generative Thinkers, equipped with a growth mindset and the emotional resilience to navigate complex challenges.
3. **Encouraging Deeper, Concept-Based Learning**: Unlike traditional assessments that focus on rote memorization, performance-based assessments in the 4DQLM encourage students to engage deeply with big ideas, concepts, and essential questions. This aligns with the Education 4.0 goal of fostering lifelong learning and intellectual curiosity, equipping students to transfer their knowledge across contexts and disciplines.
4. **Promoting Agency and Intrinsic Motivation**: In a performance-based assessment model, students take ownership of their learning by choosing projects, collaborating with peers, and exploring topics that interest them within the thematic framework. This agency promotes intrinsic motivation, as students see the relevance and impact of their learning on their lives and communities, building resilience, and persistence.
5. **Preparing Students for College and Career Readiness**: Performance-based assessments are essential for preparing students for the demands of higher education and the workforce. By engaging in standards-based projects that require research, analysis, collaboration, and presentation, CoLAB

students develop competencies aligned with college and career readiness standards, including critical thinking, communication, and technology use. These are the very skills sought by today's colleges and employers.

6. **Flexibility and Responsiveness to Individual Learning Needs**: Through performance-based assessments, CoLAB teachers can better meet individual learning needs by adjusting project expectations, providing differentiated resources, and supporting unique approaches. This responsiveness supports all learners in achieving standards mastery, aligning with CoLAB's commitment to equity and accessibility in Education 4.0.

## Ensuring Standards Mastery Through Performance-Based Assessments

In the CoLAB 4D Quantum Learning Matrix, performance-based assessments are thoughtfully designed to ensure that students not only engage deeply with each theme and project but also attain mastery of essential standards. This standards-aligned, performance-driven model reflects the very essence of Education 4.0, where assessment extends beyond testing to encompass the full range of skills and knowledge students need for the future.

The power of this approach lies in its ability to measure student learning in ways that are authentic, applicable, and reflective of real-world expectations. By combining rigorous standards alignment with meaningful, hands-on assessments, CoLAB ensures that students are prepared for success not just in school, but in life. This performance-based model of assessment redefines learning outcomes, creating a transformative educational experience that equips students to be thinkers, leaders, and innovators in an ever-changing world.

Following our commitment to rigorous, standards-based mastery through performance-based assessments, we provide a sample rubric to illustrate how the CoLAB 4D Quantum Learning Matrix operationalizes these principles. This example demonstrates how our assessment criteria align with Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for ELA, Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), and International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) standards. In this project, students engage deeply with the themes of "Identity" and "Community" while developing critical skills and competencies in research, scientific inquiry, digital literacy, and personal reflection—elements that are central to CoLAB's vision for preparing students to thrive in a complex, interconnected world.

### Sample Rubric: "My Place in the World" Project

**Project Description**:
In this project, students will research and present how their identity has been shaped by their community and the natural environment. The final product will be a multimedia presentation, which may include visuals, audio, and/or interactive components. Students will analyze their role within their community, consider the natural and social factors that shape identities, and propose ways they can positively impact their communities.

| Criteria | Exceeds Standards (4) | Meets Standards (3) | Approaching Standards (2) | Below Standards (1) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Research & Analysis** (CCSS ELA RI.9-10.1, W.9-10.7) | Thoroughly researched community and identity topics, using diverse and reliable sources; analysis demonstrates deep understanding and thoughtful insight. Sources are clearly cited. | Conducted adequate research using reliable sources; analysis shows an understanding of community and identity topics. Sources are cited accurately. | Research is limited, with minimal variety or reliability of sources; analysis shows a partial understanding of topics. Some sources are cited, but format or completeness may vary. | Little or no research is evident; sources lack reliability, and analysis is superficial or missing. Few or no sources are cited, or citations are incorrect. |
| **Scientific Inquiry** (NGSS HS-LS2-2, HS-LS2-8) | Demonstrates an exceptional understanding of scientific principles, explaining environmental influences on community and identity; presents a well-supported hypothesis on the role of environmental factors. | Demonstrates understanding of scientific principles regarding environmental influences on community and identity; presents a clear hypothesis with supporting details. | Shows partial understanding of scientific principles; hypothesis or explanation of environmental factors is unclear or lacks supporting details. | Does not demonstrate an understanding of scientific principles; no hypothesis or explanation is presented, or it lacks relevance to the project. |
| **Digital Literacy & Media Creation** (ISTE 1.2.b, 1.3.d) | Uses digital tools with expertise to create a multimedia presentation that is highly engaging, interactive, and appropriate for the audience; demonstrates ethical use of technology and respects copyright. | Uses digital tools effectively to create a multimedia presentation that is engaging and appropriate for the audience; demonstrates ethical use of technology with minor citation errors. | Uses digital tools to create a basic multimedia presentation; lacks interactivity or is partially engaging; ethical use of technology is inconsistent or has multiple citation errors. | Does not effectively use digital tools; presentation is incomplete, lacks engagement, or is inappropriate for the audience. No attention to copyright or digital ethics is evident. |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Communication & Presentation** (CCSS SL.9-10.4, SL.9-10.5) | Presents information clearly and confidently, with strong organization, visuals, and supporting details; connects with the audience and responds to questions insightfully. | Presents information clearly with organization, visuals, and adequate supporting details; engages with the audience and answers questions effectively. | Presentation is partially clear; organization and visuals may be lacking, or details are insufficient. Shows some engagement with the audience but may struggle to answer questions fully. | Presentation lacks clarity, organization, or supporting details; limited or no engagement with the audience, with difficulty responding to questions. |
| **Reflection & Personal Connection** (SEL, CCSS W.9-10.10) | Insightfully reflects on personal identity and community impact; presents a well-developed personal perspective, connecting personal experiences with broader societal issues thoughtfully. | Reflects on personal identity and community impact with a clear personal perspective; shows the connection between personal experiences and broader societal issues. | Reflection is present but may lack depth or clarity; limited personal perspective or connection to societal issues is evident. | Reflection is incomplete or missing; lacks a personal perspective or connection to broader issues, making the reflection superficial. |

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## Cultivating a School-Wide Culture of Engagement and Learning

The thematic progression and integration of 4D practices foster a vibrant school culture. Through student agency, 4D projects, and community engagement, Taino CoLAB students actively participate in their education. This environment supports intellectual curiosity and engagement, establishing a strong foundation in standards-based learning, college readiness, and career pathways.

---

## Research and Supporting Arguments

The 4D Quantum Learning Matrix framework is grounded in educational research and best practices, aligning with Education 4.0 principles. Below is a table of research that supports the 4D Quantum Matrix model, demonstrating the rigor and effectiveness of this innovative approach:

| Concept/Element | Supporting Research |
|---|---|
| **Inquiry** | *Schools of the Future* (WEF, 2019), *XQ Design Principles Rubric* (2022) |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Design Thinking** | *Defining Education 4.0* (WEF, 2023), Stanford d.school research (Carroll et al., 2010; Razzouk & Shute, 2012) |
| **Creative Arts** | Arts education research (Deasy, 2002; Winner, Goldstein, & Vincent-Lancrin, 2013) |
| **Service Learning** | Research on service learning (Billig, 2000; Eyler & Giles, 1999) |
| **Omni Literacy** | *Framework for the Future of Learning* (2023), *XQ Design Principles Rubric* (2022) |
| **College & Career Readiness** | *Schools of the Future* (WEF, 2019), ASU partnership for early college and industry credentialing |
| **AI-Augmented Learning** | *Defining Education 4.0* (WEF, 2023), AI in education research |
| **Agile Ecosystem** | *Schools of the Future* (WEF, 2019) |
| **Community Investment** | *XQ Design Principles Rubric* (2022), community school models |

The CoLAB 4D Quantum Learning Matrix prepares students to excel in a rapidly evolving world. By integrating Inquiry, Design Thinking, Creative Arts, and Service Learning, supported by rigorous standards alignment and AI, CoLAB nurtures intellectual growth, creativity, and civic responsibility, fostering the skills and mindsets required for the future.

# Appendix A5: Technology Integration Plan

1. Vision and Objectives

Vision:
The integration of technology at Taino CoLAB Waterbury will aim to enhance the educational experience, foster digital literacy, and prepare students for a technology-driven world. The goal is to leverage technology to support innovative teaching practices, personalized learning, and efficient school management. By strategically integrating technology into the curriculum and school operations, Taino CoLAB Waterbury can create a dynamic and future-ready learning environment that prepares students for success in the digital age.

Objectives:
- Enhance student engagement and learning outcomes through interactive and multimedia-rich content.
- Develop students' digital literacy skills to prepare them for future careers and higher education.
- Utilize data analytics to personalize learning and provide targeted support for each student.
- Streamline administrative tasks to allow educators to focus more on teaching and student support.
- Foster a culture of innovation and continuous improvement among staff and students.

2. Infrastructure and Hardware

Network and Internet:
- High-speed broadband internet connection to support online learning, research, and administrative functions.
- Secure Wi-Fi access points throughout the school to ensure reliable connectivity for students and staff.

Hardware:
- Classrooms equipped with interactive whiteboards and projectors.
- One-to-one device program providing each student with a tablet or laptop.
- Teacher workstations with high-performance computers.
- Computer labs with desktop computers for intensive computing tasks.
- Mobile device carts for classrooms to ensure flexible technology access.

3. Software and Digital Resources

Learning Management System (LMS):
Implement an LMS such as Google Classroom or Canvas to manage coursework, assignments, and communication between teachers and students.

Educational Software:
- Utilize educational software for various subjects, such as MobyMax for Literacy and Math, Science Buddies for science, and Storybird for creative writing
- Coding platforms like Scratch and Code.org for computer science classes.

Digital Literacy Tools:
- Incorporate tools such as Microsoft Office 365 or Google Workspace to teach productivity and collaboration skills.
- Use media creation tools like Adobe Creative Cloud for media arts and design projects.

Data Analytics Tools:

- Implement data analytics platforms to track student performance and identify areas needing intervention.
- Use AI-driven platforms to provide personalized learning pathways and real-time feedback.

4. Professional Development

Ongoing Training:

- Regular professional development sessions on integrating technology into the curriculum.
- Workshops on using specific software and tools effectively in the classroom.
- Training on data analysis to help teachers personalize learning and track student progress.

Peer Collaboration:

- Establish Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) where teachers can share best practices and support each other in using technology.
- Encourage peer observation and feedback sessions to continually improve technology integration.

5. Curriculum Integration

STEM Focus:

- Integrate technology deeply into STEM subjects through the use of simulation software, virtual labs, and coding exercises.
- Use technology to support project-based learning in STEM, allowing students to create and test their solutions digitally.

Humanities and Arts:

- Use digital storytelling tools, online research databases, and collaborative platforms to enhance learning in humanities.
- Integrate media creation tools and digital portfolios in arts education to document and showcase student work.

Special Education and ELL:

- Implement assistive technologies and language learning apps to support students with special needs and English Language Learners.
- Use adaptive learning platforms that adjust the difficulty level based on student performance to provide personalized support.

6. Security and Maintenance

Data Security:

- Ensure compliance with FERPA and other data privacy regulations.
- Implement robust cybersecurity measures, including firewalls, antivirus software, and regular security audits.

Device Management:

- Use Mobile Device Management (MDM) software to manage and secure student and staff devices.
- Regular maintenance and updates for all hardware and software to ensure optimal performance and security.

7. Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

Regular Assessment:

- Conduct regular assessments of technology integration effectiveness through surveys, feedback sessions, and performance data analysis.
- Adjust the technology plan based on feedback and emerging educational technology trends.

Stakeholder Involvement:

- Involve students, parents, and teachers in the evaluation process to ensure the technology integration meets their needs and expectations.
- Establish a technology committee to oversee the implementation and continuous improvement of the technology plan.

# Student Design Sprint

## Teacher's Guide

# Acknowledgments

We extend our deepest gratitude to The Peter and Carmen Lucia Buck Foundation whose generous financial support made this work possible. A heartfelt thank you also goes to the leadership and teaching team at 360 High School. Their dedication to continuous learning and their wholehearted embrace of the design process were instrumental in the success of this endeavor.

However, our most profound gratitude belongs to the students of this course. Their willingness to embrace challenges and remarkable dedication to improving their school for their peers were truly inspiring. It was a pleasure to witness them engage in the process, demonstrating curiosity, resilience, and determination every step of the way.

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# Welcome

Welcome to the Student Design Sprint! This course aims to introduce high school students to a comprehensive toolkit for developing skills essential for global citizenship, including leadership, management, innovation, communication, and empathy.

All necessary materials for running this course can be found within this teacher's guide and the associated online folders. This guide is tailored specifically for you, the teacher. It includes:

- Course fundamentals, highlighting unique elements of the class's design.
- Three unit overviews providing a bird's-eye view of the three units.
- Materials for assessing student progress using the Facilitation Framework.
- A student-led incentive system helping students recognize peer performance on key skills.
- A facilitation guide for each class.

# Course Fundamentals

This course operates under the principle that **the skills necessary for effective facilitation are also critical for future success**. The Student Design Sprint is inspired by the World Economic Forum 4.0[1] and "Sprint' by Jake Knapp[2]. This course seeks to disrupt the school script through powerful moments and by equipping students to be problem-solvers, leaders, and designers with skills tailored to the future's changing economy. The fundamentals of this course include the Facilitation Framework and associated assessments, three units that encompass a full sprint, and a student-driven badging system.

Specifically, **this course centers on developing seven skills outlined in the Facilitation Framework.** These skills serve as the standards for this course. The skills are listed in Table 1, and the entire framework can be found in the assessment section of this guide. Students who master the skills within the Facilitation Framework are well-equipped for the future.

**Table 1: Facilitation Framework Skills**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Communication Skills | Problem-Solving Ability | Facilitation Skills | Empathy and Emotional Intelligence |
| Time Management | Team Leadership | Design Thinking Expertise | |

The class is divided into three units. **The three units will lead you and your students through a complete design sprint, including problem identification, idea generation, prototype development, and live student testing.** Unit 1, Problem Identification, gives you a chance to get to know your students and for them to get to know you. Your focus for this unit is to build community, explore empathy, and identify a problem worth solving. Solution Generation, the second unit, is where you will pick up steam. Students will generate solutions, vet ideas, and prepare prototypes. Testing + Iteration is where the rubber hits the road. Students will lead live testing events, collect data, and refine their ideas during the third unit. Unit Overviews give you a bird's eye perspective while Facilitation Guides share lesson plan level details.

The course embeds multiple opportunities and approaches for assessing student performance on the Facilitation Framework. Students self-assess each skill at the start and end of the course. **As the teacher, you will evaluate and provide feedback, just like other standards.** Given that students

[1] https://initiatives.weforum.org/reskilling-revolution/education-4-0

[2] Knapp, Jake, John Zeratsky, and Braden Kowitz. 2016. Sprint. London, England: Bantam Press.

will have varying proficiency levels in these skills upon entering the class, our objective is to assist them in comprehending and enhancing these skills. Materials for assessment are found in the "Assessment Tools" section of this guide.

The Student Design Sprint also integrates a lightweight student-driven credentialing system called Facilitation Badges. Seven Facilitation Badges align with various skills in the Facilitation Framework. The mechanics of the badges are simple: students actively observe one another, demonstrating various facilitation framework skills, and then students nominate those peers for badges. The Badge section of this guide will provide more details and links to resources needed for student badge ceremonies. They are a high point of the course.

The Student Design Sprint is a **proactive effort to nurture skills marginalized within our conventional education system.** We hope you make moments and memories in this class that intends to flip the script on teaching and learning - You will learn more than you teach!

# Unit Overviews

Unit Overviews preview the Facilitation Guides. Each overview includes the big ideas from the unit, key steps, assessment points, and focus facilitation skills.  Facilitation Guides, found later in these materials, serve as detailed lesson plans.

# Unit 1: Problem Identification

| Phase | Big Idea + Workshops |
|---|---|
| Problem Identification | The team gets clear on the problem they are trying to solve. This can involve conducting research, developing a systems map, envisioning a future state, and identifying key questions for the sprint. |
| Key steps include:<br>• Establishing a strong design question<br>• Conducting interviews and observations<br>• Creating two year goals and guiding questions | |
| Assessment points include:<br>• Self-assessment of the Facilitation Framework<br>• End-of-unit performance check (self-created) | |
| Focus skills for this unit include:<br>• Communication<br>• Design Thinking<br>• Empathy and Emotional Intelligence<br>• Problem-Solving Ability | |

## Bird's Eye View: Problem Identification

| Lesson | Objectives |
|---|---|
| **1: Intro to the Design Sprint** | Students will:<br>• Start to understand what a design sprint looks and feels like<br>• Begin to understand how to see the world from a different perspective<br><br>Facilitation Guide |
| **2: Empathy** | Students will:<br>• Warm-up by seeing the world from a different perspective<br>• Listening deeply to improve our ability to empathize<br>• Identify high and low points from classmate interview<br><br>Facilitation Guide |
| **3: Seeing the Big Picture** | Students will:<br>• Start to understand the Facilitation Framework<br>• Identify your strengths and areas for growth on the Facilitation Framework<br>• Generate ideas for our sprint<br><br>Facilitation Guide |

# Unit 2: Solution Generation

| Phase | Big Idea + Workshops |
|---|---|
| Solution Generation | The team generates as many ideas as possible for potential solutions. Small teams select their most promising idea to develop into a concrete prototype. |

Key steps include:

- Brainstorming
- Finding inspiration outside of their environment
- Vetting ideas and solutions using an ease and impact matrix
- Development of a 3-step concept
- Creation of a testable prototype

Assessment points include:

- Development of a 3-Step Concept
- Creation of a testable prototype

Focus skills for this unit include:

- Problem-Solving
- Time Management
- Team Leadership
- Communication Skills
- Design Thinking Expertise

## Bird's Eye View: Solution Generation

| Lesson | Objectives |
|---|---|
| **4: Idea Generation** | Students will:<br>• Establish a one-year vision<br>• Generate and prioritize solutions<br>• Develop storyboards to communicate and pressure test solutions<br><br>Facilitation Guide |
| **5: Ideas from Elsewhere** | Students will:<br>• Connect our design sprint work with the world outside of their school<br>• Identify and present inspiration from elsewhere<br><br>Facilitation Guide |
| **6: 3 Step Concept** | Students will:<br>• Identify one idea to build out<br>• Develop the idea into three steps<br>• Indicate areas of interest in other concepts (heat map)<br><br>Facilitation Guide |
| **Lesson 7: Speed Critique and Prototype** | Students will:<br>• Produce feedback for each concept<br>• Begin to build a testable experience<br><br>Facilitation Guide |
| **Lesson 8: Testing Preparation** | Students will:<br>• Prepare for testing<br><br>Facilitation Guide |

# Unit 3: Testing + Iteration

| Phase | | Big Idea + Workshops |
|---|---|---|
| | Testing + Iteration | Teams develop their prototype, conduct small-scale tests, and analyze testing data. The student design sprint concludes with team presentations that share data alongside recommendations for future iterations. |

Key steps include:

- Refining prototypes
- Establishing a testing protocol
- Conducting tests
- Testing data analysis
- Reflection for future improvement

Assessment points include:

- Creation of a Concept Testing Proposal
- End-of-course presentation
- End-of-course self-assessment

Focus skills for this unit include:

- Time Management
- Communication Skills
- Design Thinking Expertise

## Bird's Eye View: Testing + Iteration

| Lesson | Objectives |
|---|---|
| **9: Testing Finalization** | Students will:<br>• Incorporate feedback to improve your concept<br>• Begin to develop a testable experience<br><br>Facilitation Guide |
| **10: Testing Review + Next Steps** | Students will:<br>• Incorporate feedback to improve your concept<br>• Begin to develop a testable experience<br><br>Facilitation Guide |
| **11: Celebrating Our Progress** | Students will:<br>• Create a gratitude poncho for each other (25 min)<br>• Complete the online survey<br><br>Facilitation Guide |

# Assessment

The course includes specific milestones and tools to assess student performance on the facilitation framework. Please consider conducting your own self-assessment on the facilitation framework. Doing so will help you connect better when providing student feedback along the way!

This section of the Teacher's Guide includes:

1. **Facilitation Framework:** The Framework serves as your standards for this class. It includes seven categories each with language to clarify what exemplary performance looks like in action.
2. **Facilitation Rubric:** The Rubric clarifies various levels of performance across the seven categories.
3. **Pre and Post Course Assessment:** These Assessments serve as a starting and ending point for students to analyze their progress over time.

# Facilitation Framework

| Category | Exemplary Performance |
|---|---|
| **Communication Skills** | • **Visual Thinking Proficiency:** Displays exceptional visual thinking skills by employing visual aids and tools to facilitate discussions and idea sharing. Creates captivating visual representations of complex concepts and solutions.<br>• **Clear Visual Representation:** Effectively translates abstract concepts into visual formats, enhancing participants' understanding and engagement during the sprint process. |
| **Problem-Solving Ability** | • **Creativity and Innovation:** Exhibits outstanding creativity and innovation during problem-solving activities. Generates inventive ideas and solutions that challenge conventional thinking.<br>• **Adaptive Quick Thinking:** Demonstrates rapid thinking and resourcefulness in addressing unexpected challenges that arise during the sprint. Effectively adapts strategies and approaches to overcome hurdles.<br>• **Analytical Precision:** Utilizes strong analytical skills to evaluate solutions rigorously, making well-informed decisions grounded in data and insights. |
| **Facilitation Skills** | • **Strong Guiding Facilitation:** Exhibits strong facilitation skills, leading participants through activities and discussions with precision and clarity. Creates an atmosphere of open communication, actively involving every participant.<br>• **Empathetic and Adaptable Environment:** Displays active listening, empathy, and adaptability as a facilitator. Ensures a collaborative and productive environment where participants feel valued and engaged. |
| **Empathy and Emotional Intelligence** | • **Participant Understanding:** Demonstrates exceptional empathy by understanding participants' emotions, needs, and concerns. Creates an environment where individuals feel heard and valued.<br>• **Skillful Conflict Navigation:** Exhibits emotional intelligence in managing group dynamics, navigating conflicts, and fostering a harmonious atmosphere. Resolves tensions while maintaining a focus on the sprint's objectives. |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Time Management** | • **Efficient Time Allocation:** Demonstrates a skillful approach to managing time constraints within the sprint. Ensures that activities progress smoothly according to the established schedule.<br>• **Balanced Exploration and Decision-Making:** Maintains a delicate equilibrium between thorough exploration of ideas and making timely decisions within the sprint's allocated timeframe. |
| **Team Leadership** | • **Multidisciplinary Leadership:** Displays a remarkable capability to lead teams composed of members with diverse perspectives and skills. Navigates collaboration seamlessly to ensure a cohesive and effective team dynamic.<br>• **Inclusive and Collaborative Environment:** Fosters an environment of collaboration and inclusion, encouraging the active participation of all team members. Provides leadership that enables individuals to contribute their strengths. |
| **Design Thinking Expertise** | • **Iterative Mindset:** Demonstrates a remarkable willingness to pivot and adapt based on feedback and insights garnered from each iteration of the sprint. Embraces change and refinement as integral to the design process.<br>• **Learning Mindset**: Exhibits a profound understanding of design thinking principles and methodologies. Applies this knowledge effectively to address complex challenges, leveraging a comprehensive toolkit of design thinking techniques. |

# Facilitation Rubric

| Points | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Communication Skills**<br><br>**__/3** | • Displays exceptional communication skills by employing clear language, visual aids, and tools to facilitate discussions and idea sharing.<br>• Creates captivating visual representations of complex concepts and solutions.<br>• Effectively translates abstract concepts into visual formats, enhancing participants' understanding and engagement during the sprint process. | • Expresses ideas clearly and using verbal and visual communication<br>• Creates clear and effective visual representations of complex concepts and solutions<br>• Demonstrates an ability to use visuals to aid in participant understanding | • Communicates ideas with moderate clarity, occasionally requiring clarification.<br>• Attempts to create visual aids to assist in discussions and idea sharing<br>• Engages in communication but may overlook nuances and find it difficult to use multiple modes of communication to help explain complex topics |
| **Problem-Solving Ability**<br><br>**__/3** | • Demonstrates strong problem-solving skills by effectively identifying and analyzing complex issues.<br>• Actively contributes innovative and well-thought-out solutions, demonstrating adaptability and creativity. | • Demonstrates problem-solving skills by identifying and analyzing basic issues.<br>• Contributes quality solutions, demonstrating adaptability and creativity. | • Identifies problems but may struggle with formulating viable solutions.<br>• Contributes to problem-solving discussions but may require guidance or support from peers. |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Facilitation Skills**<br><br>**__/3** | • Exhibits strong facilitation skills, leading participants through activities and discussions with precision and clarity.<br>• Creates an atmosphere of open communication, actively involving every participant.<br>• Displays active listening, empathy, and adaptability as a facilitator. | • Facilitates group discussions while trying to make sure all voices are heard and ideas are considered.<br>• Guides discussions while keeping them on track and productive while fostering a collaborative and inclusive environment. | • Maintains some control over group discussions but may struggle to keep them focused and productive.<br>• Encourages participation to some extent but may overlook quieter voices within the group. |
| **Empathy and Emotional Intelligence**<br><br>**__/3** | • Demonstrates exceptional empathy by understanding participants' emotions, needs, and concerns.<br>• Exhibits emotional intelligence in managing group dynamics, navigating conflicts, and fostering a harmonious atmosphere. | • Displays high levels of empathy, actively listening to and considering others' emotions and perspectives.<br>• Effectively regulates emotions, maintaining composure and demonstrating sensitivity even in challenging situations. | • Shows some awareness of others' emotions but may not consistently consider their impact on interactions.<br>• Attempts to regulate emotions but may occasionally struggle in high-stress situations. |
| **Time Management**<br><br>**__/3** | • Demonstrates a skillful approach to managing time constraints within the sprint.<br>• Maintains a delicate equilibrium between thorough exploration of ideas and making timely decisions within the sprint's allocated timeframe. | • Generally meets deadlines but may occasionally require extensions or rush to complete tasks.<br>• Demonstrates organization but may benefit from improved planning and time allocation. | • May struggle to prioritize tasks effectively, leading to missed deadlines or incomplete work.<br>• May frequently require reminders or assistance to stay on track. |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Team Leadership**<br><br>**__/3** | • Displays a remarkable capability to lead teams composed of members with diverse perspectives and skills.<br>• Fosters an environment of collaboration and inclusion, encouraging the active participation of all team members.<br>• Provides leadership that enables individuals to contribute their strengths. | • Effectively delegates tasks and empowers team members to take ownership of their responsibilities.<br>• Motivates the team, fostering a collaborative and high-performing environment. | • Attempts to delegate tasks and involve team members but may struggle to do so effectively.<br>• Provides some motivation to the team but may lack consistency in leadership approach. |
| **Design Thinking Expertise**<br><br>**__/3** | • Demonstrates a remarkable willingness to pivot and adapt based on feedback and insights garnered from each iteration of the sprint.<br>• Exhibits a profound understanding of design thinking principles and methodologies. Applies this knowledge effectively to address complex challenges. | • Demonstrates a grasp of design thinking principles and effectively applies them in problem-solving scenarios.<br>• Consistently employs design thinking methodologies to generate solutions and address complex challenges. | • Shows some understanding of design thinking principles but may struggle to apply them consistently.<br>• Makes attempts to incorporate design thinking into problem-solving but may require guidance or support. |

**Grade: ___/21**

# Pre- and Post-course Assessments

The Pre and Post-course assessments provide a template for you to use at the start and end of this course. Google Forms can be used to conduct and analyze these two critical milestones. Responses can be easily analyzed by linking the form to a Google Sheets page. All the text needed for a baseline and end-of-course check are provided in the following two tools. Copying and pasting text directly into Google Forms is encouraged.

It's important to evaluate student skill and confidence levels before starting the course to enable the teacher to meet students where they are. Evaluating the students after they complete the course will provide further information about how students have improved and to collect their feedback to ensure the course grows and evolves.

When creating and using Google Forms for the Pre- and Post-course Assessment, keep in mind these tips:

- To ensure student responses, don't forget to set questions to require answers
- Google Forms allows images and other customization. Make them fun!

You can view results either directly through the form (as the form owner) or you can link it to a spreadsheet to organize it your own way.

# Pre-course Assessment

Title: Student Design Sprint - Welcome Survey

**Section 1 - Welcome**

We are thrilled you are joining us on this design sprint journey! During the course, we will stop and take stock of how everything is going. **Your opinion and feedback matter**! This "Welcome Survey" will help us learn more about you and how we can make this journey worthwhile. It's not used for a grade and there are no right or wrong answers.

Rate your confidence in these skills from 1 (not confident) to 5 (very confident)

**Section 2 - About you!**

- Name
    - Short answer text
- Year in school
    - Multiple choice

**Section 3 - Communication Skills**

- I feel confident about my communication skills
    - 1-5 rating (not confident to very confident)
- I feel confident about my ability to communicate visually
    - 1-5 rating (not confident to very confident)
- I feel confident about making pictures that show new and sometimes complicated ideas.
    - 1-5 rating (not confident to very confident)

**Section 4 - Problem-Solving Ability**

- I feel confident about being creative and thinking outside the box
    - 1-5 rating (not confident to very confident)
- I feel confident about being quick and smart when things change
    - 1-5 rating (not confident to very confident)
- I feel confident about being good at figuring things out with data
    - 1-5 rating (not confident to very confident)

**Section 5 - Facilitation Skills**

- I feel confident about guiding and leading others
    - 1-5 rating (not confident to very confident)
- I feel confident about making everyone comfortable and open
    - 1-5 rating (not confident to very confident)

**Section 6 - Empathy and Emotional Intelligence**

- I feel confident in understanding how others feel and what they need
    - 1-5 rating (not confident to very confident)
- I feel confident about handling conflicts well and making things peaceful
    - 1-5 rating (not confident to very confident)

**Section 7 - Time Management**

- I feel confident about managing time well
    - 1-5 rating (not confident to very confident)
- I feel confident about making good choices when under a time crunch
    - 1-5 rating (not confident to very confident)

**Section 8 - Team Leadership**

- I feel confident about leading groups with different talents
    - 1-5 rating (not confident to very confident)
- I feel confident about making sure everyone works together nicely
    - 1-5 rating (not confident to very confident)

**Section 9 - Design Thinking Expertise**

- I feel confident about changing and improving my work
    - 1-5 rating (not confident to very confident)
- I feel confident about using creative ways to solve problems
    - 1-5 rating (not confident to very confident)

**Section 10 - Additional info**

- Is there anything else you want to let us know about the Design Sprint course or how you learn?
    - Long answer text
- What skills do you want to get better at?
    - Long answer text

- What is one goal you have for this semester?
    - Long answer text
- What is your favorite song that makes you feel happy or energized?
    - Long answer text

# Post-course Assessment

Title: Student Design Sprint Follow-Up Survey

**Section 1 - Welcome back!**

We have been thrilled to have you join us on this design sprint! Earlier in the course, we stopped to take stock of how things were going. We had a "Welcome Survey" to learn more about you and cater the course to your needs.

Now, we're conducting this "Follow-up" survey to understand how you felt about the class and what you got out of it.

**Your opinion and feedback matter! It's not used for a grade and there are no right or wrong answers.**

**Section 2 - About you!**

- Name
    - Short answer text
- Year in school
    - Multiple choice

**Section 3 - Communication Skills**

- I feel confident about my communication skills
    - 1-5 rating (not confident to very confident)
- I feel confident about my ability to communicate visually
    - 1-5 rating (not confident to very confident)
- I feel confident about making pictures that show new and sometimes complicated ideas.
    - 1-5 rating (not confident to very confident)

**Section 4 - Problem-Solving Ability**

- I feel confident about being creative and thinking outside the box
    - 1-5 rating (not confident to very confident)
- I feel confident about being quick and smart when things change
    - 1-5 rating (not confident to very confident)
- I feel confident about being good at figuring things out with data

    - 1-5 rating (not confident to very confident)

**Section 5 - Facilitation Skills**

- I feel confident about guiding and leading others
    - 1-5 rating (not confident to very confident)
- I feel confident about making everyone comfortable and open
    - 1-5 rating (not confident to very confident)

**Section 6 - Empathy and Emotional Intelligence**

- I feel confident in understanding how others feel and what they need
    - 1-5 rating (not confident to very confident)
- I feel confident about handling conflicts well and making things peaceful
    - 1-5 rating (not confident to very confident)

**Section 7 - Time Management**

- I feel confident about managing time well
    - 1-5 rating (not confident to very confident)
- I feel confident about making good choices when under a time crunch
    - 1-5 rating (not confident to very confident)

**Section 8 - Team Leadership**

- I feel confident about leading groups with different talents
    - 1-5 rating (not confident to very confident)
- I feel confident about making sure everyone works together nicely
    - 1-5 rating (not confident to very confident)

**Section 9 - Design Thinking Expertise**

- I feel confident about changing and improving my work
    - 1-5 rating (not confident to very confident)
- I feel confident about using creative ways to solve problems
    - 1-5 rating (not confident to very confident)

**Section 10 - Class Wrap-up**

- How would you describe a design sprint to a classmate? What are the key pieces or steps of a design sprint?

    - Long answer text
- What is your biggest learning from your project to make the school day less stressful?
    - Long answer text
- What are your favorite memories or moments from this class? Check all that apply
    - Checkboxes listing key events during class or long answer text
- What was your least favorite part of the class?
    - Long answer text

**Section 11 - Final Thoughts**

- How can I make my teaching of this class better? What advice can you give me about working with you or other high school students?
    - Long answer text
- Is there anything else you want to let us know about your experience in the Design Sprint course?
    - Long answer text

# Badges

Badges serve as a lightweight credentialing system, student incentive, and a way of making skills fully recognizable by learners. The mechanics of earning these badges is clarified in this section. You will also find blank student badges in this folder.  Blank badges can be used for your own badge ceremonies.

## Mechanics of Student-Led Credentials

Badges serve as a dynamic recognition system, acknowledging achievement and contributions throughout the sprint. The processes, and procedures recommended here should be tested out in your context. Use this system as an exploration in understanding what lights up your students. The suggested mechanics here are based on what worked in our Fall 2024 pilot.

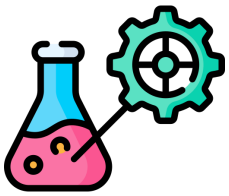
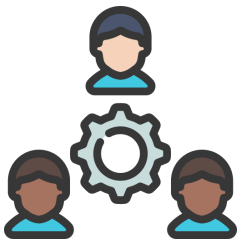
1. **Badge Understanding:** Badges align with the Facilitation Framework. Each badge has a couple aspects of the Facilitation Framework embedded in the criteria and called out. Developing a level of familiarity with the badges and the Facilitation Framework will support this system working well. At the beginning of the course help make the implicit explicit by naming these connections and mentioning the badge and the skills from the class.
2. **Teacher Modeling:** Early in the course think-aloud or name where you are trying to show what the skill looks like in real-time. Utilize the first class to encourage a student to present or facilitate a brief segment and create an early badge ceremony. Be strategic in the student you select and how you frame the ceremony so as to not alienate the other students.
3. **Peer Nominations:** Make time and space for students to reflect on each class. The convergence at the end of each class should provide students think time as well as an opportunity to write and submit their nominations. Make sure there is a clear badge submission box and have slips available for students to complete.
4. **Ceremonies:** Celebrate your students regularly and with flare! Plan ahead for specific classes where you will take five or ten minutes to announce badges. If your students want to present badges, even better! Music and decorations always elevate these moments and truly help make memories for your class community.

Remember that badge nominations or ceremonies will not happen on their own. You need to aggressively remind and point out when you see skills in action, provide time during the convergence section of each class for students to nominate their peers, and hype up the ceremonies!

## Student Facilitation Badges

Seven different badges can be earned during this course. The table below, Student Badge Listing, includes badge names, criteria for earning them, and alignment to Facilitation Framework Skills.

**Table 2: Student Badge Listing**

| Badge Name | Description | Criteria |
|---|---|---|
| **Courageous Explorer Badge** | The Courageous Explorer Badge celebrates your pursuit of knowledge and innovation. You embraced setbacks, learned from your mistakes, and demonstrated resilience and a commitment to growth. | • **Daring Ingenuity:** Demonstrated a willingness to explore unconventional ideas and solutions, showing an adventurous approach to problem-solving.<br>• **Resilient Learning:** Shared a specific mistake encountered during the project and explained the lessons derived from it, showcasing a commitment to personal and academic growth.<br>🌟 **Problem-Solving Ability** 🌟 **Design Thinking Expertise** |
| **Innovation Catalyst Badge**  | The Innovation Catalyst Badge signifies your ability to spark innovation through design sprints. You learned to identify problems, brainstorm creative solutions, and create prototypes. | • **Problem Identification:** Identify real-world problems for innovation, demonstrating the ability to find ways to improve our world.<br>• **Inventive and Adaptive Solutions:** Display creativity by generating multiple innovative solutions, showcasing the ability to think critically and maintain high standards.<br>• **Prototype Proficiency:** Master the art of crafting practical prototypes, showing your understanding of the design sprint.<br>🌟 **Problem-Solving Ability** 🌟 **Design Thinking Expertise** |
| **Problem Solver Badge**  | The Problem Solver Badge celebrates your ability to tackle real challenges using design thinking. You have shown mastery in problem-solving techniques. | • **Problem Analysis:** Demonstrated a knack for breaking down complex problems into manageable parts.<br>• **Adaptability:** Shown skill in adjusting solutions based on evolving circumstances and feedback.<br>• **Critical-Thinker:** Evaluate evidence, consider multiple points of view, and think innovatively about important questions. |

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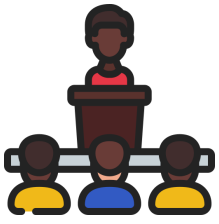
| | | 🌟 **Problem-Solving Ability** |
| **Collaboration Champion Badge**<br> | The Collaboration Champion Badge recognizes your teamwork and collaboration skills. You worked seamlessly in diverse groups and leveraged each member's strengths to achieve success. | • **Strategic Collaboration:** Skillfully leveraged the strengths of each team member to achieve success.<br>• **Skillful Conflict Navigation:** Effectively conveyed ideas, fostered open dialogue, and skillfully managed conflicts within the team.<br>🌟 **Team Leadership** 🌟 **Facilitation Skills** 🌟 **Empathy & Emotional Intelligence** |
| **Compassionate Communicator Badge**<br> | The Compassionate Communicator Badge recognizes your exceptional ability to communicate effectively, collaborate seamlessly, and empathize deeply with others. Your contributions helped to foster a harmonious and inclusive environment. | • **Empathetic Communication:** Exhibit skills in articulating ideas, actively listening, and conveying messages while valuing diverse perspectives.<br>• **Inclusive Collaboration:** Demonstrate the ability to connect with others through compassion, respect, and awareness of diverse perspectives.<br>• **Effective Teamwork:** Exhibit proficiency in working with others, fostering a collaborative and inclusive environment.<br>🌟 **Problem-Solving Ability** 🌟 **Design Thinking Expertise** |
| **Design Guru Badge**<br> | The Design Guru Badge signifies your mastery of design principles and user-centered thinking. You excelled at creating visually appealing and user-friendly prototypes. | • **Iterative Mindset:** Continually refine designs based on user feedback and insights.<br>• **User-Centered Design:** Prioritize user needs in the design process, ensuring user-friendly solutions.<br>🌟 **Design Thinking Expertise** 🌟 **Communication Skills** |
| **Presentation Pro Badge**<br>  | The Presentation Pro Badge highlights your ability to communicate effectively. You learned to present convincingly and engage your audience. | • **Clear Visual Communication:** Present ideas using visuals clearly and concisely, ensuring easy understanding.<br>• **Strong and Engaging Presentation:** Capture and maintain your audience's attention.<br>🌟 **Communication Skills** 🌟 **Facilitation Skills** |

# Facilitation Guides

Facilitation Guides serve as lesson plans for the Student Design Sprint.  Each Facilitation Guide provides background and details for every class.  Details for class sessions identify chunks of the class, talking points and facilitator actions, and student actions.

# Unit 1: Problem Identification

Unit 1 is where you begin creating a community that can sprint. These first three classes focus on slowing down to build rapport and community through check-in conversations and empathy interviews. This initial slowdown is crucial for effective sprinting later. Here's how to make Unit 1 effective:

**Foster Empathy and Leadership:**

- Celebrate students who jump right in, take risks, and show enthusiasm.
- Give these students small facilitation roles to build confidence.
- Hold your first badge ceremony to recognize student leadership.

**Operate with Empathy:**

- Listen and observe what is working and what isn't.
- Pay attention to student interviews and feedback.
- Understand scavenger hunt examples and think about potential sprint topics.
- Guide the class towards a meaningful problem.

**Plan Your Sprint:**

- Decide whether to focus on one design question with multiple groups or work on one project as a class.
- Base your decision on student numbers, interest, independence, and your comfort with managing multiple projects.
- Set clear project parameters, identifying limitations and opportunities.
- Conduct due diligence to ensure the class can achieve success.

By following these steps, you'll lay a strong foundation for a community that can effectively sprint together.

# Lesson 1: Intro to the Design Sprint!

| Objectives | Focus Skills |
| --- | --- |
| <br>• Start to understand what a design sprint looks and feels like<br>• Begin to understand how to see the world from a different perspective | <br>• Empathy and Emotional Intelligence<br>• Communication |
| **Materials** | **Student Product or Performance** |
| • Deck<br>• Marshmallows and spaghetti<br>• Student Folders<br>  ○ Student Name Tents<br>  ○ Course Overview<br>  ○ Blank paper for reflections<br>  ○ Empathy Scavenger Hunt | <br>• Team built marshmallow tower<br>• Individual written reflection to connect the design challenge with the sprint phases |
| **Class Set-Up** | **Class Flow** |
| • Music on<br>• Class Flow Chart posted<br>• Tables arranged for groups<br>• White board with sprint phases | • Welcome and Check-In Circle<br>• Marshmallow Design Challenge<br>• Connect the Design Challenge and Design Sprint Phases<br>• Empathy Shades and Scavenger Hunt Challenge<br>• Converge + Next Steps |

| Big Idea | Facilitator Moves | Student Actions |
|---|---|---|
| **Warm Welcome (15 min)** | Welcome students into the classroom and guide them to group tables<br>Ask that they create their name tents<br><br>Introduce yourself and preview the class:<br>• Walk through the flow of the class (using the chart)<br><br>Set some emotional and collaborative expectations:<br>• Emphasize that the class might feel a little different and at times you might feel a little rushed and nervous and that is ok.<br>• Assure that there will be a lot of ways for all of you to voice your opinions and your ideas.<br><br>Set academic expectations:<br>• Walk through one page course overview sheet<br>• Clarify that you are a facilitator and this is your job. I am teaching you how to do my job.<br><br>Conduct a circle check-in using the prompt and the Design Sprint book. Provide students with a minute to think about their answer and jot their ideas down in advance. | Find a seat at one of the groups of tables.<br><br>Create a name card<br><br>Ask questions about the class<br><br>Respond to the check in question |
| **Marshmallow Design Challenge (35 min)** | Introduce the challenge<br>Clarify general rules<br>• If you eat your materials, you will have fewer<br>• Timer will be visible and I will give you a half-way reminder, five minute, one minute, and ten seconds<br>• At the end, all hands are off your structure | Students work to build towers |

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| | • We will measure for height immediately and identify a winner<br><br>• Ask for questions<br>• Start timer and music<br>• Give the teams space to work and provide timing updates<br>• Take some notes to see where and how students are testing, how they are communicating, and other examples of their work to bring into the reflection<br>• Measure towers quickly and celebrate the winners | |
| **Connect the Design Challenge and Design Sprint Phases (10 min)** | • Show the design sprint phases<br>• Celebrate that they just completed their first design challenge<br>• Preview the phases and include specific observations *(ie - Keanu and Dorismar talked a lot about how they were testing as they built. Dorismar said "When I put this spaghetti here, it tips over. When we move the marshmallow it seems more solid")*<br>• Ask students to stop and reflect on this design challenge in writing using the prompts on the slide (3 min)<br>• Provide time for students to share their thoughts and include more examples and help them see the challenge in the phases | Share experiences from the challenge<br><br>Connect the challenge with the phases<br><br>Write their initial thoughts about a design sprint<br><br>Add to a dialogue about the sprint |
| **Introduce Empathy, Empathy Shades, and Scavenger Hunt (10 min)** | • Pass out a prize/tool for the class (empathy shades)<br>• These shades help you with a new reading ability, they help you read the room...<br>• This is important in doing this kind of work<br>• Another critical part of running a sprint is understanding how other people feel | Select a pair of shades<br><br>Read along on the scavenger hunt<br><br>Provide examples of things they could add |

| | | |
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| | • We call this empathy<br>• Use slide descriptions to clarify<br>• Walk through scavenger hunt handout (their second class challenge) | |
| **Team Convergence (10 min)** | • Started with nothing and now have towers!<br>• Review objectives slide and class flow chart<br>• Ask the students to think for a minute about what we did today with one question - What stood out to you today?<br>• Provide response time<br>• Reiterate their next step of completing the scavenger hunt<br>• Explain end of class clean up process (including marshmallow towers | Identify what stood out from this class |

# Lesson 2: Empathy

| Objectives | Focus Skills |
| --- | --- |
| <br>• Warm-up by seeing the world from a different perspective<br>• Listening deeply to improve our ability to empathize<br>• Identify high and low points from classmate interview | <br>• Empathy and Emotional Intelligence<br>• Problem-Solving Ability |
| **Materials** | **Student Product or Performance** |
| • Deck<br>• Handout - Empathy<br>• #2 pencil | <br>• Articulation of empathy vs sympathy<br>• Identification of peer points of friction from interviews |
| **Class Set-Up** | **Class Flow** |
| • Music on<br>• Class Flow, Sprint Phases, and Venn Chart posted in the room<br>• Tables arranged for groups<br>• Additional spaces set-up for one-on-one empathy interviews | • Welcome and Weather Check-In<br>• Multimedia Learning: Empathy vs Sympathy<br>• Questions to a Pencil<br>• Empathy Interviews<br>• Converge + Next Steps |

| Big Idea | Facilitator Moves | Student Actions |
|---|---|---|
| **Warm Welcome (10 min)** | • Preview the class and materials<br>• Focus on empathy today - our check-in is about how we are feeling, our warm-up is about trying to see the world through someone else's perspective, and the majority of our time together is on interviewing one another<br>• We will get to watch a quick video and start to have some ideas about what problem we want to solve as a team<br>• We will get to that problem by understanding one another better<br>• Conduct check-in circle | Turn in scavenger hunt materials<br><br>Respond to the check-in prompt |
| **Multimedia Learning: Empathy vs Sympathy (10 min)** | What is empathy? Why is it important to the design sprint?<br>• Introduce the video and note-taking template<br>• Play video (3 min) - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Evwgu369Jw<br>• Discuss and chart differences between empathy and sympathy | Take notes on video<br><br>Share notes on empathy vs sympathy |
| **Questions to a Pencil (5 min)**<br><br>Additional info about this warm-up here under "Pencil Questions". | • This is a quick warm-up for our interviews<br>• It is intended to get you to become curious and think from someone else's perspective<br>• The way it works is four of you will role-play as the four people listed here<br>• That means you need to think and talk like them (as best as you can)<br>• You are going to pretend you are them and ask questions to this pencil<br>• I have example questions on the slide<br>• Select or ask for volunteers<br>• Conduct one round of questions<br>• After one round remind the group that they should be able to channel who they interview by the end of the interviews | Channel a character to ask questions of a pencil<br><br>Observe peers<br><br>Laugh! |
| **Empathy Interviews (40 min)** | Preview interview format (5 min)<br>• What do we notice in the image?<br>  ○ take turns | |

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| | ○ really listening<br>• Tips for interviewing<br>○ listening for where they are struggling<br>○ seeking to understand their point of view<br>○ taking notes so you can remember and use what they are thinking about<br>• NOTE: Students should not ping-pong questions. One person should be interviewing and then the students should switch roles.<br>Interviews (25 min)<br>• Student 1 interviews (8 min)<br>• Student 2 interviews (8 min) | Conduct interviews<br><br>Take notes |
| **Identifying high and low points (10 min)** | • Review interview notes and identify one or two high or low points<br>• Place one idea per post-it and follow the color scheme<br>• Place high points near the mountain peak<br>• Place low points near the ocean<br><br>• Review and organize notes into categories and read them aloud<br>• Acknowledge groups or themes<br><br>• Our sprint can focus on making high points higher or low points not low points<br>• We will decide our focus next week<br>• Your next step is to think about one of these groups and learn more about it between now and then. | Review notes<br><br>Jot down a high and low point<br><br>Place post its on chart<br><br>Think about what they will focus on for the upcoming week |
| **Converge + Next Steps (15 min)** | • Review the objectives slide and clarify next steps<br>• Ask students to keep their eyes open for high and low points over the next week | |

# Lesson 3: Seeing the Big Picture!

| Objectives | Focus Skills |
|---|---|
| <br>• Start to understand the Facilitation Framework<br>• Identify your strengths and areas for growth on the Facilitation Framework<br>• Generate ideas for our sprint | <br>• Design Thinking Expertise<br>• Problem-Solving Ability |
| **Materials** | **Student Product or Performance** |
| • Deck<br>• Handout<br>• Would you rather (check-in prompts)<br>• Dots for voting on sprint ideas<br>• Pink and blue post-its<br>• Badge Handout | <br>• Self-assessment of Facilitation Framework<br>• Vote on sprint projects |
| **Class Set-Up** | **Class Flow** |
| • Music on<br>• Class flow chart posted in the room<br>• Sailboat Chart<br>• Ipads in classroom<br>• Tables set in circle | • Welcome, recap, and preview of sprint options<br>• Sailboat Workshop<br>• Seeing the Big Picture<br>  ○ The Facilitation Framework<br>  ○ Four Phases of the Design Sprint<br>• Closure + Next Steps |

| Big Idea | Facilitator Moves | Student Actions |
|---|---|---|
| **Welcome + Recap of Last week (5 min)** | Provide students with a "would you rather" slip as they walk into the room<br>Conduct your check in with the "would you rather" responses<br><br>Preview the class:<br>• Today we are going to understand the big ideas behind a design sprint. These ideas include the four phases of a design sprint and the facilitation framework which explains the skills needed to run a design sprint. The big picture includes the four phases of a sprint and the facilitation skills needed to move a team through the sprint.<br>• Focus skills today are Design Thinking Expertise and Problem-Solving Ability. | Share their answer to a would you rather question |
| **Seeing the Big Picture - Part 1 (25 min)** | The Facilitation Framework<br>General background on the framework (5 min)<br>Hand out note-taking document<br>Connect facilitation to the real-world (job prospects)<br>Preview the Facilitation Framework text directly calling out the four categories they have already experienced (Communication Skills, Problem-Solving Ability, Empathy and Emotional Intelligence, and Design Thinking Expertise)<br>Ask students to annotate the text using the school method (10 min)<br><br>Explain the survey and levels of confidence<br><br>Have students take the survey about how they feel using the ipads (10 min) | Annotate the Facilitation Framework<br><br>Self-assess their confidence on the Facilitation Framework |
| **Seeing the Big Picture - Part 2 (5 min)** | Four Phases of the Design Sprint (10 min)<br>Ask students to take notes while I talk through the 4 phases | Take a guess about each phase using the visuals, titles, and experiences from last |

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| | Ask - Looking at the visuals, what do you think these phases are about? (raise hands?)<br><br>Problem Identification<br>• What is it?<br>• Why is it important?<br>• What is a design question?<br>• Provide three bad How might we questions | week<br><br>Take notes on the design sprint phases<br><br>Thumbs up and thumbs down on various HMW (X3) |
| **Sailboat Workshop (30 min)**<br><br>NOTE: This workshop can be modified. If you do not want to focus on school improvements, develop prompts that help generate ideas that students can work on. Another example might be for students to share things they like about INSERT SPECIFIC SCHOOL EVENT (end-of-year cookout, report cards, etc).<br><br>Another modification could be to focus on high points and | This workshop helps us get clear on a problem to solve.<br><br>Explain the sailboat image<br>• Sail and above water is where we note things that move us forward, highpoints, or positives<br>• The anchor and below the water line are items that may hold us back, challenges, or things that might bring people down<br><br>Step 1: Identify high points or positives about their school (3 min to write and 10 min to share)<br>• Please think about what observed on the scavenger hunt and heard in your empathy interviews<br>• Identify high points and place one on each post-it<br>• Ask the students to stand up with their post-it and walk to a section of the room to have them quickly read them out<br>• Have each student read their post-its and place them near the sail<br>• Sort and arrange as they go if you want<br><br>Step 2: Identify challenges or things that cause struggle in the school (5 min to write)<br>• Head back to your desks and we are going to do the reverse.<br>• Think about what you observed during your scavenger hunt and what you heard during your interview<br>• Generate a list of things that caused you and your classmates to struggle | Write 2-3 high points or things that are working at the school<br><br>Share highpoints outloud and place on the sailboat |

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| thinking about how to add more of those throughout the school. | • Write down one item on each post it<br>• Make sure your handwriting is clear.<br>• I will set the timer again and we will not read these out loud...people will not know who wrote each item<br><br>Step 3: (5 min to read and vote)<br>• Ask students to come back up and place the post-its below the water line.<br>• After everyone has their post its up, quickly read aloud and organize the post-its so that like post-its are clustered together<br>• After they are generally organized, ask students to use voting dots to identify the ideas they are most excited about trying to solve<br>• Students could have about 5 dots and they can vote however they want (all on one or scattered)<br><br>Organize and preview<br>• After students vote, pull out the top few ideas<br>• Preview that these ideas will be considered for next week and that you need to consider if and how these focus areas can work for our sprint<br>• Celebrate their completion of their first full workshop | Identify challenges<br><br>Vote on challenges that they want to tackle |
| **Review objectives and reflect on sailboat workshop (10 min)** | • Review class flow chart and ask the group what was their high point of the class<br>• Ask the group to reflect on the sailboat workshop and to think about where else could they use this workshop or something similar<br>• Clarify next step of them continuing to understand the emotions of their peers and to chat with two people about the areas the group voted on | Share thoughts on where this workshop could be used |

# Unit 2: Solution Generation

Unit 2 is where you and your students will truly dig into the sprint. This unit is crucial for fostering a deep understanding of design thinking and facilitating meaningful progress in your project. Here are the key elements and considerations for making this unit effective.

**Prepare for a Deep Dive in Lesson 4:** Lesson 4 requires careful preparation and planning. Consider adding 30 minutes to this session to allow for a more thorough exploration of ideas. If you are unable to extend this class significantly, please split the class into two sessions. There are four critical points to keep in mind for this lesson. They include:

- **Clear Design Question:** Enter the session with a well-defined design question that aligns with the class's energy and fits within the course's scope. This question should be relevant and motivating for students, setting the stage for productive brainstorming and ideation.
- **Align with School Community:** Consider how the design sprint will integrate with the larger school community. This might involve meeting with a supervisor or peers to discuss potential directions and ensure the project is feasible within your program's parameters.
- **Realistic Scope:** While encouraging creativity, ensure the project remains realistic and achievable. This balance will help maintain student engagement and prevent frustration.
- **Strong Facilitation:** These classes are tightly timed and require strong teacher facilitation. Provide clear guidance and feedback to keep students focused and on track.

**Plant Seeds for Testing:** As you progress through Unit 2, start planting seeds about the importance of testing and iteration. Begin planning how you will support your students in setting up successful testing environments. Keep in mind these considerations for testing:

- **Support and Ownership:** Decide how much support you will provide and where you will intentionally step back to ensure students maintain ownership of their learning. Striking this balance is crucial in fostering independence and critical thinking.
- **Planning for Testing:** Consider logistical aspects, such as resources and time, to ensure your students can effectively test their ideas.

**Create Engaging Moments:** Enhancing the learning environment with small, thoughtful touches can make a significant impact. Suggestions include:

- **Snacks, Space, and Music:** Simple additions like snacks, a comfortable space, and background music can make sessions more enjoyable and engaging.
- **Badge Ceremonies:** Aim to have one or two badge ceremonies to recognize student achievements and build morale during this unit.

**Encourage Student Leadership**: Identify a few students who can take on leadership roles to foster a sense of ownership and community. Leadership opportunities may include:

- **Class Kick-Offs:** Have students lead the check-in circle. This practice encourages students to take ownership of the experience while also helping students internalize facilitation practices.
- **Facilitation Roles:** Small moments of student facilitation, such as asking peers about their takeaways, deepen community engagement and enhance the sprint's collaborative vibe.

By focusing on these elements, Unit 2 will drive the project forward and cultivate an environment where students can develop essential skills in design thinking and collaboration.

# Lesson 4: Idea Generation

| Objectives | Focus Skills |
| --- | --- |
| <br>• Establish a one year vision<br>• Generate and prioritize solutions<br>• Develop storyboards to communicate and pressure test solutions | <br>• Problem Solving |
| **Materials** | **Student Product or Performance** |
| • Deck<br>• Dots for voting<br>• 30 Circles templates<br>• Post-its | <br>• Effort + Impact Grids |
| **Class Set-Up** | **Class Flow** |
| • Red carpet for badge ceremony<br>• A few Effort + Impact chart stations around the room (2-3 students per chart) | • Welcome<br>• Badges!<br>• Warm-Up - Celebration Planning<br>• Our Design Question<br>• One Year Goal + Guiding Questions<br>• Warm-Up - 30 Circles<br>• Ideation<br>• Closure + Next Steps |

| Big Idea | Facilitator Moves | Student Actions |
|---|---|---|
| **Welcome + Badges (10 min)** | • Conduct a quick badge ceremony by announcing badges from the last couple of weeks<br>• Conduct check-in<br>• Set some emotional and collaborative expectations while walking through the flow of the class (chart):<br>  ○ Today is fast paced...here is where it feels like a sprint<br>  ○ Moving through a few workshops and warm-ups<br>  ○ May feel like we are going in a few different directions and that is ok...try and trust the process and have fun!<br>• Share design question | Celebrate badge winners<br><br>Participate in check-in |
| **Warm-Up: Yes and... (10 min)**<br><br>Additional info about this warm-up. Consider a different scenario that might connect better with your class. This might also work better with your team as a fishbowl exercise. | • Warm up helps us get ready to collaborate and listen carefully to our partner's ideas in order to build on them and then to think critically about the ideas<br>• Scenario for the exercise is planning a celebration for INSERT NAME getting hired as a facilitator for a design sprint at INSERT COMPANY. Let's plan their party! No limits to this idea...dream big and grand<br>• The first part of the exercise is for you to pay attention to what your partner is saying and to build on their idea by saying "Yes and..."<br>• The second part of the exercise is to flip to a "Yes but..."<br>• Partners will alternate and one partner will always respond with a "Yes but..."<br>• After the quick warm-up share the take-away of how this relates to our next conversation<br>• In our exercises today we will be looking at things in a way that will be grand and beyond what we think is possible and other times where we need to reign it in and think about boundaries and what is truly possible | Work in pairs to complete the "yes and"<br><br>Work in pairs to complete the "yes but"<br><br>Share what felt different |
| **Creating a Goal (20 min)** | • Critical step in a design sprint that helps our team imagine what is possible and what we are aiming for<br>• We will come back to this every week<br>• Follow the directions on the slide and ask each person to develop their vision of | Write responses to the prompt "In 1 year..."<br><br>Vote on goal options |

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| | the goal<br>• Have students place their ideas on a poster and read them aloud<br>• Provide students with 3 dots to vote for their favorite or most aligned option<br>• Pull out the top options and identify or modify to make the goal that feels right | |
| **Creating Guiding Questions (20 min)** | • Goal is to think of obstacles that we need to tackle along the way<br>• Looking to identify the three biggest challenges we might face and keep those front and center<br>• Follow directions on the slide and allow students to vote<br>• Pull out top options and modify where needed | Create 3-4 questions that start with "Can we..."<br><br>Vote on guiding questions that seem most critical to the project |
| **OPTION TO DIVIDE THIS CLASS INTO TWO SECTIONS** | Stop and reframe the project:<br>• We now have our design question<br>• A vision or goal of what this can look like in one year<br>• Three guiding questions that will help us move past the three biggest challenges in our way! | If you choose to break the class into two sessions, stop here and use this as a moment to converge. |
| **Warm-Up: 30 circles (10 min)**<br><br>Additional info about this warm-up. | • Group students for the ideation segment of the class<br><br>• Warm up to get creative<br>• Get your brain, pen, and ideas moving<br>• Turn as many of the blank circles as possible into recognizable objects in three minutes (think sun, pool balls, etc.)<br>• Provide students with two minutes on the timer<br>• Now pass your circles to the person to your right.<br>• In 1 min: What do you notice? How did they approach this differently than you? The same as you?<br>• Ask for two students to share out. | Draw<br><br>Share what they noticed in partner's work |
| **Brainstorm (10 min)** | • Generate as many responses to our design question in five minutes<br>• Move quickly and push for volume | Create 20-25 ideas with one idea on each post-it |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | • One idea on each post-it<br>• When you see people stalling out prompt them to think about the craziest idea they can imagine or to think about how NASA or google or insert other organization that would resonate with them | |
| **Plot Your Ideas (20 min)**<br><br>Additional info about this type of exercise | • Not every idea is going to be tested<br>• Our next step is to find the ideas that will have a big impact and can get done<br>• This can be hard to figure out so we are doing this in teams<br>• Take your ideas and start adding them to your team chart by asking<br>• Will this idea get us closer to our goal?<br>• The answer to that question will help you place the post it on the Y axis (impact)<br>• How difficult or complicated will it be to make this idea happen?<br>• The answer to that question will help you place the post it on the X axis (effort) | Plot post-its on chart paper<br><br>Discuss the two questions when and if they get stuck |
| **Crazy 8s (15 min)**<br><br>Additional info about this type of exercise. | • Select an idea that you and your team feel is a quick win<br>• We are going to take that idea and make 8 versions of it<br>• Use slide to clarify and have an example ready to share<br>• Partners share by passing papers<br>• Have students vote on ideas that seem interesting<br>• If time allows, have students select a second idea to create 8 versions | Select an idea<br><br>Create 8 versions of the idea |
| **Closure (5 min)** | • We took a huge step today by creating an enormous bank of ideas for our sprint<br>• Next class we will come back to these ideas to select one that we will start building out<br>• Don't worry that we do not have one specific idea picked yet<br>• Purpose of today was to really get thinking about solutions and coming up with a lot of options<br>• Ask - What stood out about today? | Reflect on what stood out<br><br>Nominate peers for badges |

# Lesson 5: Ideas from Elsewhere

| Objectives: | Focus Skills |
|---|---|
| <br>• Connect our design sprint work with the world outside of 360<br>• Identify and present inspiration from elsewhere | <br>• Problem-Solving Ability<br>• Time Management<br>• Team Leadership |
| **Materials** | **Student Product or Performance** |
| • Deck<br>• Flow of the class chart<br>• Student Handout<br>• Badge Overview for students | <br>*Present one point of inspiration*<br>• *Take meaningful notes of other inspiration* |
| **Class Set-Up** | **Class Flow** |
| • Small groups set up with space for laptops<br>• Prepare projection for student presentations | • Welcome, Check-In, and Badge Reminder<br>• Looking Elsewhere<br>  ○ Connecting our process with the skateboard challenge<br>  ○ Researching for inspiration<br>  ○ Lightning Demos<br>• Wrap-Up + Next Steps |

| Big Idea | Facilitator Moves | Student Actions |
|---|---|---|
| **Warm Welcome (15 min)** | • Check-in circle - *If you had to create a new Halloween candy, what flavors would it have, and what would you call it?*<br>• Preview the class using the flowchart and slide<br>• Identify the focus skills for today.<br>• Revisit the Badge Overview Doc and review the descriptions for the three aligned to today's lesson<br>• Remind students that at the end of the class we will take time to think if there are any classmates to nominate for these badges | Grab folders as they enter<br><br>Respond Check-in question |
| **Lightning Demos (45 min)** | • Preview the lightning demo process and share Daybreaker example (5 min)<br>• Conduct online research (15 min)<br>• Build out their one-page presentation (3 min)<br>• Present (3 min/ group) (20 min total w/ transitions)<br>• Note-take on the presentation<br><br>Consider using AI for this research. Prompts that could help students might be: How are 10 companies solving INSERT CHALLENGE? What five industries struggle with INSERT CHALLENGE? | Research the idea<br><br>Create their chart<br><br>Present what they learned<br><br>Take notes on the other presentations |
| **Converge and Next Steps (10 min)** | Review the agenda chart from today to prime students to respond to the three reflection questions<br>Ask students,<br>-What stood out today?<br>-What are you leaving here thinking about?<br>-Where can you use what we did today outside of this classroom? | Identify high points from the class |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Return to the badge nominations<br>Provide students with a few moments to write any nominations and submit them to you | |

# Lesson 6: 3-Step Idea

| Objectives | Focus Skills |
|---|---|
| <br>• Identify one idea to build out<br>• Develop the idea into three steps | <br>• Communication Skills<br>• Problem-Solving Ability<br>• Time Management<br>• Team Leadership |
| **Materials** | **Student Product or Performance** |
| • Deck<br>• Speed Friending Prompts<br>• Student Handout: 3-Step Concept | <br>• 3-Step Idea Charts |
| **Class Set-Up** | **Class Flow** |
| • Seven stations labeled around the room for speed connecting<br>• Half circle in the back of the room facing the window (for check-in)<br>• A few groups of tables to make 6 or 7 groups around the room | • Welcome, Speed Connecting Check-In, and Badge Reminder<br>• Getting Grounded: Where are we and what are we trying to do?<br>• Three Step Concept<br>  ○ Pop Up Dance Boost Example<br>  ○ Group Projects<br>• Wrap-Up + Next Steps |

| Big Idea | Facilitator Moves | Student Actions |
|---|---|---|
| **Warm Welcome (15 min)** | • Check-in circle - Speed connecting across 7 stations<br><br>• Preview the class using the flowchart and slide<br>• Identify the focus skills for today.<br>• Revisit the Badge Overview Doc and review the descriptions for the three aligned to today's lesson<br>• Remind students that at the end of the class we will take time to think if there are any classmates to nominate for these badges | Grab folders as they enter |
| **Getting Grounded: Where are we and what are we trying to do? (10 min)** | • Identify where we are in our sprint - Solution Generation<br>• Reiterate what we are trying to do - Build some ideas that solve our design question.<br>• We are going to be testing these ideas in the next 3 or 4 weeks<br>• After we test we will update our ideas and try to leave our legacy at 360<br>• ***Need to get moving today - commit to an idea and start making it real***<br><br>• Our design sprint is very focused<br>• These are the things that we are aiming for...<br>• REVIEW THE SLIDE and ASK STUDENTS TO HELP BRING TO LIFE THE IDEAS | Review the handout with the question, vision and guiding question. |
| **3 Step Concept (45 min)** | • The 3 Step Concept is a way to communicate your idea<br>• It is a visual display of your concept that has a few key components<br>• Needs to stand on its own and not with a verbal explanation<br>• Title, three visuals that show a beginning, middle, and end, short descriptions of each visual<br><br>• Walk through handout and considerations using the Daybreaker example | Develop an idea into a three step concept in a group |
| **Positive Closure (10 min)** | • Review the agenda chart from today to prime students to respond to the three reflection questions | Identify high points from the class |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | • Ask students,<br>  ○ What stood out today?<br>  ○ What are you leaving here thinking about?<br>  ○ Where can you use what we did today outside of this classroom?<br><br>• Return to the badge nominations<br>• Provide students with a few moments to write any nominations and submit them to you | Nominate peers for specific badges |

# Lesson 7: Iterate. Build.

| Objectives | Focus Skills |
| --- | --- |
| <br>• Incorporate feedback to improve your concept<br>• Begin to develop a testable experience | <br>• Communication Skills<br>• Time Management<br>• Team Leadership<br>• Problem-Solving Ability |
| **Materials** | **Student Product or Performance** |
| • Deck<br>• Feedback Handouts - Example: Safe But Private | <br>• Group Storyboards<br>• Completion of handout with questions for their project |
| **Class Set-Up:** | **Class Flow** |
| • Standing space near the front of the room for our check-in circle<br>• Four group stations set up around the room<br>• Each group will have markers, their feedback sheets, chart paper, and the appropriate number of voting dots for the museum | • Welcome, Check-In Circle, and Badge Reminder<br>• Skatepark Video<br>• Team Huddle<br>• 6 Step Storyboard<br>• Art Museum Heatmap<br>• Wrap-Up, Badges, + Exit Ticket |

| Big Idea | Facilitator Moves | Student Actions |
|---|---|---|
| **Warm Welcome (15 min)** | • Check-in circle - What motivates you to work hard? (5 min)<br>• Preview the class using the flowchart and slide *(5 min)*<br>• Identify the focus skills, objectives, and available badges for today. | Grab folders as they enter<br>Respond to the check-in prompt |
| **Getting Grounded: Real-Life Example (10 min)** | • Watch the skateboard video with two questions in mind<br>  ○ *What connections can you make with what we are doing and this video?*<br>  ○ *What does this make you wonder about our process?* | Identify connections and wonderings based no the video |
| **Team Huddle (10 min)** | • Feedback makes us iterate<br>• Getting signals and comments from people helps us make things better<br>• Sometimes these are called design constraints<br>• This is an example of some basic feedback on art<br>• You all have some feedback and questions on your concepts<br>• Today we are going to take that feedback and use it to iterate or make the next version of your concept<br><br>• Today you all have one yellow handout. You are responsible for this as your exit ticket today. This helps guide you through what is expected today. Please respond to the prompts as we go.<br><br>• In a minute you will go to your groups and review the feedback<br>• After you read it to yourself, talk with your teammates about the questions and identify 2-3 things you want to change in the next version<br>• When you are done, please signal that you have landed your decisions | Review feedback<br>Discuss questions<br>Decide on 2-3 things that they want to change |
| **3 to 6 Steps (15 min)** | • Reminder - *Not making a new idea but getting more clear on the one you have*<br>• Walk through the steps on the handout and the example.<br>• Starting with a verb is very helpful | Respond to the 6 step prompts by creating post-it headers |
| **Storyboard** | • A Storyboard tells the story of your idea and how a user or a student would | Work with their teammates to |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Development (20 min)** | experience your concept.<br>• Similar to the 3 step concept but includes all the layers you identified in the 6 steps<br>• Build this out using your written steps. You can also take apart your three step concept to make this. A few of the visuals may be the same. | build out their storyboards |
| **Art Museum Heatmap (5 min)** | • We did this last week but I was not clear in my directions<br>• To make a heatmap you have to show what you actually like<br>• Our visuals last week did not help because no one could tell what you were 'liking'<br>• This week let's use one dot per storyboard. Place the dot near the image or description that you like. | Indicate areas that they like on the other storyboards |
| **Positive Closure (10 min)** | • Review the agenda chart to prime students to respond to reflection questions:<br>• Discussion - What was a high point from today? Why?<br>• Written Exit Question - What worked well? What did not work well?<br>• Complete a badge nomination form | Identify high points from the class<br>Nominate peers for badges<br>Write down responses to the exit questions |

# Lesson 8: Prototype Development + Testing Prep

| Objectives | Focus Skills |
|---|---|
| <br>• Incorporate feedback to improve your concept<br>• Begin to develop a testable experience | <br>• Communication Skills<br>• Time Management<br>• Team Leadership<br>• Problem-Solving Ability |
| **Materials** | **Student Product or Performance** |
| • Deck<br>• Badge Nomination Forms<br>• Concept Testing Proposal | <br>• Concept Testing Proposal |
| **Class Set-Up** | **Class Flow** |
| • Group space with all necessary materials available | • Welcome, Check-In Circle, and Badge Reminder (10 min)<br>• What is testing?<br>• Team Time<br>  ○ Feedback<br>  ○ Testing Plan<br>  ○ Logistics Guide<br>• Wrap-Up, Badges, + Exit Ticket (10 min) |

| Big Idea | Facilitator Moves | Student Actions |
|---|---|---|
| **Warm Welcome (15 min)** | • Check-in circle -What food brings you warmth and happiness?<br>• Preview the class using the flowchart and slide<br>• Identify the focus skills, objectives, and available badges for today. | Grab folders as they enter<br>Respond to the check-in prompt |
| **What is testing? (10 min)** | • Testing is not a pass fail thing...it is basically just learning<br>• This class is a test and I am learning what is working for you each week<br>• I observe, I ask, I listen, and then I make adjustments<br>• Today you are writing up and envisioning what your test will look like | Connect our class with a testing experience |
| **Team Work Session (50 min)** | • In groups, review written feedback and find a way to incorporate that idea into their storyboard<br>• Discuss and complete the Concept Testing Proposal<br>• Check in with instructor to make sure a general plan makes sense for testing | Review feedback<br>Discuss questions<br>Complete testing proposal (logistics guide and testing info)<br>Hang storyboard in the hallway |
| **Positive Closure (10 min)** | • Review the agenda chart to prime students to respond to reflection questions:<br>• Discussion - What was a high point from today? Why?<br>• Written Exit Question - What worked well? What did not work well?<br>• Complete a badge nomination form<br>• Next step -Think through your testing proposal to identify any items you may need to fine tune | Identify high points from the class<br>Nominate peers for badges<br>Write down responses to the exit questions |

# Unit 3: Testing and Iteration

Unit 3 moves quickly. Students are fully immersed in their projects, and your role is to ensure that testing is conducted thoughtfully and effectively. This unit is an excellent opportunity to refine both design thinking and analytical skills. Here's how to make Unit 3 effective:

**Ensure Realistic Testing:**

- Set up testing scenarios that are feasible and meaningful.
- Strike a balance between guiding students and letting them learn through observation and trial.

**Learn from Pilots:**

- Share insights from the pilot program, such as logistical challenges. For example, some students enjoyed a sunrise event but found the timing inconvenient for others. Use these lessons to improve the experience.

**Focus on Effective Facilitation:**

- Employ facilitation strategies and create "Moments that Matter" to enhance the learning experience.
- The end of the course is crucial, so find ways to ensure all students see their own success and that of their peers.

**Celebrate and Reflect:**

- Recognize that not every student will excel in the same way, but aim for each to gain a sense of accomplishment.
- Help students understand the rhythm of the project and see how their efforts can lead to real-world changes.

By following these guidelines, you'll help students experience the full potential of design thinking and leave the course with valuable insights and skills.

# Lesson 9: Testing Finalization

| Objectives | Focus Skills |
| --- | --- |
| <br>• Incorporate feedback to improve your concept<br>• Begin to develop a testable experience | <br>• Time Management<br>• Team Leadership |
| **Materials** | **Student Product or Performance** |
| • Badge Nomination Forms<br>• Advertisement Task | <br>• Testing Materials<br>• Student Design Sprint Advertisement |
| **Class Set-Up** | **Class Flow** |
| • Design Sprint Advertisement<br>• Data Chart<br>• List of conference order to meet with each group | • Welcome, Check-In Circle, and Badge Reminder<br>• Badge Ceremony<br>• Testing Preview + Data Collection<br>• Team Time<br>• Wrap-Up, Badges, + Exit Ticket |

| Big Idea | Facilitator Moves | Student Actions |
|---|---|---|
| **Warm Welcome (10 min)** | • Check-in circle: (5 min)<br>• Preview the class using the flowchart and slide *(5 min)*<br>• Identify the focus skills, objectives, and available badges for today. | Grab folders as they enter<br>Respond to the check-in prompt |
| **Badge Ceremony (15 min)** | • Celebrate students for their hard work and efforts | Celebrate peers and receive badges |
| **Testing Finalization (50 min)** | • Big goal is getting everything ready for our testing next week<br>  ○ What is observational testing data?<br>  ○ What is direct feedback? | Discuss testing plan through teacher / group conferences<br><br>Utilize project feedback to move project closer to test-ready status |
| **Positive Closure (10 min)** | • Review the agenda chart to prime students to respond to reflection questions:<br>• Discussion - What was a high point from today? Why?<br>• Written Exit Questions on slide<br>• Complete a badge nomination form | Identify high points from the class<br>Nominate peers for badges<br>Write down responses to the exit questions |

# Lesson 10: Testing Review + Iteration

| Objectives | Focus Skills: |
|---|---|
| <br>• Incorporate feedback to improve your concept<br>• Begin to develop a testable experience | <br>• Time Management<br>• Team Leadership |
| **Materials** | **Student Product or Performance** |
| • Advertisement Task<br>• Testing Final Assignment<br>• Link to End-of-Course Assessment | <br>• Testing Materials<br>• Student Design Sprint Advertisement |
| **Class Set-Up** | **Class Flow** |
| Design Sprint Advertisement<br>Data Chart | • Welcome<br>• Senior Flex (Test)<br>• Course Team Final (and Sprint Advertisement)<br>• Survey, Wrap-Up, Badges, + Exit Ticket |

| Big Idea | Facilitator Moves | Student Actions |
|---|---|---|
| **Warm Welcome (5 min)** | • Welcome students and celebrate testing process<br>• Preview the class using the flowchart and slide *(5 min)*<br>• Transition to testing experience | FInd seats<br><br>NOTE - Check in for this class was part of the student test. |
| **Student Test (20 min)** | • One team runs their test during the first part of the class | Students participate in testing experience |
| **Testing Data + Reflection (45 min)** | • Provide overview of final assignment<br>• *Offer students that are done early the option of creating the Student Advertisement. | Students use the final assignment rubric to create their presentations |
| **End of Course Survey + Positive Closure (15 min)** | • Re-orient students to the Facilitation Framework Self-Assessment and scale<br>• Remind them to be honest about how they feel about these skills<br>• Encourage students to provide feedback on how this course could be better<br>• Provide time for them to complete the google form | Students complete the end of course self-assessment |

# Lesson 11: Presentations + Celebration

| Objectives | Focus Skills |
|---|---|
| <br>• Share learnings from concept testing<br>• Demonstrate gratitude to and for classmates | <br>• All of them! It's the final class! |
| **Materials** | **Student Product or Performance** |
| • Create your own slides and use the student project slides<br>• Testing Final Assignment Grading Sheet<br>• Ponchos (one piece of chart paper for each student and one for you with a hole cut in the center so that the paper can be worn as a poncho) | <br>• Group presentations for their concept testing |
| **Class Set-Up** | **Class Flow** |
| Consider bringing back as many artifacts as you can from the course. Artifacts might include printed photos from the marshmallow challenge, the first badge ceremony, and any other high points that will help you make the closure of this experience a memorable high point. | • Warm Welcome<br>• Final Badge Ceremony<br>• Test Presentations + Feedback<br>• Ponchos!<br>• Closure |

| Big Idea | Facilitator Moves | Student Actions |
|---|---|---|
| **Warm Welcome (5 min)** | • Welcome students and conduct a final check-in<br>• Preview the class using the flowchart and slide | Respond to the check in question |
| **Final Badge Ceremony (10 min)** | • Present badges to students*<br>• *Consider prepping one or two students to lead this ceremony. | Celebrate peers and receive badges |
| **Presentation of Tests (35 min)** | • Each group shares their concept test and their final presentation<br>• Use the Testing Final Assignment Grading Sheet to guide the class with their feedback and complete this as students share their presentations | Teams listen and share one thing they appreciated and one thing they think the team should consider moving forward |
| **Gratitude Poncho (30 min)** | • Students get in a line and write something on the back of the person in front of them that they appreciated about them during this class<br>• Have students rotate and move around so that everyone can write something positive on each classmate<br>• Decorate the front with what you want (if time allows)<br>• Class picture in your gratitude poncho | Express gratitude to one another in writing<br><br>Stop and read all the positive things others see in them |
| **Positive Closure (5 min)** | Wrap up | |

# Appendix B1: Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

1. Core Philosophy and Educational Framework

Vision:
Taino CoLAB Waterbury is dedicated to creating an educational environment that values and respects the cultural backgrounds of all students. The culturally relevant and responsive curriculum and pedagogy aim to enhance cultural awareness, promote inclusivity, and prepare students to be empathetic and informed global citizens.

Objectives:
- Integrate students' cultural references into all aspects of learning.
- Develop a curriculum that reflects and celebrates the diversity of the student body and broader community.
- Foster an inclusive learning environment that respects and values cultural differences.
- Encourage critical thinking and the ability to challenge social inequities.
- Prepare students for meaningful participation in a diverse, globalized society.

2. Curriculum Design and Content

Inclusive Content:
- Diverse Literature and Resources: Select literature, historical texts, and multimedia resources that represent a wide range of cultures and perspectives.
- Multicultural Perspectives: Incorporate contributions from various cultures in all subject areas, including STEM, humanities, and the arts.
- Local and Global Contexts: Include content that connects students' local cultural contexts to global issues and perspectives.

Cultural Contexts in Lessons:
- Relevant Examples: Use culturally relevant examples and scenarios in teaching academic concepts.
- Integration of Cultural Backgrounds: Incorporate students' cultural backgrounds and experiences into lesson plans and classroom discussions.
- Bilingual Resources: Support bilingual education and include students' native languages in the curriculum when possible.

Language and Communication:
- Culturally Responsive Communication: Employ communication strategies that build strong relationships with students and their families.
- Language Support: Provide resources and support for English Language Learners (ELLs) to ensure their full participation in the curriculum.

3. Pedagogical Strategies

Student-Centered Learning:
- Cultural Capital: Recognize and build on students' cultural knowledge and experiences in the classroom.
- Student Voice: Encourage students to share their cultural backgrounds and experiences as part of classroom activities and projects.

Critical Pedagogy:

- Questioning Biases: Implement teaching practices that encourage students to question and challenge cultural biases and stereotypes.
- Problem-Based Learning: Use problem-based and project-based learning to address real-world issues that are relevant to students' lives and communities.

Collaborative Learning:
- Group Projects: Foster a collaborative learning environment where students from diverse backgrounds work together and learn from each other.
- Peer Learning: Utilize group projects and peer learning to promote cultural exchange and understanding.

Reflective Practice:
- Teacher Reflection: Encourage teachers to engage in reflective practice to examine their own cultural biases and teaching methods.
- Professional Learning Communities: Create Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) where teachers can share best practices and support each other in culturally responsive teaching.

4. Professional Development and Teacher Support

Ongoing Training:
- Cultural Competence: Provide professional development on culturally relevant and responsive teaching practices.
- Inclusive Pedagogy: Offer workshops and training sessions on cultural competence, anti-bias education, and inclusive pedagogy.
- Reflective Practice: Encourage teachers to engage in ongoing reflective practice to examine and improve their own cultural competence and teaching methods.

5. Family and Community Engagement

Partnerships with Families:
- Family Involvement: Build strong partnerships with families to understand students' cultural contexts and support their learning.
- Cultural Events: Organize cultural events and activities that involve families and celebrate the diversity of the school community.

Community Resources:
- Community Engagement: Leverage community resources and partnerships to bring diverse cultural perspectives into the classroom.
- Guest Speakers: Invite community leaders and cultural experts to share their knowledge and experiences with students.

6. Curriculum Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

Feedback and Assessment:
- Regular Evaluation: Regularly assess the curriculum for cultural relevance and responsiveness through student feedback, teacher observations, and academic outcomes.
- Continuous Improvement: Use data and feedback to make continuous improvements to the curriculum and teaching practices.

Inclusive Curriculum Committee:

Diverse Stakeholders: Establish a curriculum committee that includes diverse stakeholders, including students, parents, teachers, and community members, to review and guide curriculum development.

7. Examples of Culturally Relevant and Responsive Curriculum and Pedagogy

Literature and History:

- Diverse Authors: Include books and texts by authors from diverse cultural backgrounds.
- Multiple Perspectives: Study historical events from multiple perspectives, including those of marginalized groups.

STEM Integration:

- Global Contributions: Highlight scientific contributions from diverse cultures and regions.
- Culturally Relevant Problems: Incorporate culturally relevant problems and scenarios in math and science lessons.

Arts and Media:

- Cultural Art Forms: Explore diverse artistic traditions and media representations from different cultures.
- Student Projects: Encourage students to create art and media projects that reflect their cultural identities and experiences.

Critical Thinking and Social Justice:

- Social Inequities: Engage students in critical thinking about social inequities and how they can be challenged and addressed.
- Community Projects: Involve students in community projects that address local issues and promote social justice.

# Appendix B2: CoLAB Pathways Overview

**Electives and Pathway Coursework**

Taino CoLAB will offer a comprehensive selection of electives across five distinct pathways: Media and Communication Arts, Business and Entrepreneurship, AI, Machine Learning, and Robotics, Biotech and Health Sciences, and Social Impact and Global Challenges. These pathways are designed to provide students with a robust and engaging learning experience that prepares them for both college and career success.

**Early College Credit and University Partnerships**

In partnership with Arizona State University (ASU), Taino CoLAB students will have unparalleled opportunities to earn college credits while still in high school. Starting from the 9th grade, students can enroll in ASU's accredited college courses, earning credits that count towards both their high school graduation and future college education. By graduation, students can achieve an associate degree or industry-recognized credentials, significantly reducing the financial burden and time commitment required for further higher education.

**Blended Learning Management System for College Courses**

Our early college program utilizes a blended learning approach for ASU courses, combining synchronous (session-based) and asynchronous (on-demand) instruction. This ensures that students can experience the rigor of traditional college courses while benefiting from the flexibility of self-paced learning. The virtual learning management system provides interactive content, real-time feedback, and personalized learning pathways, allowing students to progress outside the traditional school day.

**Educator-Designed Courses**

Each educator at Taino CoLAB will design and oversee at least two elective courses, leveraging their expertise to provide innovative and relevant content. Examples include "Introduction to Artificial Intelligence," "Multimedia Advocacy & Design Thinking," and "Bioethics & Climate Change." Educators serve as content experts, ensuring high engagement and academic achievement.

**Pathway Electives and Industry Alignment**

Our pathway electives are developed in collaboration with industry leaders and academic partners, ensuring they meet current industry standards and competencies. Students will have the opportunity to earn skill credentials in areas such as Project Management, Google IT, AWS Cloud Computing, and Applied Business Data Analytics, enhancing their employability and preparing them for high-demand careers.

**Skill Credentialing and Field-Based Projects**

Taino CoLAB will seek additional partnerships outside of ASU for early college access and skill credentialing, focusing on local and regional partnerships across Connecticut. By investing in the communities we serve, we aim to align workforce development initiatives that fit our pathways. Our extensive network of supporters will play a crucial role in establishing these partnerships, ensuring that our students have access to a broad range of opportunities for real-world experience and professional growth. These partnerships will support

Mastery-Based Performance Assessments, enabling students to apply their knowledge and skills in real-world contexts, leveraging nationally respected, standards-aligned resources to maintain high rigor and quality.

**Advisory Team and Support Network**

ASU is an integral part of our advisory team, ensuring Taino CoLAB remains responsive to evolving industry needs and educational best practices. As part of the ASU Prep and Innovation Alliance Network, Taino CoLAB benefits from access to a larger community of practice, extensive resources, and collaborative opportunities. This network supports our mission by connecting us with other innovative schools and college partners dedicated to preparing high school students for college and career opportunities in high-demand and emerging fields.

**Pathway Course Offerings**

Taino CoLAB pathways are designed to be flexible, allowing students to choose electives and extension activities aligned with their interests and career aspirations. Inquiry-based practices underpin all pathways, aligning with the NGSS to ensure high academic standards and student engagement.

Sample: **Core Outcomes of Pathways**

| Pathway | Core Content Alignment Area | Core Outcomes of Program |
|---|---|---|
| **Media and Communication Arts** | Interdisciplinary | ● Generate and develop artistic ideas and work.<br>● Integrate aesthetic principles to form original solutions.<br>● Refine and complete artistic work, expressing compelling stories or ideas.<br>● Develop media projects with a clear purpose and audience in mind.<br>● Utilize technology and multimedia tools for creative expression and content creation for various industries. |
| **Business and Entrepreneurship** | Mathematics | ● Apply mathematical concepts in business scenarios.<br>● Develop business plans and strategies.<br>● Analyze financial data and projections.<br>● Understand principles of project management and business operations.<br>● Innovate and create sustainable business models. |
| **AI, Machine Learning, and Robotics** | Mathematics, Science and Engineering | ● Use programming and modern computer tools.<br>● Design and conduct experiments, analyze results.<br>● Solve complex problems and integrate interdisciplinary knowledge.<br>● Develop AI solutions and applications.<br>● Understand ethical implications of AI and computer science.<br>● Apply principles of machine learning and robotics in practical scenarios. |
| **Biotech and Health Sciences** | Science and Mathematics | ● Maintain safe and productive biotech environments.<br>● Perform scientific measurements and tests.<br>● Apply scientific principles to health and wellness.<br>● Conduct research and develop biotechnological solutions.<br>● Understand core concepts and career fields in biotechnology. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Social Impact and Global Challenges** | Social Studies, English Language Arts and Science | ● Analyze social, political, and economic systems.<br>● Engage in civic activities and advocacy.<br>● Lead community-based projects and initiatives.<br>● Develop and implement public health and environmental initiatives.<br>● Understand principles of social justice and apply them in real-world contexts.<br>● Address global challenges and promote sustainable solutions. |

**Sample Pathways Overview: Social Impact and Global Challenges**

The "Social Impact and Global Challenges" pathway at Taino CoLAB provides students with a robust and engaging curriculum designed to address pressing societal and environmental issues. This pathway equips students with the knowledge and skills necessary to become active and informed citizens who can effect positive change in their communities and beyond. Below is a sample of what this pathway could look like:

| Grade Level | Core Course Offerings | Electives | Extension Activities | Credential Opportunities |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **9th Grade** | Introduction to Social Sciences<br><br>Foundations of Environmental Science | Civic Engagement 101<br><br>Global Issues Seminar | Community service projects<br><br>Environmental field studies | Beginner's Badge in Civic Engagement<br><br>Certificate in Basic Environmental Stewardship |
| **10th Grade** | Social Justice and Policy<br><br>Intro to Public Health | Environmental Advocacy<br><br>Human Rights and Ethics | Participation in local advocacy campaigns<br><br>Health and wellness community projects | Intermediate Badge in Advocacy<br><br>Certificate in Public Health Fundamentals |
| **11th Grade** | Comparative Government<br><br>Environmental Science II | Advanced Civic Engagement<br><br>Global Environmental Policies | Internships with local NGOs<br><br>Research projects on global issues | Advanced Badge in Civic Leadership<br><br>Certificate in Environmental Policy |
| **12th Grade** | Capstone Project in Social Impact<br><br>Advanced Public Health | Sustainable Development<br><br>Advanced Human Rights Studies | Capstone project presentation<br><br>Leadership roles in community initiatives | Mastery Badge in Global Impact<br><br>Certificate in Sustainable Development Practices |

To further enrich the "Social Impact and Global Challenges" pathway, students will have access to a range of ASU Universal Learner Courses available year-round. These courses will deepen student learning and provide college credit, enhancing their readiness for post-secondary education. Examples of ASU courses aligned with this pathway include:

- Global History to 1500 (HST 100 SB)
- Global History since 1500 (HST 101 SB)
- Introduction to Public Health (HCR 230 OD)
- Introduction to Sociology (SOC 101 OD)
- Introduction to Sustainability (SOS 100 SB)
- Public Service and American Democracy (PAF 112 SB)
- Introduction to Social Transformation (SST 220 SB)

**Integrating the C3 Framework**

The "Social Impact and Global Challenges" pathway aligns with the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards, which enhances the rigor of K-12 civics, economics, geography, and history. The C3 Framework's Inquiry Arc focuses on developing questions and planning inquiries, applying disciplinary concepts and tools, evaluating sources and using evidence, and communicating conclusions and taking informed action. These components are embedded in our pathway, ensuring that students develop the skills needed for effective civic participation.

ASU offers over 200 college courses that will be accessible to CoLAB students for enrichment and college credit completion during their time at CoLAB. Below is a sample of some of the courses that CoLAB will focus on within pathways. This list is not comprehensive, yet provides an overview of some of the synchronous and asynchronous courses available for credit:

**Media and Communication Arts**

- **COM 100**: Introduction to Human Communication (Synchronous)
- **ENG 101**: First-Year Composition (Asynchronous)
- **ENG 105**: Advanced First-Year Composition (Synchronous)
- **COM 110**: Interpersonal Communication (Synchronous)
- **COM 225**: Public Speaking (Synchronous)
- **ENG 131**: Poetry in America (Synchronous)

**Business and Entrepreneurship**

- **FIN 123**: ASU Financial Literacy (Asynchronous)
- **FIN 294**: Fundamentals of Personal Finance (Synchronous)
- **CIS 308**: Advanced Excel in Business (Synchronous)
- **CIS 313**: Location Analytics for Business (Synchronous)
- **OGL 200**: Introduction to Organizational Leadership (Asynchronous)
- **OGL 320**: Foundations of Project Management (Asynchronous)

**AI, Machine Learning, and Robotics**

- **CSE 110**: Principles of Programming (Synchronous)
- **CIS 194 G1**: Business Technology Fundamentals (Asynchronous)
- **CIS 394z**: Cloud Analytics (AWS 3) (Asynchronous)

- **CIS 405**: Business Intelligence (Asynchronous)
- **MAT 265**: Calculus for Engineers I (Asynchronous)
- **CIS 309**: Business Process Management (Asynchronous)

**Biotech and Health Sciences**

- **BIO 160**: Intro to Anatomy & Physiology (Asynchronous)
- **HCR 210**: Ethics for the Health Care Professional (Asynchronous)
- **HCR 220**: Introduction to the Health Professions and the US Healthcare System (Asynchronous)
- **HCR 230**: Culture & Health (Asynchronous)
- **PSY 101**: Introduction to Psychology (Synchronous)
- **BIO 181**: General Biology I (Asynchronous)

**Social Impact and Global Changes**

- **SOC 101**: Introductory Sociology (Synchronous)
- **POS 110**: American Government & Politics (Synchronous)
- **HST 100**: Global History to 1500 (Asynchronous)
- **SST 220**: Introduction to Social Transformation (Synchronous)
- **PAF 112**: Identity, Service, and American Democracy (Synchronous)
- **ECN 211**: Macroeconomic Principles (Asynchronous)

**Other**

- **MAT 117**: College Algebra (Asynchronous)
- **MAT 170**: Precalculus (Synchronous)
- **MAT 210**: Brief Calculus for Business & Economics (Synchronous)
- **MAT 265**: Calculus for Engineers I (Asynchronous)
- **CHM 101**: Introductory Chemistry (Asynchronous)
- **AST 111**: Intro to Solar Systems Astronomy (Asynchronous)

**Performance-Based and Mastery Approach**

Taino CoLAB's educational model emphasizes a performance-based and mastery approach to assessing student learning. This involves a combination of badges, projects, and community-based initiatives that allow students to demonstrate their competencies in real-world contexts. For instance:

- **Badges**: Students earn badges for completing specific skill sets, such as Civic Engagement or Environmental Stewardship, which reflect their proficiency and commitment.
- **Projects**: Students undertake various projects, such as community service, environmental studies, and advocacy campaigns, which are assessed through Mastery-Based Performance Assessments.
- **Community-Based Initiatives**: Engagement with local NGOs, participation in advocacy campaigns, and internships provide students with practical experience and opportunities to apply their learning in meaningful ways.

Through these components, students develop a portfolio of work that showcases their skills, knowledge, and impact, preparing them for success in college, careers, and civic life. This comprehensive approach ensures that students not only acquire academic knowledge but also develop the critical thinking, problem-solving, and leadership skills necessary to address global challenges.

**Enhancing Pathways through the 4D Quantum Learning Matrix**

Taino CoLAB's educational model is grounded in the innovative 4D Quantum Learning Matrix, which integrates four foundational pillars: Inquiry, Design Thinking, Creative Arts, and Service Learning. These pillars enhance our pathways by promoting critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, and community engagement.

- **Inquiry:** Encourages students to ask questions, explore ideas, and engage in deep learning. This is particularly effective in pathways like Biotech and Health Sciences, where scientific inquiry drives understanding and innovation.
- **Design Thinking**: Empowers students to develop solutions through a structured problem-solving approach. Pathways such as AI, Machine Learning, and Robotics benefit from this method as students create and iterate on technological solutions.
- **Creative Arts**: Fosters creativity and artistic expression, crucial for pathways like Media and Communication Arts. This pillar helps students integrate technology with creativity to produce compelling media projects.
- **Service Learning:** Extends education beyond the classroom, promoting social responsibility and community involvement. This is integral to the Social Impact and Global Challenges pathway, where students address real-world issues through civic engagement.

**Goals and Vision for the Future**

Taino CoLAB aims to prepare students for success in rapidly evolving industries and to excel in college and career preparation. By integrating rigorous academic standards with innovative teaching methods, Taino CoLAB ensures that students graduate with the skills, knowledge, and perspectives needed to thrive in a rapidly changing world. Our first graduating class in 2030 will be well-equipped to meet the challenges and opportunities of the future, embodying the principles of inquiry-based learning and global citizenship.

**Addressing Youth Disengagement**

The Dalio Foundation's report highlights the critical need to address youth disengagement in Connecticut, where 119,000 young people (aged 14-26) were either at-risk or disconnected in 2022. Taino CoLAB's pathway-focused curriculum aims to re-engage students by providing relevant, career-oriented education that addresses these challenges directly. By offering diverse and flexible pathways, we aim to reduce the dropout rate and increase postsecondary success, particularly in high-need areas like Waterbury, which faces significant concentrations of at-risk and disconnected youth.

Through our partnership with ASU and the implementation of the 4D Quantum Learning Matrix, Taino CoLAB students will not only excel academically but also develop as innovative thinkers, problem solvers, and engaged citizens. Our program's comprehensive approach to education fosters intellectual growth, creativity, and social responsibility, positioning Taino CoLAB at the forefront of educational innovation.

*Dalio Education. (2023). Connecticut's Unspoken Crisis: Getting Young People Back on Track. Dalio Education*

# Appendix C1: Monitoring Student Progress

CoLAB will create structures for the regular monitoring of student progress towards achieving academic and non-academic goals which fall within the school's broader Multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS). This system also includes the provision of day to day student support as well as progress monitoring for students who have not regularly met their goals or made expected progress. These include:

| Steps | Person(s) Responsible | Role/Responsibility |
|---|---|---|
| **1** | **Classroom Teacher** | ● Facilitate learning experiences based on student knowledge, interests and engagement (Learning and Design sprints)<br>● Provide and implement effective, differentiated academic instruction and classroom management<br>Provide Tier 1 interventions for academics and/or behavior as needed<br>● Consult with the Departmental PLC, Grade Level MTSS teams, specialists, and the Student Support Team to brainstorm alternate interventions<br>● Record use of interventions for at least three weeks on the MTSS Pre-Referral Form |
| **2** | **Grade Level MTSS Team** | ● Academic Director and/or Director of Student Supports reviews all MTSS Pre-Referral Forms from teachers<br>● Determines which students are in need of Tier 2 Interventions<br>○ ○ For students in need of Tier 2 interventions, complete a 73 Tier 2 Intervention Plan<br>○ ○ Schedule a parent meeting to review the Intervention Plan<br>Note: A student must receive Tier 1 interventions prior to moving to Tier 2 interventions. The interventions must be recorded and students must not have responded to the Tier 1 interventions. |
| **3** | **Grade Level MTSS Team and specialists, student support, and/or ILT members as needed** | ● Conduct parent meeting with grade level teachers and any necessary student support team members and/or specialists<br>○ Parent must agree to the Tier 2 Intervention Plan<br>○ Indicate any communication preferences requested by parent<br>● Implement Tier 2 Intervention Plan for at least 6 weeks; record evidence of interventions and progress of student |
| **4** | **Grade Level MTSS Team and Specialists, student support, and/or ILT members as needed** | ● Review Tier 2 Intervention Plan success and progress at the end of six weeks; modify interventions and Tier 2 Intervention Plan and complete a second round, as needed ●<br>● At any point, if any of the following qualifiers exist, the student may be referred to Tier 3 after a Tier 3 Referral Form is completed.<br>○ Student is potentially harmful to self or others<br>○ Student has had significant medical trauma or mental health concerns or issues<br>○ Tier 2 interventions were implemented consistently for a minimum of 12 weeks (two rounds of intervention plans) and student did not respond |
| **5** | **ILT Members, student support, and specialists** | ● Convene to review students' Tier 1 and Tier 2 interventions<br>● Create and implement a Tier 3 Intervention Plan |
| **6** | **Referral to PPT** | ● Review Tier 3 Intervention Plan success and progress at the end of six weeks; modify interventions and Tier 3 Intervention Plan and complete a second round, as needed ● |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | ● At any point, if any of the following qualifiers exist, the student may be referred to PPT after a PPT Referral Form is completed.<br>○ Student is potentially harmful to self or others<br>○ Student has had significant medical trauma or mental health concerns or issues<br>○ Tier 3 interventions were implemented consistently for a minimum of 12 weeks (two rounds of intervention plans) and student did not respond |

*Note: Table adapted from Pulaski County Special School District and Priest River Lamanna High School

## Appendix C2: Assessment Framework

CoLAB's structured and systematic approach to using assessment data ensures that students receive timely and appropriate tiered interventions and support. Our comprehensive process, involving continuous data collection, regular review and analysis, and active student involvement, enables us to address the needs of students who do not meet established achievement targets effectively. This approach fosters a supportive and responsive learning environment, helping all students achieve their academic goals.

| Steps | Classroom Assessments | | Common Formative Assessments | Benchmark Assessments | External Assessments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Example of Practice** | Worksheets, clickers, whiteboards, exit slips, conferences | Final exams, final projects | Tasks assessed with rubrics, short quizzes, common worksheets, clickers | Quarterly tests or performances, writing samples, lab reports | State tests, Accuplacer |
| **Formative or Summative** | Formative | Summative | Formative | Summative | Summative |
| **Frequency** | Daily (frequent, ongoing) | 1 per unit (at minimum) | Periodic (pre and post) | Quarterly (at minimum) | Annual (or longer) |
| **Responsibility** | Classroom teachers | Classroom teachers | Collaborative teams (department PLC) | Collaborative teams (department PLC) | External experts |
| **Purpose** | Descriptive feedback (immediate feedback) | Mastery feedback (to determine mastery of standards, to assign a grade) | Diagnostic feedback (to determine if students have learned the material and how to respond) | Diagnostic feedback (to assess curriculum, instructional strategies, and pacing) | Accountability (to determine whether curriculum, instructional strategies, and pacing were appropriate) |
| **Follow up** | Reteaching and regrouping | Systematic interventions | Reteaching and regrouping, systematic interventions | Reteaching and regrouping, systematic interventions | Accountability |

**Appendix D1: Founding Team Resumes**


# Adrian C. Manuel, Ed.D

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(914)-656-6675
amanuel@colablearning.org

**LinkedIn Profile**: www.linkedin.com/in/AManuel-EdD


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## QUALIFICATIONS

- 24 years of experience in education, with a focus on improving student performance outcomes in district, charter, and boarding schools.
- Expertise as a school turnaround leader, successfully leading five school turnarounds.
- Expertise in instructional leadership, developing school culture, and enhancing instructional quality.
- Proven track record in strategic planning, data-driven decision making, and implementing successful school turnaround initiatives.
- Strong background in community relations, restorative practices, and fostering diverse and inclusive educational environments.

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## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

**Executive Director**
*Merrick Academy Charter School, Laurelton, NY*
*October 2021 - Present*
Returned to Merrick Academy at the end of the pandemic to lead an expansion project to middle school grades, manage the construction of a new campus site, and facilitate the accreditation for the IB Primary and Middle Years program.

- Led a successful charter expansion to middle school grades.
- Secured over $2.5 million in new grant funding to support year-round STEAM programming.
- Initiated and managed a new campus construction project to be completed in Fall 2025.
- Facilitated accreditation for the IB Primary and Middle Years program.

**Founder/Consultant**
*ALT-ED LLC*
*January 2017 - Present*
Led the creation and implementation of school improvement initiatives, providing leadership coaching and consultation on transformation and systems development. Regularly presented at educational conferences on topics such as innovation and strategic planning.

- Supported school leaders and district leaders in multi-year strategic planning and school turnaround efforts.
- Coached school leaders and leadership teams towards evidence-based practices.
- Facilitated lesson studies and the integration of inquiry-based teaching practices.

**Superintendent**
*Wonderful College Prep Academy, Central Valley, CA*
*July 2020 - September 2021*
Oversaw a network of PreK-12 charter schools, navigating the challenges of distance learning and reopening during the COVID-19 pandemic. Implemented strategic initiatives to improve educational outcomes and expand early college pathways.

- Achieved a 98% high school graduation rate with 70% of students attending 4-year colleges.
- Expanded the early college model for high school students to earn associate degrees.
- Developed a three-year strategic plan focusing on early college pathways and equity.

**Executive Director**
*Merrick Academy Charter School, Laurelton, NY*
*January 2019 - July 2020*
Directed the operations of a STEAM-based elementary school, fostering a culture of innovation and excellence. Successfully led the school through a turnaround process, improving performance and securing a charter renewal.

- Led a successful school turnaround.
- Secured a five-year charter renewal.
- Negotiated a new collective bargaining agreement with UFT.

**Principal**
*Alverta B. Gray Schultz Middle School, Hempstead, NY*
*July 2017 - December 2018*
Brought in as a turnaround leader to help the district during receivership, leading the school to meet and exceed improvement targets for the first time after four years of failed efforts.

- Achieved double-digit gains in ELA proficiency and a 30% increase in science Regents exam pass rates.
- Expanded community partnerships through the NYS Community Schools Grant.
- Dramatically reduced chronic absenteeism, suspension rates, and improved attendance on a campus of 2500 middle school students.

**Head of School**
*The SEED School of Washington DC, Washington, DC*
*July 2014 - January 2017*
Led a 24-hour college preparatory boarding program, driving high academic performance and innovative program initiatives. Focused on reducing disciplinary actions and enhancing student support services.

- Achieved over 90% annual graduation rates with 98% attending four-year colleges.
- Launched innovative programs and significantly reduced suspensions and dismissals.
- Highest ELA performance in DC in 2016 and awarded Tier 1 high school status in 2017.

**Principal**
*Kingston High School, Kingston, NY*
*August 2011 - July 2014*
Implemented strategic improvements to increase graduation rates and support student achievement. Fostered community collaborations to create internship opportunities and support networks.

- Increased graduation rates from 67% to 82%.
- Led the school to be removed from the state's designation of school in need of improvement for multiple years.
- Transformed a large 2000-student comprehensive program to a campus of small learning communities focused on personalization and college and career pathways.

**Principal**
*ACCION Academy Middle School, Bronx, NY*
*July 2007 - August 2011*
Designed and facilitated professional learning programs and innovative scheduling models. Expanded support systems to foster academic, social, and emotional development.

- Achieved multiple years of “A” report card grades on NYC Progress Reports, outperforming citywide peer indexes for performance growth of students with special needs and ELL students.
- Designed and instituted a school-wide lesson study program that led to dramatic improvements in performance and teacher retention.
- Designed and implemented impactful programs such as: school-wide literature circles, standards-based report cards, teacher action research, and community-based service learning projects.

**Co-Principal/Leadership Fellow**
*Jordan L. Mott Middle School, Bronx, NY*
*September 2006 - June 2007*
Co-Lead instructional leadership and professional development initiatives to improve student outcomes and teacher effectiveness. Co-Principal during the year when the school was taken off the list of most violent/dangerous schools in NYC and removed from the state closure list.

**Social Studies Teacher**
*Middle School 390, Bronx, NY*
*September 2001 - June 2006*
Taught social studies while founding and directing the College Prep Academy, a program that transformed student achievement and learning outcomes for over 700 students.

- Founded and directed the College Prep Academy, improving student achievement for over 700 students.
- Developed and implemented inquiry-based teaching practices.
- Coordinated extracurricular activities to support academic and personal growth.

**Adjunct Instructor**
*Mercy College, Bronx, NY*
*September 2006 - June 2007*
Taught graduate courses in education, focusing on instructional strategies and classroom management.

## EDUCATION

**University of Pennsylvania**
Ed.D., Educational & Organizational Leadership

**Baruch College**
M.S.Ed., Educational/Public Administration

**Lehman College**
M.S., Secondary Education/Social Studies (7-12)

**New York University**
B.A., History

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## CERTIFICATIONS

- NY State School Administrator and Supervisor (SAS) - Permanent Status
- NY State Certified Secondary Education - Social Studies (7-12) - Permanent Status

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## PUBLICATIONS

- *Organizational Inquiry Teams: Capturing the Work of a Newly Formed Inquiry Team and Its Influence on Organizational Learning and Professional Practice* (2013, University of Pennsylvania)

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## ACTIVITIES

- Board Member, Poughkeepsie Day School
- Presenting at national and local conferences on school turnaround, innovation, and instructional leadership
- Graduate of the New York City Leadership Academy (2006)
- New York City Teaching Fellow (2000)
- National Teaching US History Grant NYC Cohort 1 (2003)
- Board Member, Kingston YMCA (2011-2014)
- Urban Master Teacher Certification (NYU 2005)
- Multiple Harvard School Leader Institutes
- Consultant with Sapience Learning, a network of organizational consultants affiliated with the PENN Innovation Center
- Sits on numerous advisory committees and has been a founding design partner/advisor for over 12 charter schools
- Co-Founder of CoLAB Education focused on designing and opening charter high schools

**Appendix D2: Founding Team Resumes**

# Bill Clarke

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Delmar, NY 12054

401-316-9893
wmjclarke@gmail.com

**QUALIFICATIONS**
Seven years as school leader resulting in significant literacy & math gains • Eighteen years coaching district, school and classroom leaders to increase academic achievement • Thirteen years leading and developing charter schools • Four years as a charter school authorizer in RI and NY • Ten years nonprofit and government-sector leadership, business development, fundraising and program development

**ResultsAhead Consulting**
***Founder/Principal***
Results*Ahead* exists to help schools and organizations implement bold, simple ideas in support of dramatic improvement. Results*Ahead* uses a design-sprint approach (i.e. asking a lot of questions and helping quickly promote solutions) to help leaders *design* and *redesign* schools to effectively serve students and their families.

Having launched and helped launch over 20 schools, Results*Ahead*'s **Design** approach focuses on helping schools get started and helping "ready" schools expand or replicate. Results*Ahead* has also guided over 40 schools in a **Redesign** process through strategic rethinking, simplification, and implementation of evidence-based academic and leadership practices in support of literacy outcomes. See Project List for more details.

**June 2022 - Present CoLAB Education** **National**
**Co-Founder**
Develop services and organizational systems in order to partner with schools in support of innovative practices tied to WEF 4.0 outcomes

**April 2019 – June 2021 Springboard Collaborative** **National**
***Vice President/National Growth Officer***
Operationalize organization's growth strategy by cultivating relationships with school districts, network leaders and funders to ensure Springboard has a robust pipeline that fuels growth • Coach Executive Directors and Account Executives to reach partnership targets

- *Secured ~ $7MM in new fee-for-service contracts and fundraising in 3 new geographic markets*

**June 2015 – April 2019 The Rensselaerville Institute and School Turnaround** **National**
***Vice President/Chief Partnerships Officer***
Drove strategy for and development of the organization's national initiatives and programmatic targets in the key areas of student academic gain and organizational effectiveness • Effectively communicated TRI's successes and value proposition to a variety of audiences nationally with the goal of accelerating impact, strengthening brand, and developing strategic partnerships • Developed and implemented strategy for partnership development and fundraising to multiple donor segments

- *Secured over $5MM in new fee-for-service contracts*
- *Led the development of four new geographic markets and three new partnership sectors*

***Executive Director, School Turnaround***
Led staff with the express purpose of dramatically increasing student achievement for over 20,000 students in 39 schools nationwide • Implemented School Turnaround leadership development framework to dramatically increase

student achievement in partner schools nationwide

- *Achieved average of 10% point gains annually in literacy and math with school partners*

## ***CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZER/STATE OVERSIGHT***

**Jan 2013 – June 2015 New York State Education Department** **Albany, NY**

***Executive Director, Office of School Innovation and Charter Schools***

Serving on the Deputy Commissioner's Leadership team, led the State's School Turnaround and Charter School initiatives • Developed and implemented results-focused performance management systems for 374 traditional and charter public schools and school district programs • Oversaw the implementation of grants including $300MM+ School Improvement grants, $50MM RTT grants, and $113MM Charter School Program grant • Authorized 15 new charter schools, published nationally-recognized fiscal oversight guidelines, awarded ~$10MM in dissemination grants to 10 charter schools

- *37.5% turnaround schools improved in both Reading and Math in 2013-14*
- *Average charter gains – 36 days of learning in Reading; 79 days in Math (CREDO, 2013)*

**Aug 2011 – Jan 2013 Rhode Island Department of Education** **Providence, RI**

***Manager, Office of Transformation and Charter Schools***

Led the development of the charter school office and effectively improved the sector through authorization of 5 new schools and performance management for 16 schools to ensure strong student achievement outcomes • Oversaw implementation of an $11MM CSP grant and an RTT Grant for new schools and expansion

- *Average charter gains – 86 days of learning in Reading; 108 days in Math (CREDO, 2013)*

## ***INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP***

**Aug 2009 – Aug 2011 TIMES$^2$ Academy Charter School** **Providence, RI**

***Principal and Academic Director (grades 7-12)***

Oversaw development and implementation of a student-centered, STEM-focused academic program • Redesigned daily schedule to increase literacy and math time and teacher collaboration, aligned curriculum to standards and student needs, and restructured data teams to focus on grouping and immediate instructional shifts • Developed community and parent partnerships to support academic achievement including internship programs and after-school programs

- *2009-2011 NECAP increases – 7$^{th}$ grade cohort: +23 Reading, +11 Math*
- *2009-2011 NECAP increases – 8$^{th}$ grade cohort: +21 Reading, +34 Math*
- *2010-11 Growth measure: highest Math growth in Providence Public Schools (68 RIGM)*

**Aug 2003 – Aug 2009 Blackstone Academy Charter High School** **Pawtucket, RI**

***Instructional Leader***

Led redesign of academic program including the daily schedule to increase literacy and math time, teacher collaboration, alignment of curriculum to standards and student needs, and restructuring data teams to focus on grouping and immediate instructional shifts • Built interventions for math, reading, and writing resulting in increased student proficiency • Managed internal and external assessment data and analysis for NECAP, NWEA, ACCESS, AP

- *2007-2009 NECAP increases—11$^{th}$ grade: +22 Reading, + 27 Math*
- *Helped improve school status to "Meeting AYP" in two years*

***Literacy Coordinator***

Developed and taught reading course that increased reading level of 93 students 2+ grade levels per year (NWEA) • Oversaw ELL and SWD program and developed parent programs • Managed budget and staffing for schoolwide Title 1 programs

**Aug 1998 – June 1999 Howard County Public School District** **Ellicott City, MD**

***Writing Teacher***

Designed and taught college-level writing curriculum for district • Taught 9$^{th}$ grade English literature

**July 1994 – Aug 1998 Aberdeen Public School District** **Aberdeen, MS**

***Teacher, ELA and Spanish —Mississippi Teacher Corps***

Taught middle and high school ELA and Spanish • Provided professional development on literacy and project-based learning • Developed parent-involvement program • Coached football & soccer

***Other NONPROFIT MANAGEMENT***

**Dec 2002 – Aug 2003 City Year Rhode Island** **Providence, RI**

***Director, Program and Service***

Led 50 AmeriCorps members and 5 staff through training and program implementation at local schools and community organizations • Developed community partnerships to increase impact on student achievement

**June 1999 – Dec 2002 American Red Cross, Central Maryland** **Baltimore, MD**

***Manager, Youth Services***

Spearheaded inception of Youth Services department including program and budget oversight, strategic planning, staff supervision, fundraising and international development

- *Provided service-learning and team-development training nationwide to over 50,000 students in Maryland, Iceland, Poland, Kenya and Malawi*
- *Recipient of George M. Elsey Award - national recognition for Outstanding Program*

**EDUCATION**

| | |
|---|---|
| PROVIDENCE COLLEGE | *M Ed. Educational Leadership* |
| MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE - BLSE | *DeWitt Wallace Rural Teacher Fellow*ship |
| UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI | *MA Ed. C&I Mississippi Teacher Corps Fellow* |
| UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS at Austin | *BA English/Spanish* |

# D3: Draft Board Bylaws

ARTICLE I: NAME AND LOCATION

1. Name: The name of the organization shall be Taino CoLAB Charter School, hereinafter referred to as the "School."
2. Location: The principal office of the School shall be located in Waterbury, Connecticut. The Board of Directors (hereinafter referred to as the "Board") may change the location of the principal office as necessary.

ARTICLE II: PURPOSE

1. Purpose: The purpose of the School is to provide a high-quality education to students in accordance with the charter granted by the Connecticut State Board of Education and to operate as a nonprofit organization under Connecticut General Statutes § 10-66aa.

ARTICLE III: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

1. Powers: The Board shall manage the business and affairs of the School, ensuring compliance with state and federal laws governing public schools, including financial, educational, and operational oversight.
2. Number and Composition: The Board shall consist of no fewer than four (4) and no more than ten (10) members, including the Executive Director as an ex-officio non-voting member.
3. Terms: Board members shall serve two-year terms, renewable up to three times, for a maximum of six years.
4. Officers: The Board shall have the following officers: Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Treasurer, and Secretary.
5. Election and Removal of Members:
   - Election: Board members shall be elected by a majority vote of the existing Board at the annual meeting.
   - Removal: A member may be removed by a two-thirds vote of the Board for failure to fulfill duties, misconduct, or other reasons as deemed appropriate by the Board.
6. Vacancies: Vacancies on the Board shall be filled by majority vote of the remaining Board members.

ARTICLE IV: MEETINGS

1. Regular Meetings: The Board shall hold regular meetings at least quarterly. The schedule shall be determined annually.
2. Special Meetings: Special meetings may be called by the Chairperson or any three Board members with at least 48 hours notice.
3. Quorum: A quorum shall consist of a majority of the Board members then in office.
4. Voting: Each Board member shall have one vote. Proxy voting is not permitted. Decisions shall be made by a majority vote of those present.

ARTICLE V: COMMITTEES

1. Executive Committee: Comprised of the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Treasurer, and Secretary, this committee handles urgent matters between Board meetings.
2. Standing Committees: The Board shall establish standing committees including, but not limited to, Academic Performance, Finance, and Governance.
3. Ad Hoc Committees: The Board may establish ad hoc committees as necessary for specific tasks or projects.

ARTICLE VI: OFFICERS

1. Chairperson: Presides over meetings, sets the agenda in collaboration with the Executive Director, and ensures the Board fulfills its responsibilities.
2. Vice Chairperson: Assists the Chairperson and assumes their duties in their absence.
3. Treasurer: Oversees financial matters, ensures proper financial records are kept, and reports on the financial status of the School.
4. Secretary: Keeps minutes of all meetings, ensures records are maintained, and handles Board correspondence.

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ARTICLE VII: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

1. Role: The Executive Director is responsible for the day-to-day management of the School, implementing Board policies, and overseeing staff and programs.
2. Evaluation: The Board shall conduct an annual performance evaluation of the Executive Director based on agreed-upon goals and performance metrics.

ARTICLE VIII: CONFLICT OF INTEREST

1. Policy: Board members shall adhere to a conflict of interest policy to ensure decisions are made in the best interest of the School.
2. Disclosure: Members must disclose any potential conflicts of interest and abstain from voting on related matters.

ARTICLE IX: AMENDMENTS

1. Process: These bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the Board at any regular or special meeting, provided the amendment was submitted in writing at the previous meeting.

ARTICLE X: NONDISCRIMINATION

1. Policy: The School shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, or disability in any of its programs or activities.

ARTICLE XI: DISSOLUTION

1. Process: In the event of dissolution, the assets of the School shall be distributed in accordance with state and federal law, ensuring they are used for educational purposes.

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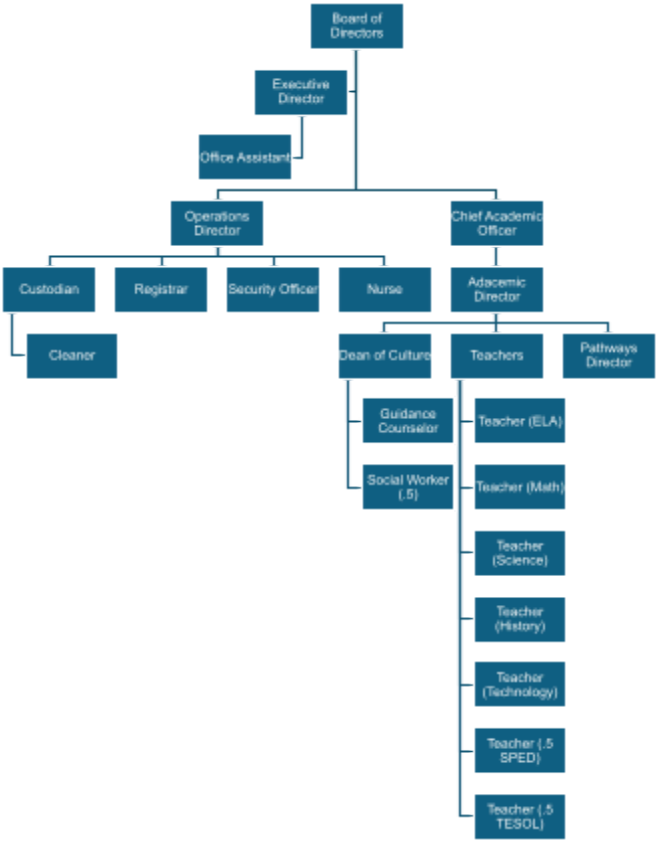
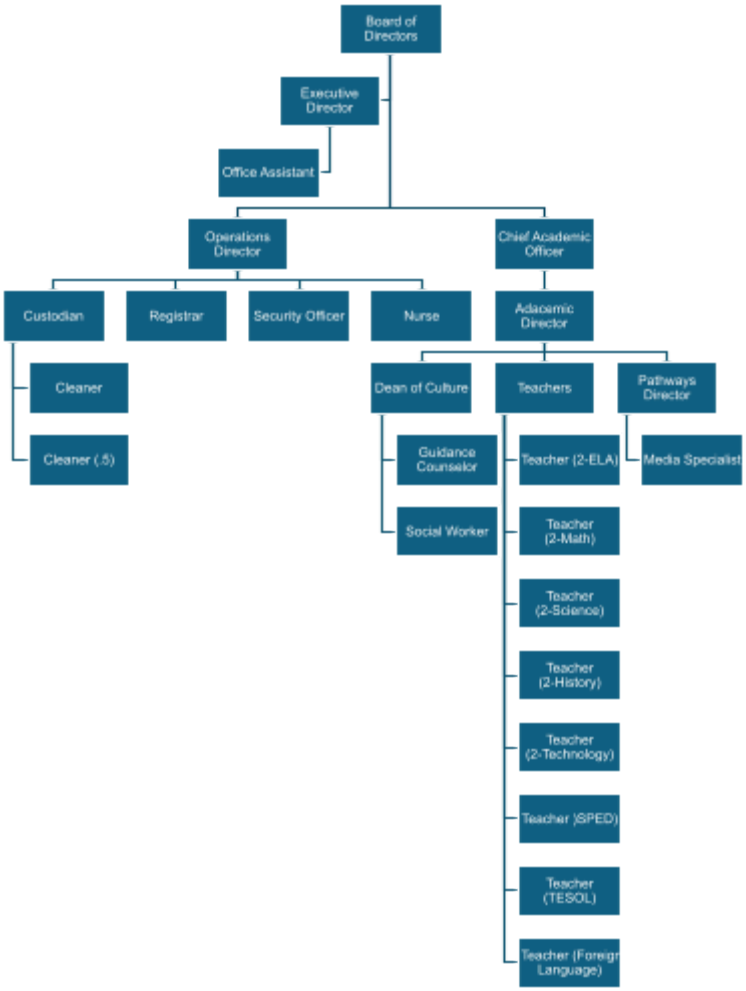
# Appendix E1: Organizational Chart

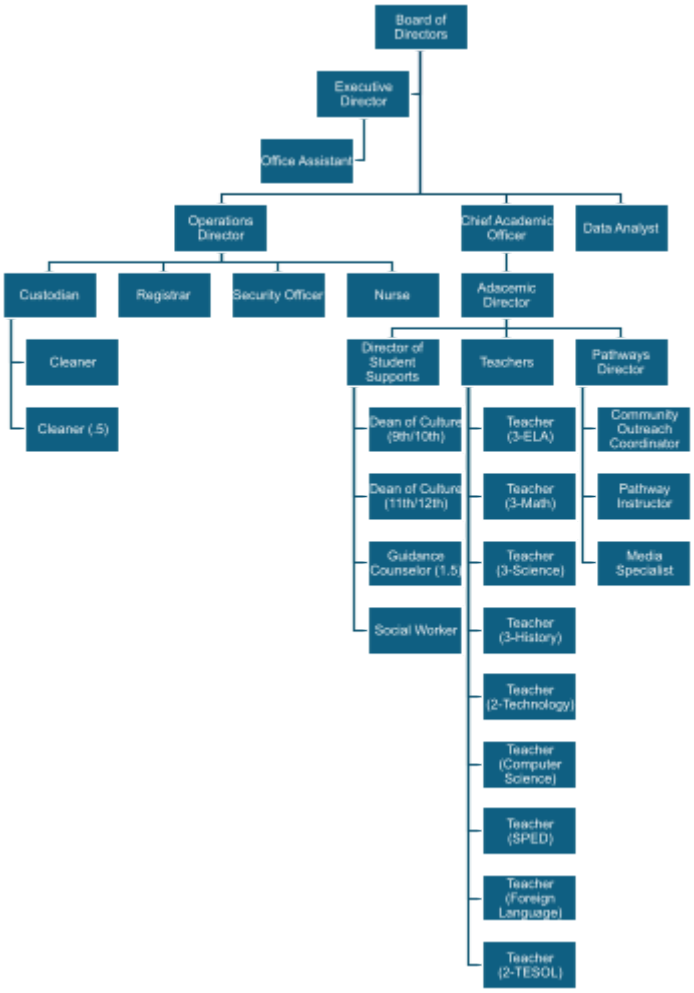
## CoLAB Year One



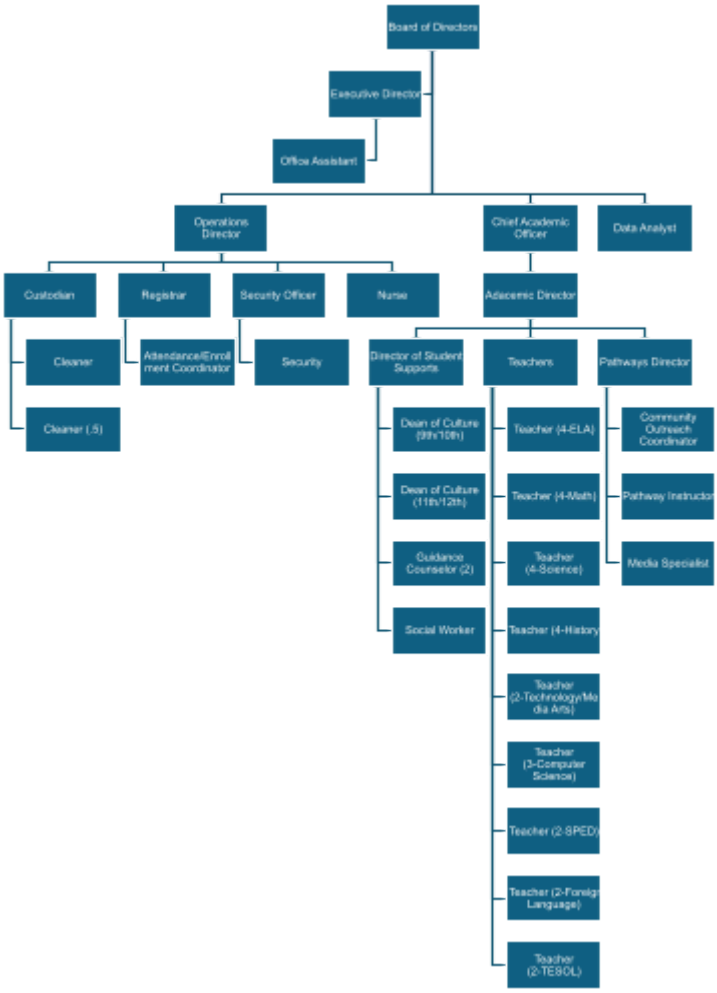

## CoLAB Year Two


Board of Directors
Executive Director
Office Assistant
Operations Director
Chief Academic Officer
Custodian
Registrar
Security Officer
Nurse
Adacemic Director
Cleaner
Cleaner (.5)
Dean of Culture
Teachers
Pathways Director
Guidance Counselor
Social Worker
Teacher (2-ELA)
Teacher (2-Math)
Teacher (2-Science)
Teacher (2-History)
Teacher (2-Technology)
Teacher )SPED)
Teacher (TESOL)
Teacher (Foreign Language)
Media Specialist

## CoLAB Year Three



## CoLAB Year Four



# Appendix E2: Founding Board Resumes

**STEVEN HERNÁNDEZ, ESQUIRE**
94 Round Hill Road
Manchester, CT
Tel. 860-904-0404
Solek1984@gmail.com

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

**ConnCAN,** *Hartford, CT*
*Executive Director* Feb. 2024–Present

**CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY**
**COMMISSION ON WOMEN, CHILDREN, SENIORS, EQUITY & OPPORTUNITY,** *Hartford, CT Executive Director* Jun. 2019–Jan. 2024 **COMMISSION ON WOMEN, CHILDREN AND SENIORS,** *Hartford, CT Executive Director* Jun. 2016–Jun. 2019 • Collaborate with a diversely appointed advisory board, community members, policymakers, and the public, philanthropic, and private sectors to develop dynamic and sound policy initiatives, focused on accessing equitable resources and opportunities for our under-resourced and underrepresented constituents;

- Direct and manage a dynamic professional staff and volunteers to administer and implement the Commission's short, mid, and long-term advocacy goals;
- Assist federal, state, municipal, and private agencies in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of programs and policies that impact our constituents, for example: the Administration of the state's "2GEN" multigenerational success initiative;
  - Chairing of the state's School Climate and Anti-Bulling Collaborative;
  - o Stewardship of the state's pre-K to 12 literacy strategy;
- Oversee and manage the Commission's personnel and operating budget, and the development of statutorily authorized philanthropic and private resources; and, • Advised the legislature and ushered the staff and Board through the consolidation of six previous Commissions, working across party and agency, culminating in the creation of a highly effective legislative team.

**COMMISSION ON CHILDREN,** *Hartford, CT*
*Attorney/Director of Public Policy and Research* Apr. 2012–Jun. 2016 • Staffed the legislature to promote policies to ensure that all children and their families are healthy and safe, achieve educational success, and are free from poverty and discrimination;

- Drafted and promoted public policy through a bipartisan, bicameral lens in the best interest of children, families, and community, for example:
  - The state's childhood preventive mental health response to Newtown, which led to the creation of Connecticut's Behavioral Health Plan for Children;
  - o Groundbreaking reading reforms to ensure that all children are reading by third grade, addressing persistent gaps in equity and opportunity, and the creation of a Reading Director at the State Department of Education, which formed the foundation of the Right to Read Strategy;
  - o Implementation language for the state's two-generational policy, which led to CT's position as a national leader in 2GEN;
  - o Improvements to the state's school climate and anti-bullying laws; creating a task force (now statewide Collaborative) to study and advise on the intersection of the state's school climate, antibullying, and restorative policies and practices;
  - o Innovations to improve youth and family engagement and opportunity;
- Represented the State of Connecticut, the Commission, and the best interest of children and their

families in print and live media, national webinars and conferences, public fora, task forces, and in the community, including as a proxy for the Executive Director and on behalf of the Board;
- Lead presentations and discussions with the Commission on Children Board on emerging public policy, while eliciting the advisory expertise of the Board to inform the Commission's focus and direction;
- Collaborated with the Executive Branch through the Interagency Council for Ending the Achievement Gap on issues including mental and physical health, safety, and results-based accountability;
- Forecasted child trends and assessed programs, policies, and practices in state agencies as they affect children and their families;
- Disseminated information and research data regarding the status of children and children's programs;
- Served as staff and liaison between the National Conference of State Legislatures and the Young Legislators Caucus to ensure opportunity and access for the State's millennial legislators in a national context;
- Engaged the three branches of government, along with the private sector, nonprofit agencies, philanthropy, and families to bolster child and family outcomes by braiding resources, ensuring operational efficiencies, and engaging in long-term sustainability planning;
- Served as a liaison between government and private groups concerned with children and families;
- Lead systems reform to improve child and family outcomes in health, safety, and learning.

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA GOVERNMENT OFFICE OF WARD 1 COUNCILMEMBER JIM GRAHAM**, *Washington, DC*

*Legislative & Budget Director, Various Committees* Dec. 2003–Dec. 2010 • Directed and supervised a five-person professional staff, including attorneys, policy advisors, research, and administrative staff;
• Advised on a wide range of policy, legislative, and regulatory issues;
• Prioritized, managed, and executed the Committee's aggressive legislative calendar; • Conducted performance and budget oversight of select District agencies; • Formulated annual operating and capital budgets for select District agencies; • Drafted and negotiated several laws and reforms to, for example:

- o A language access act to expand access to government for the linguistically diverse residents of the District of Columbia;
- o Strengthen consumer identity theft protection;
- o Authorize risk securitization to ensure a competitive captive insurance environment;
- o Immunize individuals from civil liability for emergency use of automatic external defibrillators; and
- o Reform state contract and procurement practices to thwart fraud, waste, and abuse.

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA COURT OF APPEALS**, *Washington, DC*

*Judicial Law Clerk, Chambers of Senior Judge John M. Ferren* Aug. 2003–Dec. 2003 • Recruited to draft a complex medical malpractice opinion.

*Judicial Law Clerk, Chambers of Associate Judge Vanessa Ruiz* Aug. 2002–Aug. 2003 • Assisted in all aspects of the appellate review process, including the drafting of opinions, memorandum opinions and judgments, and bench memoranda.

**BAKER & MILLER, PLLC**, *Washington, DC*

*Consultant* Aug. 2001–Aug. 2002 • Drafted client contracts and memoranda, pleadings, responses, and related documents for antitrust litigation and compliance;
• Undertook extensive document production for "Second Requests" and "CIDs" and

prepared accompanying indices and privilege logs.

## EDUCATION

**AMERICAN UNIVERSITY, WASHINGTON COLLEGE OF LAW,** *Washington, DC*

*Juris Doctor* 1998-2001 • International Law Review; served as an Articles Editor

- Served as a student attorney at the renowned International Human Rights Law Clinic, successfully gaining asylum for a political refugee
- Secured a competitive 2L summer clerkship at the U.S. Department of Justice, Board of Immigration Appeals
- Elected Executive Board Member by the *Hispanic Law Students Association*; Member, of Lambda Law Society

**BENNINGTON COLLEGE,** *Bennington, VT* 1991-1995 *Bachelor of Arts*

- Double Major: International Politics, with a focus on Human Rights, and Spanish Literature, with a Focus on Latin American Women Writers; Minor: Philosophy

## HONORS, SERVICE, SKILLS & VOLUNTEERISM

• Member, Tobacco and Health Trust Fund Board of Trustees
• Governor's Appointed Member, Connecticut Hate Crimes Advisory Council • Habitat for Humanity North Central Connecticut, Vice President, Board of Directors (*retired*)
• Nutmeg State Financial Credit Union, Board Member
• Partners for Educational Leadership, Executive Board Member • Access Health CT, Board Member, Strategy Committee Chair • United Way of Connecticut, Board Member, Governance Committee Member • Partnership for Strong Communities, Board Member
• Connecticut Hispanic Bar Association (CHBA), President-Elect • Connecticut Bar Association, Member, House of Delegates CHBA Designee • Goodspeed Musicals, Member, Board of Trustees
• The Bushnell, Ambassador
• Little Theatre of Manchester, Inc., Secretary, Board of Directors • Connecticut Bar Foundation, Fellow
• Town of Manchester, Chair, Civilian Police Review and Relations Board • Fluent in written and spoken Spanish.

**Juan Candelaria**
34 6th Street
New Haven, CT. 06519
Tel. 203-645-7905
juanbotoa@gmail.com

## Leadership Attributes

- Experienced bilingual/bicultural leader with strong organizational and communication skills. Able to collaboratively align and focus internal and external stakeholders' efforts to achieve the organization's goals.
- A respected leader who values stakeholders' input and fosters a culture of shared decision-making.
- Visionary, and proactive in planning and implementing systemic changes to enhance organizational responsiveness to challenges.

## Academic Preparation

**MBA**, Business Administration, University of New Haven**,** West Haven, CT - 2012
**BS**, Business Management, Albertus Magnus College, New Haven, CT - 2010

## Professional Experience

2022- Present **Candelaria Insurance Group** West Haven, CT.

***Principal, Candelaria Insurance Group***

- Successfully manage all aspects of the agency, including operations, sales, marketing, and customer service. Oversee financial performance, budgeting, and forecasting to ensure profitability and growth.
- Drive sales performance by developing and implementing effective sales strategies: train and mentor, a team of agents to achieve sales targets and deliver exceptional service.
- Build and maintain strong relationships with clients, providing personalized insurance solutions to meet their needs. Ensure high levels of customer satisfaction and retention.
- Develop and execute marketing campaigns to promote the agency and generate leads. Actively participate in community events and build partnerships to enhance brand visibility and reputation.
- Ensure compliance with all regulatory requirements and company policies. Implement risk management strategies to mitigate potential risks and protect clients and the agency.

2019-2022 **Cornell Scott Hill Health Center** New Haven, CT.

***Director of Patient Experience & Satisfaction***

- Led the executive team in developing and sustaining strategies for patient satisfaction.
- Established data systems, analytics, and reports to drive patient satisfaction improvements.
- Analyzed patient satisfaction survey data and presented findings to senior management.
- Researched and implemented industry best practices to achieve top-box performance in patient satisfaction.
- Partnered with Human Resources to design and deploy customer service training aligned with patient satisfaction goals.
- Managed complaints and grievances, and trained staff on resolution processes.
- Worked closely with senior leadership and staff to improve overall customer service and patient satisfaction.

- Investigated incident reports and patient feedback, developing reports on risk management trends.
- Oversaw the Access to Care Department, assisting patients with insurance and other programs.

2013-2019 **Cornell Scott Hill Health Center** New Haven, CT.

***Patient Advocate***
- Listened to patient grievances, investigated and resolved complaints, and educated patients on their rights.
- Provided customer service training to staff through formal education sessions and on-the-job training.
- Coordinated the review and response to patient concerns, working with providers and management.
- Approved exceptions to policies and authorized patient prescriptions and co-payments.
- Documented and reported patient concerns to the Compliance Officer and CEO.
- Collaborated on tracking and trending customer concerns and conducted educational programs.
- Facilitated discussions with staff and patients to improve patient satisfaction.
- Developed and monitored the corporate-wide Risk Management Plan.

2008 - 2013 **Demarco Management Corp** New Haven, CT.

***Community Relations Specialist***
- Developed relationships with community agencies, the school system, and city officials.
- Executed marketing plans and raised community awareness of programs and services.
- Facilitated communication and conflict resolution with residents.
- Assisted with community problem-solving and referred residents to appropriate services.
- Maintained liaison with community social agencies and industry programs.
- Assessed resident needs and implemented support programs.

2006 – 2008 **TD Banknorth** Bridgeport, CT.

***Business Development & Sales Manager***
- Managed account portfolios, including deposit accounts, loans, investments, and insurance.
- Developed and implemented branch sales strategies, achieving performance goals.
- Conducted business development calls and closed small business loans.
- Compiled financial data for analysis and strategized with the team on market opportunities.

2002-2006 **Bank of America** New Haven, CT.

***Senior Business Specialist/Assistant Branch Manager***
- Opened and managed business and personal accounts.
- Developed relationships with business customers and made referrals to business partners.
- Led branch operations in the manager's absence and conducted team meetings.
- Processed loan applications and closed loans and lines of credit.
- Managed customer-related projects.

2000-2002 **Bank of America** Hartford, CT.

***Business Development Officer***
- Initiated important revenue-generating client relationships.
- Prospected and networked in larger markets to develop new client relationships for the bank.
- Effectively expanded a network of prospects by focusing on existing internal and external referral sources and building new contact networks.
- Focused sales efforts on operating accounts, cash management, and other payment services, Business Loans, Lines of Credit, Commercial Real Estate Loans, and various other business banking products and services.
- Transfer clients to Business Banking Client Managers to deepen and expand long-term banking relationships.

1998-2000 **Latino Youth Development** New Haven, CT.

***Executive Director***

- Secured funding and managed federal and state budget requirements.
- Developed service programs and after-school programs for community children.
- Managed payroll and daily operations of the agency.
- Advocated for community issues at local and state government levels.

## Community Involvement

- Clifford Beers (Board Member)
- Puerto Rican United (Board Member)

## Political Activities

- **State Representative 95th District**, *Deputy Speaker* (2002-Present)
  *Committees:* Appropriations, Education, and General Law.
  - Researched proposed changes to state laws
  - Created policies, budgets, and programs
  - Participated in debates on proposed legislation
  - Sought district funding and negotiated to move legislation forward
  - Negotiate with other lawmakers to gain consensus and move legislation forward
  - Made public appearances, presentations, and speeches

- Member, Black, and Puerto Rican Caucus
- Member of the National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators
- Member of the National Conference of State Legislators
- Alderman City of New Haven (2001-2002)
- Town Committee Member (1999-2004)

## References

Provided upon request

**Jose Lucas Pimentel**

Tel. 203-502-3618
Lpimentel@ctlead

## Professional Summary

With over 22 years of experience as a classroom teacher and administrator, I have dedicated my career to educational excellence and community empowerment. As the Founding CEO of Latinos for Educational Advocacy and Diversity (LEAD) I have continued my passion for education and my vision for a more equitable society drives me to work tirelessly to provide better equity and representation to underserved communities.

## Work History

**Founding CEO**
*Latinos for Educational Advocacy and Diversity (LEAD), Danbury, CT*
*01/2019 - Present*

- Established and led the growth of LEAD to now have community centers in 6 cities across Connecticut with plans on expanding to 4 more.
- Developed and implemented comprehensive programs in educational options, civic engagement, health, financial literacy, and history and culture.
- Built strong partnerships with local and state organizations to enhance community support and resources.

**Founding President**
*Dominican Club Of Connecticut*

- Fostered community engagement and cultural enrichment programs for the Dominican community in Connecticut.

**Board Member**
*Latino Scholarship Fund*

- Contributed to the strategic direction and fundraising efforts to support Latino students' higher education aspirations.

**Co-Founder**
*North Star Fellowship in Connecticut*

- Working to develop a fellowship program to support the accessibility to high quality educational options across the state and providing support to educational leaders to better educate and affect change in our communities.

**Co-Founder**

*Hope in Action Foundation*

- Initiated projects to build schools and provide educational opportunities in underserved communities in the Dominican Republic.

**SS Department Chair and Social Studies Teacher**
*The Bridge Academy, Bridgeport, CT*
*09/1998 - 08/2019*

- Taught social studies and history to grades 9-12.
- Developed and implemented the Latin American and African American curriculum. ● Created the school's capstone project for seniors.
- Build strong relationships with parents to support student success.

**Assistant Administrator**
*The Bridge Academy, Bridgeport, CT*
*09/2007 - 06/2017*

- Evaluated and supported teachers through the SEED evaluation system. ● Administered school programs in alignment with the school's vision and goals. ● Mentored new teachers and facilitated professional development programs.

**Skills**

- Bilingual: Spanish, English (Limited Portuguese)
- Policy Development and Enforcement
- Staff Development
- Relationship Building and Networking
- Verbal and Written Communication
- Analytical Problem Solving
- Process Improvements
- Community Engagement
- Presentation Skills
- Program Oversight
- Social Media Management
- Event Planning
- Team Player
- Strategic Thinker

**Education**

**Master of Arts: Education Administration**
*Sacred Heart University, Fairfield, CT*
*2010*

**Sixth Year Administration Degree 092 Education Administration**
*Sacred Heart University, Fairfield, CT*
*2010*

**Bachelor of Arts: History**
*Western Connecticut State University, Danbury, CT*

*May 1996*

**Certificate: Latin American And Caribbean Studies**
*Universidad De San José, San José, Costa Rica*
*2007*

**Certifications**

- 023 Spanish
- 026 Social Studies/History
- 092 Administration
- Language Proficiency Certification in Spanish

**Additional Experience**

- Developed and taught Methods of Teaching for graduate students to meet certification requirements for teaching world languages.
- Led professional development sessions and workshops for educators. ● Implemented innovative technologies and teaching strategies to enhance classroom learning experiences.
- Monitored and evaluated educational programs to ensure high-quality standards and performance objectives.

## Appendix F: References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## Appendix G1: Behaviors and Consequences Chart

CoLAB will formalize its disciplinary policy with the support of the school's founding governing board. However, our general thinking related to an appropriate range of consequences by action are listed below.

| Infraction Level | Behaviors | Hearing/Appeal Process | Range of Consequences/Outcomes |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Level 1** | 1. unexcused tardiness to school/class<br>2. foul or offensive language or gesture<br>3. wearing attire or displaying symbols that interfere with the rights of others or will cause a substantial disturbance or interfere with the educational process (wearing clothing that will insult a person or group or otherwise not be proper for school)<br>4. inappropriate affectionate behavior in a public place<br>5. using items which interfere with the rights of others or will cause a disturbance, compromise safety, or interfere with the educational process during regular school hours<br>6. disruptive behavior on school property or at a school-sponsored activity<br>7. causing minor damage to school property<br>8. littering<br>9. loitering<br>10. eating or drinking in prohibited areas<br>11. the use of electronic devices that cause a minor disturbance (such as, but not limited to, audio, text, photo, etc.) | Informal hearing before the person imposing the disciplinary outcomes and/or mediation | ● Verbal reprimand and/or short-term detention<br>● Voluntary alternative outcomes may include community service, restorative circle or conversation, mediation, or other appropriate restorative practices<br>● Meeting with the Dean and identifying school-based alternative consequences and/or loss of privileges<br>● Classroom-based consequences as prescribed by teacher (#s 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11)<br>● Less severe outcomes may be substituted by:<br>● Administration Outcomes issued by Peer Court Classroom based consequences instituted by teacher<br><br>OTHER OUTCOMES<br>● Confiscated items will be returned to the person(s) in parental relation(s) |
| **Level 2** | 1. insubordinate absence from class/school/detention<br>2. misrepresentation of a signature (forgery)<br>3. being disrespectful to staff<br>4. possession of lighters, matches, and incendiary devices on school premises or during school-sponsored activities<br>5. intentional misuse or unauthorized use of school district property<br>6. possession, distribution, or use of unauthorized medicines (including over the counter- medicines)<br>7. unauthorized sale or vending on school property<br>8. continuing or repeating Level I behaviors after prior corrective measures have been taken | Informal hearing before the Dean, Academic Director or their designee and/or mediation | ● Same as Level I and parents are notified<br>● Voluntary alternative outcomes may include community service, restorative circle or conversation, mediation, or other appropriate restorative practices<br>● Family conference and institution of short-term (3 weeks) behavioral improvement plan<br>● Meeting with Dean and to identify school-based alternative consequences and/or loss of privileges<br>● Detention over five days<br>● Up to three days assignment to alternative placement/class removal program<br>● Outcomes issued by Peer Court |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | OTHER OUTCOMES:<br>● Confiscation |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Level 3** | 1. action, verbal assault and/or abuse based on differences (e.g. racial, ethnic, religious, political, social, lifestyle differences, or gender expression, etc.)<br>2. foul or offensive language or gestures used in a confrontational manner<br>3. insubordination (deliberate and/or defiant refusal to follow a reasonable rule and/or request)<br>4. intentional plagiarism (using someone else's work and claiming it as your own)<br>5. giving, requesting, or obtaining test information (cheating on tests)<br>6. behavior which interferes with the operation of a school bus<br>7. confrontations involving physical contact<br>8. stealing<br>9. reckless or intentional conduct or unauthorized use of school district property which causes significant damage<br>10. gambling<br>11. extortion (a threatening demand for goods or services)<br>12. student-to-person threat, bullying and/or harassment<br>13. giving false information concerning school-related behaviors (lying)<br>14. lewd or sexual behavior on school premises or during school-sponsored activities<br>15. reckless or intentional conduct which could cause physical injury<br>16. intentional misuse of any school district computer hardware/ software in any fraudulent or destructive manner, including but not limited to sending a harmful or threatening message, unauthorized entry into a file, altering software programs vandalizing hardware or software components. (Refer District Computer & Internet Use)<br>17. forcing someone to commit a dangerous or demeaning act (hazing including initiations)<br>18. willful action or language that substantially disrupts the normal operations of school<br>19. aiding and/or abetting in any level three behavior<br>20. vandalism | Expanded informal administrative hearing and/ or mediation<br>Expulsion hearing and/or long-term suspension hearing as provided by law where there is a potential for criminal charges | ● Up to 5 days out of school suspension or preferably up to 5 days assignment to the alternative placement/classroom removal program and/or loss of privileges.<br>● Voluntary alternative outcomes may include community service, restorative circle or conversation, mediation, or other appropriate restorative practices.<br>● Restorative conferencing may be utilized to reduce the period of suspension<br>● Family conference and institution of short/long term (3+weeks) behavioral improvement plan<br>● Outcomes issued by Peer Court<br><br>OTHER OUTCOMES<br>● Offense #5 – If the exam is a state/national exam, student may be barred from future exams<br>● Potential criminal and/or civil lawsuits financial restitution (paying for damages)<br>● Confiscation<br>● Expulsion and/or longer out of school suspension as authorized by the laws of Connecticut and/or more than five days assignment to the alternative placement/classroom removal program |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 21. the use of electronic devices and/or social media that causes a substantial disturbance and/or compromises safety (such as, but not limited to, audio, video, text, photo, etc.)<br>22. willful and deliberate attempt to leave or leaving the campus<br>23. use of and/or possession of tobacco, nicotine and/or paraphernalia (such as, but not limited to e-cigarettes, vaporizers in any shape or form, other smoking, or delivery devices) on school premises or during school sponsored activities<br>24. use of lighters, matches and incendiary devices on school premises or during school-sponsored activities<br>25. continuing or repeating Level II behaviors after prior corrective measures have been taken | | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Level 4** | 1. bringing and/or possessing unauthorized weapons or explosives to school or a school sponsored activity<br>2. making a bomb scare/false alarm<br>3. burglary<br>4. the willful or reckless setting of a fire<br>5. distribution, sale or manufacture of controlled substances illegal substances, synthetic substances ("designer drugs"), tobacco, nicotine, and/or paraphernalia (such as, but not limited to e-cigarettes, vaporizers in any shape or form other smoking or delivery devices) or the inappropriate use of prescriptions and/or over-the-counter medicines on school property or at a school-sponsored activity<br>6. falsification of official school documents (any *document* bearing the official school seal, such as, but not limited to, transcripts, diplomas, or attendance records)<br>7. assault or reckless conduct which causes physical emotional, psychological injury (assault – verbal sexual, physical confrontation causing serious injury)<br>8. upon investigation by school officials, there is a serious and validated student-to-staff threat<br>9. possession, use, or being under the influence of a controlled substance, illegal substance, synthetic substance (designer drug) inappropriately used prescription and/or over-the-counter medicine, alcohol, or in possession of drug paraphernalia on school property or at a school-sponsored activity<br>10. aiding and/or abetting in any level four behavior<br>11. conduct so serious that it requires more than Level III outcomes | Long term suspension hearing with Executive Director Expulsion hearing as provided by law | ● Expulsion and/or longer out of school suspension as authorized by the laws of Connecticut and/or more than five days assignment to the alternative placement/classroom removal program.<br>● *Suspended students will be required to participate in a re-entry meeting that includes parent/guardians and the Dean.<br><br>OTHER OUTCOMES<br>● Behaviors # 1-9 – potential criminal charges, juvenile delinquency petitions<br>● Possible removal from class<br>● Loss of library/computer privileges<br>● Confiscation<br>● Voluntary alternative outcomes may include the use of restorative conferencing to reduce the period of suspension |

# Appendix G2: CoLAB Code Framework

The CoLAB Code serves as the foundation for fostering a positive, inclusive, and dynamic learning environment at Taino CoLAB Waterbury. It is designed to develop students as successful community members, young professionals, and individuals in broader society. This framework document outlines the key components of the CoLAB Code, its implementation, and the research supporting this approach.

## CoLAB Code Summary

### C - Cultivate Curiosity and Innovation:

- Encourage inquiry-based learning and diverse perspectives.
- Embrace new ideas, including AI tools, for enhanced learning.
- Approach challenges with a growth mindset and learn from mistakes.

### O - Own Your Learning and Development:

- Take responsibility for academic progress and personal growth.
- Set and work towards academic and personal goals.
- Seek help and resources when needed, and track progress.

### L - Lead with Integrity and Respect:

- Show respect for yourself, others, and the learning environment.
- Act with honesty and integrity in all situations.
- Communicate politely and professionally, and listen attentively to others.

### A - Actively Participate and Collaborate:

- Attend classes on time and be prepared to learn.
- Engage in class discussions and collaborative projects.
- Value diverse contributions and foster a team spirit.

### B - Build a Positive and Inclusive Community:

- Be responsible and follow school rules and policies.
- Participate in community and service-learning activities.
- Show empathy and compassion towards others.

## Implementation and Reinforcement

The successful implementation and reinforcement of the CoLAB Code are essential to creating a thriving educational environment at Taino CoLAB Waterbury. This section outlines the strategies and practices that will be employed to ensure that the CoLAB Code is effectively integrated into the daily lives of students and staff. By focusing on positive behavior reinforcement, restorative practices, habit formation, inclusivity, and consistent adult modeling, we aim to foster a culture where the CoLAB Code is not just a set of guidelines, but a lived experience that shapes our school community.

1. **Positive Behavior Reinforcement:**
    - Encourage and celebrate behaviors that align with CoLAB's core values.
    - Recognize and reward students who exemplify the CoLAB Code.
2. **Restorative Practices:**
    - Use restorative justice principles to address misbehavior, focusing on repairing harm and restoring relationships.
    - Implement these practices within the SRBI or MTSS framework.
3. **Habit Formation:**
    - Develop essential behaviors through the Habits of Mind over four years.
    - Integrate these habits into daily routines and classroom activities.
4. **Inclusivity and Equity:**
    - Ensure all students are treated fairly with supports tailored to individual needs.
    - Promote a respectful and inclusive environment for all.
5. **Consistent Adult Modeling:**
    - Adults in the school community model expected behaviors.
    - Reinforce the CoLAB Code through daily interactions and practices.

**Supporting Research**

1. **Inquiry-Based Learning:**
    - Research supports that inquiry-based learning enhances critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Barron & Darling-Hammond, 2008).
2. **Growth Mindset:**
    - Carol Dweck's research on growth mindset shows that students who believe their abilities can be developed through hard work and dedication achieve higher levels of success (Dweck, 2006).
3. **Restorative Practices:**
    - Studies indicate that restorative practices reduce suspensions and improve school climate by promoting positive behavior and accountability (González, 2012).
4. **Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS):**
    - PBIS is a research-based framework that enhances academic and social behavior outcomes for students by implementing proactive strategies (Horner et al., 2010).
5. **Social-Emotional Learning (SEL):**
    - SEL programs have been shown to improve students' social skills, emotional regulation, and academic performance (Durlak et al., 2011).

The CoLAB Code is an integral part of Taino CoLAB Waterbury's approach to education, aligning with the school's values and the 4D Quantum Learning Matrix. By cultivating curiosity, ownership, leadership, active participation, and community building, the CoLAB Code prepares students for success in school and beyond.

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# Appendix H1: Marketing and Recruitment Plan for CoLAB Charter School

**Goals and Objectives:**
The primary goal of CoLAB Charter School's marketing and recruitment plan is to exceed student enrollment targets for each grade level by April 1 every year. Secondary goals include increasing awareness of the school within Waterbury and surrounding areas, establishing strong community engagement and partnerships, and ensuring a diverse and inclusive student body. Additionally, the plan aims to achieve full enrollment capacity for each grade level by the start of each academic year and build strong relationships with local community organizations, businesses, and families.

**Target Audience:**
The target audience for CoLAB's marketing efforts includes parents and guardians of students entering grades 9-12, community leaders, educational influencers, local businesses, and prospective staff members. By focusing on these groups, CoLAB aims to create a broad base of support and interest in the school.

**Branding and Messaging:**
CoLAB will develop and maintain a strong, recognizable brand that reflects its mission, vision, and values. The tagline "Empowering Future-Ready Leaders" will be prominently featured in all marketing materials. Core messages will emphasize the innovative and future-ready education provided by CoLAB, with a focus on leadership, advocacy, and digital literacy. The school's unique 4D Quantum Learning Matrix, which integrates Inquiry, Design Thinking, Creative Arts, and Service Learning, and its commitment to high academic standards and personalized learning pathways, will be highlighted.

**Timeline:**
The marketing and recruitment efforts will follow a structured timeline. Planning and preparation will take place in July and August, with the initial outreach and marketing launch occurring in September and October. Engagement and lead nurturing activities will continue through November and December, followed by a focused application push and follow-ups in January and February. The final push and confirmation of enrollments will be completed in March.

**Marketing Strategies:**
CoLAB's marketing strategies will encompass both digital and traditional approaches.

**Digital Marketing:**
The school's website will be developed to be user-friendly, mobile-responsive, and informative, featuring virtual tours, testimonials, application forms, and detailed program descriptions. Active social media profiles on platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn will share student success stories, school events, and educational content regularly. Email marketing will involve building an email list of interested families and sending monthly newsletters with updates and important dates. Additionally, the website will be optimized for search engines, and Google AdWords will be used to ensure visibility in search results.

**Traditional Marketing:**
Traditional marketing efforts will include distributing flyers and brochures at local community centers, libraries, and businesses, placing eye-catching billboards and banners in high-traffic areas around Waterbury, and sending personalized letters and brochures to families in target areas, highlighting key benefits and upcoming open house dates.

**Community Engagement:**
Community engagement will be a crucial part of the plan. CoLAB will host regular open house events and school tours to showcase its facilities and programs, including virtual open houses for convenience. The school will participate in local fairs, festivals, and community gatherings to raise awareness and engage with potential students and their families.

Partnerships with local businesses, community organizations, and other educational institutions will be established to build a network of support and referrals.

**Media and Public Relations:**
The media and public relations strategy will involve sending press releases to local newspapers, radio stations, and TV channels about significant achievements, events, and newsworthy updates. School representatives will appear on local radio and TV programs to discuss CoLAB's mission and unique educational model. Articles and blog posts on educational topics will be published to showcase CoLAB's expertise and innovative approaches.

**Recruitment Strategies:**
The recruitment strategies will ensure a smooth and effective enrollment process.

**Application Process:**
The online application process will be straightforward and accessible, with clear instructions and support for families who need assistance. Workshops and webinars will guide prospective students and their families through the application process, and one-on-one support will be available as needed.

**Student Ambassadors:**
A Student Ambassadors Program will be established, selecting current students to serve as ambassadors. These students will share their experiences and answer questions from prospective families. Peer-to-peer outreach will be encouraged, utilizing social media and school events to connect with prospective students.

**Data-Driven Recruitment:**
Data analytics will be used to track and analyze enrollment patterns, adjusting strategies as needed to meet recruitment goals. Follow-up communications will be implemented to ensure consistent and personalized communication with interested families.

**Evaluation and Adjustments:**
The effectiveness of the marketing and recruitment efforts will be continuously monitored and evaluated. Key metrics such as website traffic, social media engagement, event attendance, and application numbers will be tracked. Feedback from new enrollees and their families will be collected to understand what attracted them to CoLAB and identify areas for improvement. Monthly reviews of marketing and recruitment efforts will be conducted, and strategies will be adjusted based on data and feedback to optimize results.

## Appendix H3: Staff Job Descriptions

CoLAB will implement a robust hiring process which ensures that all selected staff have the capacity and disposition necessary to provide a high-quality education to its students. All core content staff will be required to have state licensure. A waiver has been presented to allow flexibility for licensure to allow industry professionals and college professors to support our electives, extended learning and enrichment offerings. The core criteria which we seek in our Academic Director and teachers are as follows:

**Academic Director**
**Job Description:** Academic Director

**Reports to:** CAO
**Job Summary:**
The Academic Director is responsible for providing visionary leadership to CoLAB - Waterbury, ensuring the school's mission is upheld and that all scholars have the opportunity to achieve academic success. The CAO will oversee all aspects of school operations, with a focus on instructional improvement, staff development, and community engagement.
**Key Responsibilities:**

- Lead the development and implementation of a rigorous and innovative curriculum that aligns with the school's mission and vision.
- Provide instructional leadership to teachers and staff, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and high expectations.
- Collaborate with leaders and teachers to design and implement instructional practices that improve student learning outcomes.
- Oversee the recruitment, hiring, and evaluation of staff to ensure a high level of performance and commitment to the school's mission.
- Develop and maintain positive relationships with parents, community members, and other stakeholders to support student success.
- Manage the school's budget and resources effectively to support educational programs and initiatives.
- Ensure compliance with all relevant laws, regulations, and policies governing charter schools.

**Qualifications:**

- Minimum ten years of professional experience with at least five years in K-12 school leadership.
- Bachelor's and Master's degrees required.
- Experience designing or implementing curriculum initiatives and practices preferred.
- Strong oral and written communication skills.
- Ability to organize complex tasks for multiple stakeholders.
- Demonstrated ability to facilitate design conversations toward instructional improvement.
- Self-reflective and open to feedback, with a drive for excellence and continuous growth.
- Entrepreneurial spirit and a positive, solutions-oriented attitude.

**Job Description:** Teacher
**Reports to:** Academic Director
**Job Summary:**

The Teacher at CoLAB plays a critical role in delivering high-quality instruction and fostering a positive learning environment for students. Teachers are expected to uphold the school's mission, vision, and KDE (Knowledge, Dispositions, and Essential Skills) while meeting the diverse needs of students from underserved communities.

**Key Responsibilities:**

- Implement a rigorous curriculum that meets the needs of all students and aligns with the school's mission and vision.
- Create a safe, supportive, and challenging classroom environment conducive to learning.
- Utilize technology and digital resources to enhance instruction and student learning.
- Set and achieve ambitious learning goals for students, closing achievement gaps.
- Collaborate with colleagues to continuously improve teaching and learning practices.
- Engage in continuous professional growth and development.

**Qualifications:**

- Master's degree preferred, with state certification in general education or eligibility for interstate reciprocity where applicable.
- Demonstrated ability to teach rigorous curriculum in a high-expectation environment.
- Passion and commitment to teaching students from underserved communities.
- Comfort with technology and digital resources.
- Desire for continuous professional growth and development.

**Teacher**

- Belief in the mission, vision of CoLAB
- Master’s degree (preferred) and state certification in general education or eligibility for interstate reciprocity where applicable.
- Demonstrated ability to teach rigorous curriculum in an environment of high expectations
- Demonstrated ability to create safe, supportive and challenging classroom environments.
- High comfort level with technology and digital based resources
- Passion and commitment to teaching students from underserved communities and closing achievement gaps.
- Relentless drive to set and achieve ambitious learning goals for students.
- Eagerness to share and collaborate with peers on continuously improving teaching and learning.
- Desire for continuous professional growth and development.

Additional qualifications and expertise may be expected based on the specific course which a teacher will facilitate or the population they serve (for example TESOL licensure or certifications pertinent to pathways).All employment contracts at CoLAB will be “at will”. This means that they may be terminated at any time by the school for cause. A formal process for such will be documented in our employee 114 handbook which is further described later in this application.

## Appendix H4: Expected Qualifications and Certification

**Year 1**
**Teacher: Student 6:100 or 1:16**

| **Admin** | **FTE** | **Certification** |
|---|---|---|
| Executive Director | 1 | Admin endorsement preferred |
| Chief Academic Officer | 1 | Admin endorsement preferred |
| Operations Director | 1 | |
| Academic Director | 1 | Admin endorsement preferred |
| **Staff** | | |
| Office Assistant | 1 | |
| ELA Teacher | 1 | Certification required |
| Math Teacher | 1 | Certification required |
| Science Teacher | 1 | Certification required |
| History Teacher | 1 | Certification required |
| Technology Teacher | 1 | |
| SPED Teacher | .5 | Certification required |
| TESOL Teacher | .5 | Certification required |
| Pathways Director | 1 | |
| Dean of Culture | 1 | |
| Social Worker | .5 | |
| Guidance Counselor | 1 | |
| Nurse | 1 | |
| Custodian | 1 | |
| Cleaner | .5 | |
| Registrar/Enrollment Coord | 1 | |
| Security Officer | 1 | |
| **Total FTEs** | **18** | |

**Year 2**
**Teacher:Student 14:200 or 1:14**

| **Admin** | **FTE** | **Certification** |
|---|---|---|
| Executive Director | 1 | Admin endorsement preferred |
| Chief Academic Officer | 1 | Admin endorsement preferred |
| Operations Director | 1 | |
| Academic Director | 1 | Admin endorsement preferred |
| **Staff** | | |
| Office Assistant | 1 | |
| ELA Teacher | 2 | Certification required |
| Math Teacher | 2 | Certification required |
| Science Teacher | 2 | Certification required |
| History Teacher | 2 | Certification required |
| Technology Teacher | 2 | |
| Computer Science | 1 | |
| Language Teacher | 1 | Certification required |
| SPED Teacher | 1 | Certification required |
| TESOL Teacher | 1 | Certification required |
| Pathways Director | 1 | |
| Media Specialist | 1 | |
| Director of Student Supports | 1 | |
| Dean of Culture | 1 | |
| Social Worker | .5 | |
| Guidance Counselor | 1 | |
| Nurse | 1 | |
| Custodian | 1 | |
| Cleaner | 1.5 | |
| Registrar/Enrollment Coord | 1 | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Security Officer | 1 | |
| **Total FTEs** | **30.5** | |

**Year 3**
**Teacher:Student 19:300 or 1:15**

| **Admin** | **FTE** | **Certification** |
|---|---|---|
| Executive Director | 1 | Admin endorsement preferred |
| Chief Academic Officer | 1 | Admin endorsement preferred |
| Operations Director | 1 | |
| Academic Director | 1 | Admin endorsement preferred |
| **Staff** | | |
| Office Assistant | 1 | |
| Data Analyst | 1 | |
| ELA Teacher | 3 | Certification required |
| Math Teacher | 3 | Certification required |
| Science Teacher | 3 | Certification required |
| History Teacher | 3 | Certification required |
| Technology Teacher | 2 | |
| Computer Science | 2 | |
| Language Teacher | 1 | Certification required |
| SPED Teacher | 1 | Certification required |
| TESOL Teacher | 1 | Certification required |
| Pathways Director | 1 | |
| Media Specialist | 1 | |
| Dean of Culture (gr 9/10) | 1 | |
| Dean of Culture (gr 11/12) | 1 | |
| Director of Student Supports | 1 | |
| Social Worker | 1 | |
| Guidance Counselor | 1.5 | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Community Outreach | 1 | |
| Nurse | 1 | |
| Custodian | 1 | |
| Cleaner | 1.5 | |
| Registrar/Enrollment Coord | 1 | |
| Security Officer | 1 | |
| **Total FTEs** | **40** | |

**Year 4**
**Teacher:Student 26:400 or 1:15**

| **Admin** | **FTE** | **Certification** |
|---|---|---|
| Executive Director | 1 | Admin endorsement preferred |
| Chief Academic Officer | 1 | Admin endorsement preferred |
| Operations Director | 1 | |
| Academic Director | 1 | Admin endorsement preferred |
| **Staff** | | |
| Office Assistant | 1 | |
| Data Analyst | 1 | |
| ELA Teacher | 4 | Certification required |
| Math Teacher | 4 | Certification required |
| Science Teacher | 4 | Certification required |
| History Teacher | 4 | Certification required |
| Technology Teacher | 2 | |
| Computer Science | 2 | |
| Language Teacher | 2 | Certification required |
| SPED Teacher | 2 | Certification required |
| TESOL Teacher | 2 | Certification required |
| Pathways Coordinator | 1 | |
| Pathways Instructor | 3 | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Media Specialist | 1 | |
| Dean of Culture (gr 9/10) | 1 | |
| Dean of Culture (gr 11/12) | 1 | |
| Director of Student Supports | 1 | |
| Social Worker | 1 | |
| Guidance Counselor | 2 | |
| Community Outreach | 1 | |
| Nurse | 1 | |
| Custodian | 1 | |
| Cleaner | 1.5 | |
| Registrar | 1 | |
| Enrollment Coordinator | 1 | |
| Security Officer | 2 | |
| **Total FTEs** | **51.5** | |

# Appendix H5: Draft AI Tools Acceptable Use Policy Draft

Overview

In response to the rapid growth of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies and their potential to enhance educational experiences, Taino CoLAB Charter School is dedicated to ensuring the responsible and effective use of AI tools in our schools. This addendum to the district's Acceptable Use Policy outlines guidelines and expectations for using AI technologies. The goal is to ensure all tools used for learning, teaching, and administration align with our mission and values.

Definitions

- Artificial Intelligence (AI): Computer systems or software that perform tasks requiring human intelligence, including but not limited to learning, decision-making, and language processing.
- Large Language Models (LLMs): A type of AI that processes and generates human-like text based on vast amounts of data. LLMs can understand, converse, translate, and create content in natural language.
- Machine Learning: A subset of AI involving computers learning from data without being explicitly programmed for specific tasks.
- Natural Language Processing (NLP): AI's ability to understand and generate human language.
- Generative AI: AI technologies that generate new content, including text, images, audio, and video, based on their training data. These tools can be used for creative and educational purposes but must be used with consideration for accuracy, appropriateness, and originality.

Access and Permissions

- Access to approved AI tools is granted to students, faculty, and staff for educational and administrative purposes only.
- Requests for new AI tools must be submitted to the CAO for review and approval, ensuring compliance with district standards for privacy, security, and educational value. Submissions must adhere to the process outlined [here (link to web page or resource guide)].
- AI tools are not considered approved until final authorization has been granted, signed, and communicated by the CAO

Ethical Use

- Users must not employ AI tools to conduct or support cheating, plagiarism, or any academic dishonesty.
- Users must not employ AI tools to automate decision-making without human oversight. The district believes in the Always Center Educators (ACE) model promoted by the United States Department of Education. Any output of artificial intelligence or machine learning will be limited to suggestions and recommendations—final decisions must be made by human beings with the appropriate review, nuance, and context.
- Generative AI content that is inappropriate, offensive, or harmful is strictly prohibited.
- Respect and courtesy must be maintained when interacting with AI systems, recognizing their impact on the learning environment.
- Users should be aware of the potential for AI bias in tools and consider this when interpreting AI-generated information or content. The district encourages critical thinking and scrutiny of AI outputs and training data sets for large language models and other generative AI tools, promoting discussions on how biases can affect the fairness and accuracy of AI-generated content. Natural language processing functions are expected to be accessible and consistent for students of all languages and dialects. Users are encouraged to report instances of perceived bias to the Technology Department for further investigation.

Privacy, Security, and Data Protection

- Users must be aware of data privacy concerns with AI tools, especially regarding the handling of personal and sensitive information.
- Personally identifiable, confidential, and/or sensitive information should never be shared with an AI tool unless such sharing is explicitly approved by the district.
- All AI tools must comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), and other relevant privacy laws.
- The district ensures that AI tools employed have robust security measures to protect user data from unauthorized access.
- Users are expected to be aware of and comply with the terms and conditions of all AI tools, specifically with respect to age requirements. The district Technology Department maintains a list of minimum age and parental consent rules here (link to district web page or resource guide).
- Users are responsible for securing their accounts and personal information when using AI tools.
- The district conducts regular security assessments of AI technologies to safeguard against vulnerabilities.

Academic Integrity

- AI tools should supplement the educational process without undermining the integrity of academic work. Examples of appropriate use include generating ideas for brainstorming sessions, providing tutoring in specific subjects, and automating administrative tasks.
- Direct submission of AI-generated work as one's own without proper attribution or reliance on AI for completing assignments without understanding the content is prohibited.
- Users must respect copyright laws and intellectual property rights when using AI tools. This includes not using AI to replicate or modify copyrighted materials without authorization and properly citing all sources of content, including AI-generated content, to avoid plagiarism.

Monitoring and Enforcement

- The district reserves the right to monitor the use of AI tools to ensure compliance with this policy. This may include real-time monitoring of network activity and/or maintaining a log of Internet activity for later review.
- There is no right to privacy on the district's network or devices. All users should operate under the assumption that all online activity, including digital communications and interactions with AI tools, will be visible to the district's system administrators.
- Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, including but not limited to suspension of access to technology resources, disciplinary measures as per the student and employee handbooks, and notification of supervisors, parents, or guardians.

Review and Modification

This policy will be reviewed regularly to adapt to new challenges and opportunities presented by AI technologies. Feedback from teachers, students, parents, and staff is welcome and can be submitted to the Technology Department for consideration during the review process. Updates to the policy will be communicated via district email and/or the user's preferred contact method.

| Appendix I1: Pre-Opening Budget | Code | | Budget Narrative/Description of Assumptions |
|---|---|---|---|
| **January 2025-August 2025** | | | |
| **REVENUE** | | | |
| | | | |
| **In-kind services** | | $0 | |
| **Private contributions** | | $2,650,000 | CSP - anticipated $1.25M over 2 years; additional anticipated planning year grants = $450K (PCLB); $225K (NSVF); $850K (PCLB Facilities Loan) |
| **Total Revenue** | | $2,650,000 | |
| | | | |
| **EXPENDITURES** | | | |
| | | | |
| **Salaries and Benefits** | | | |
| | | | |
| **Salary–Administrators** | ***111A*** | ***$185,000*** | 2 Admin (ED, CAO) for 12 months @ .5 FTE; Operations Coordinator (. 5 FTE) |
| **Salary–Teachers** | ***111B*** | ***$175,000*** | CoLAB Summer staffing and summer professional development Summer 2025 |
| **Salary–Other** | ***112A*** | ***$25,000*** | .5 FTE Community outreach |
| **Salary–Support staff** | ***112B*** | ***$0*** | |
| **Benefits** | ***200*** | ***$92,978*** | Payroll taxes equate to 10.95% of total compensaton. Fringe benefits equate to 13.20% in YR 1. |
| **Subtotal** | | ***$477,978*** | |
| | | | |
| **Services and Activities** | | | |
| | | | |
| **In-service staff development** | ***322*** | ***$10,000*** | Conferences, model school visits |
| **Pupil services** | ***323*** | ***$0*** | |
| **Field trips** | ***324*** | ***$0*** | |
| **Parent activities** | ***325*** | ***$0*** | |
| **Professional tech services** | ***330*** | ***$10,000*** | Computers for admin and Wifi |
| **Accounting** | ***330*** | ***$25,000*** | Financial consultant |

| Appendix I1: Pre-Opening Budget | Code | | Budget Narrative/Description of Assumptions |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Audit** | ***331*** | ***$30,000*** | Annual Audit of 501(c)3 |
| **Student transportation** | ***510*** | ***$0*** | |
| **Telephone** | ***530*** | ***$0*** | |
| **Postage and shipping** | ***530*** | ***$0*** | |
| **Travel** | ***580*** | ***$5,000*** | as needed for travel statewide and PD |
| **Subtotal** | | ***$80,000*** | |
| | | | |
| **Physical Plant** | | | |
| | | | |
| **Rent** | ***400*** | ***$275,000*** | 60K sq ft @ $6.50/sq ft |
| **Utilities** | ***400*** | **$27,500** | |
| **Custodial services** | ***400*** | ***$25,000*** | |
| **Maintenance and repairs** | ***400*** | ***$10,000*** | |
| **Renovations/expansion** | ***400*** | ***$500,000*** | Anticipate low or no interest loan for securing and renovating facility |
| **Subtotal** | | ***$837,500*** | |
| | | | |
| **Marketing and Development** | | | |
| | | | |
| **Advertising** | ***590*** | ***$10,000*** | mailings, signage, outreach |
| **Printing** | ***590*** | ***$5,000*** | promotion, marketing and print communication |
| **Insurance** | ***590*** | ***$3,000*** | General Liability, Professional, D&O, etc. |
| **Subtotal** | | ***$18,000*** | |
| | | | |
| **Supplies and Equipment** | | | |
| | | | |
| **Supplies–Instructional** | ***611*** | ***$10,000*** | start-up instructional materials during planning year |
| **Supplies–Administrative** | ***612*** | ***$10,000*** | start-up office, support and administrative supplies and materials |
| **Supplies–General** | ***690*** | ***$0*** | |
| **Textbooks** | ***641*** | ***$25,000*** | $250/student first year licenses, programs |
| **Library books** | ***642*** | ***$2,000*** | $20/student; 100 students |

| Appendix I1: Pre-Opening Budget | Code | | Budget Narrative/Description of Assumptions |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Computers** | ***700*** | ***$250,000*** | 1:1 devices for Y1 students and staff, 3D printers, software, Promethean boards |
| **Furniture** | ***700*** | ***$150,000*** | Based on classroom - $5,000 per classroom / $5,000 Admin. In YR 1. $5,000 Per New Class Room in Yrs 2-5. |
| **Vehicles** | ***700*** | ***$0*** | |
| **Other equipment** | ***700*** | ***$0*** | |
| **Subtotal** | | ***$447,000*** | |
| | | | |
| **Other Objects** | | | |
| | | | |
| **Other objects (e.g., in-kind)** | ***800*** | ***$0*** | |
| **Subtotal** | | ***$0*** | |
| | | | |
| **Loan Repayments** | | | |
| | | | |
| **Interest** | ***900*** | ***$0*** | |
| **Principal** | ***900*** | ***$0*** | |
| **Subtotal** | | ***$0*** | |
| | | | |
| **Total Expenditures** | | **$1,860,478** | |
| | | | |
| **INCOME LESS EXPENDITURES** | | **$789,523** | Carried over to Y1 income |

# Appendix I3: Facilities Funding and Borrowing Plan for CoLAB Charter School

**Overview:**
CoLAB Charter School aims to ensure financial stability and compliance with both Connecticut and federal laws by maintaining a structured schedule of borrowings and repayments. This program outlines the estimated funds to be borrowed, including details on the source, repayment schedule, and the purpose of each borrowing. This approach aligns with best practices in financial management for educational institutions.

**Eligible Funding:**
CoLAB Charter School is eligible for Program-Related Investments (PRI) facilities funding from the Public Charter Lending Bank (PCLB). CoLAB has engaged in ongoing communications with PCLB grant officers and plans to apply for facilities funding from the PRI fund during its planning year.

**Funding Details:**
Source of Funds: PCLB's PRI facilities funding.
Loan Amount: Up to $1 million.
Interest Rate: 0% interest loan for privately owned buildings.
Loan Forgiveness: Potential for loan forgiveness for publicly owned buildings based on performance metrics.

**Purpose of Borrowing:**
The borrowed funds will be utilized to secure a lease or purchase a building necessary for CoLAB's operations prior to or during the first charter term.

**Repayment Schedule:**
CoLAB Charter School's budget includes provisions for regular payments to PCLB to prepare for the potential repayment of the loan. This ensures that the school maintains financial readiness and compliance with repayment obligations.

**Contingency Plan:**
If CoLAB is granted the public-building, fully forgivable loan, the Board of Directors will reallocate the planned repayment funds to enhance and support the academic program. This reallocation will further bolster the educational offerings and resources available to students.

**Compliance and Best Practices:**
Connecticut and Federal Law Compliance: The borrowing and repayment plan adheres to Connecticut state regulations and federal guidelines for financial management in public charter schools.
Financial Transparency: CoLAB will maintain transparency in its financial dealings by providing regular updates on borrowings and repayments to the Board of Directors and stakeholders.
Risk Management: By including a contingency plan and maintaining a structured repayment schedule, CoLAB mitigates financial risks associated with borrowing for facilities funding.

**Monitoring and Reporting:**
Regular Financial Reviews: Monthly financial reports will be presented to the Board of Directors, detailing the status of borrowings and repayments.
Annual Audit: An independent auditor will conduct an annual audit to ensure compliance and accuracy in financial reporting.

# Appendix I4: Sample Fiscal Controls and Financial Management Policies

## 1. Budgeting and Financial Planning Policy

Purpose:
To ensure that CoLAB Charter School's financial resources are allocated efficiently and effectively to support the school's mission, goals, and objectives.

Policy:

- Annual Budget Preparation: The Executive Director, in collaboration with the Finance Committee, shall prepare an annual budget for the upcoming fiscal year. The budget must be aligned with the school's strategic plan and approved by the Board of Directors by June 30th of each year.

- Budget Review and Approval: The Board of Directors shall review and approve the annual budget, ensuring it reflects the school's priorities and is based on realistic revenue and expenditure projections.

- Monthly Financial Reporting: The Executive Director and the Finance Committee shall present monthly financial reports to the Board of Directors. These reports must include budget-to-actual comparisons, cash flow statements, and explanations of any variances.

- Multi-Year Financial Planning: Develop and maintain a multi-year financial plan to ensure long-term sustainability. This plan should include projections for enrollment, revenues, expenses, and capital needs.

- Amendments and Revisions: Any significant amendments to the approved budget must be submitted to the Board of Directors for approval. Adjustments within approved budget categories may be made by the Executive Director with Board notification.

## 2. Internal Controls and Audit Policy

Purpose:
To establish a framework for safeguarding the assets of CoLAB Charter School, ensuring the accuracy and reliability of financial information, and promoting operational efficiency.

Policy:

- Separation of Duties: Implement a system of checks and balances by ensuring that no single individual has control over all aspects of any significant financial transaction. Key responsibilities such as authorization, custody, record-keeping, and reconciliation shall be divided among different staff members.

- Access Controls: Limit access to financial systems and sensitive information to authorized personnel only. Regularly review and update access permissions.

- Transaction Authorization: Require proper authorization for all financial transactions. Authorization levels should be defined and documented in a delegation of authority matrix.

- Documentation and Record-Keeping: Maintain detailed and accurate records of all financial transactions. Ensure all transactions are supported by appropriate documentation, such as invoices, receipts, and contracts.

- Periodic Audits: Conduct internal audits regularly to review the adequacy and effectiveness of internal controls. Engage an independent external auditor to perform an annual financial audit and present the findings to the Board of Directors.

**3. Procurement and Expenditure Policy**

Purpose:
To establish procedures for procuring goods and services that ensure fairness, transparency, and the best value for CoLAB Charter School.

Policy:

- Procurement Procedures:
    - Develop and implement procurement procedures that outline the process for soliciting bids, evaluating proposals, and selecting vendors. Ensure compliance with state and federal procurement regulations.
    - For purchases below $5,000, obtain at least one quote. For purchases between $5,000 and $25,000, obtain at least three written quotes. For purchases above $25,000, conduct a formal bidding process.

- Approval Process:
    - Define approval thresholds for different levels of expenditures. For example, expenditures up to $10,000 may be approved by the Executive Director, while those above $10,000 require Board approval.
    - Require purchase orders for all purchases above a specified amount (e.g., $1,000) and ensure they are approved by authorized personnel before orders are placed.

- Vendor Selection:
    - Select vendors based on factors such as price, quality, reliability, and service. Maintain a list of approved vendors and periodically review their performance.
    - Avoid conflicts of interest by ensuring that staff involved in the procurement process disclose any potential conflicts and recuse themselves from decision-making when necessary.

- Payment Procedures:
    - Verify the accuracy and legitimacy of all invoices before processing payments. Ensure that payments are made only for goods and services that have been received and approved.
    - Require dual signatures for checks above a certain threshold (e.g., $5,000) to provide an additional layer of oversight.

- Expense Reimbursements:
    - Establish clear guidelines for reimbursing staff and Board members for business-related expenses. Require original receipts and a detailed description of the expenses for reimbursement requests.

Appendix J1: Timetable

| Function Area | Task | Timeline<br>Q1: January - March<br>Q2: April-June<br>Q3: July-September<br>Q4: October-December | | | | | | | Responsible Party |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 2026 | | | | 2027 | | | |
| | | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | |
| **Community Outreach** | Public presentations with local community partners, flyer distribution, public forums | | X | X | X | X | X | X | Founding team and Board |
| | Formal advertising for school and lottery. | | | X | X | X | | | Founding team and founding staff |
| **Student Enrollment** | Application development, including translation | | | X | | | | | Founding team and Board |
| | Application distribution on website and with community partners | | | X | X | X | | | Founding team and Board |
| | Hold first lottery | | | | | X | | | Executive Director |
| | Formalize student handbook | | | | X | | | | Executive Director with Board approval |
| **Curriculum** | Final Board approval of initial curriculum. Training of all staff on curriculum | | | | X | X | X | X | Board Chief Academic Officer |
| | Evaluation of implementation completed after the first Assessment Cycle | | | | | X | | | Chief Academic Officer |
| **HR/Staffing** | Final approval and implementation of job descriptions, hiring processes | | | X | X | X | X | X | Executive Director |
| | Pursue criminal background checks | | | | X | X | X | X | Executive Director |
| | Recruit, hire, and onboard special education and MLL staff to ensure adequate student support structures are in place | | | | X | X | X | X | Executive Director |
| | Track educator background and licensure to ensure the school is | | | X | X | X | X | X | Executive Director with founding staff |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | complying with all expectations/law | | | | | | | | |
| **Building Acquisition** | Acquire location and facility for school | | X | | | | | | Board with staffing of Executive Director |
| | Create facility completion schedule and establish time-bound benchmarks | | | X | | | | | Executive Director |
| | Outfit school building for launch | | | X | X | X | X | X | Executive Director |
| **Board Development** | Establish founding board | X | | | | | | | Board (existing members) |
| | Formalize and ratify bylaws | X | | | | | | | Board |
| | Elect Officers | X | | X | | | | X | Board |
| | Establish annual (July-June) performance goals for the school and Executive Director. | | | X | | | | X | Board |
| | Finalize Board Calendar | X | X | X | | | | X | Board with the support of the Executive Director |
| **Fiscal and Operations Structures** | Establish school as 501c3 | X | | | | | | | Board/Founding team |
| | Finalize fiscal policies/bring on fiscal consultant/CPA to support start-up operations | X | | | | | | | Board/Founding team |
| | Finalize transportation and food service plans | | | X | | | | | Board/Founding team |
| | Finalize school schedule | | | | X | | | | BoardFounding team |
| | Vote on annual budet | | | X | | | | X | Board |
| **Policy Development and Implementation** | Create and vote upon all relevant school policies including, but not limited to, FOIL, FERPA, Discipline, Complaints, Wellness, Fiscal, Enrollment | X | X | X | | | | | Board |
| | Develop a school safety plan | | | X | X | | | | Board with the support of the Executive Director |

# Appendix J2: Timetable Narrative

The timeline for the launch of Taino CoLAB Waterbury runs from the first quarter of 2026 to the third quarter of 2027, reflecting a strategic and methodical approach to ensure a smooth and successful opening. This comprehensive plan addresses all critical aspects required to establish a charter school that meets and exceeds regulatory and operational standards, underscoring our commitment to meticulous planning and execution.

Beginning in Q1 2026, we began the initial phase focused on laying the groundwork for the school's establishment. This included forming a dedicated planning team including hiring the Executive Director, securing necessary funding, and initiating the charter application process. These early steps have been crucial for building a solid foundation, allowing us to address any potential challenges proactively and ensure alignment with our mission and vision.

By Q2 2026, our efforts shift towards community engagement and outreach. Establishing strong relationships with local stakeholders, including parents, community leaders, and educational partners, is essential for garnering support and building a network of advocates for the school. This period also involves conducting thorough needs assessments to tailor our educational approach to the specific requirements of the Waterbury community.

Moving into Q3 2026, we intensify our focus on developing a robust academic framework. This phase includes designing the curriculum, aligning it with Connecticut state standards, and integrating innovative teaching methodologies such as inquiry-based learning and design thinking. Concurrently, we begin the recruitment process for experienced and passionate educators who align with our educational philosophy and values.

By Q4 2026, we expect to receive charter approval, marking a critical milestone in our journey. With approval in hand, we ramp up our student recruitment efforts in collaboration with LEAD, our community partner.. This involves launching an intensive outreach campaign to prospective students and families, providing information about the school's unique offerings, and processing applications. Our goal is to generate strong interest and build a diverse student body that reflects the Waterbury community.

Entering Q1 2027, we hold the enrollment lottery if necessary, ensuring a fair and transparent selection process for student admission. During this period, we also continue our community engagement efforts, hosting informational sessions and orientation events for accepted students and their families. Additionally, we conduct professional development sessions for our staff, ensuring they are well-prepared to implement our innovative curriculum and foster a supportive learning environment.

By Q2 2027, the focus shifts to the operational aspects of school preparation. This includes developing comprehensive policies and procedures, establishing administrative systems, and setting up the physical infrastructure. We finalize the location for the school, ensuring it meets all regulatory requirements and can accommodate our projected student enrollment. The setup of classrooms and learning spaces begins in earnest, along with the procurement of educational materials and resources.

As we approach Q3 2027, the final preparations for the school opening are in full swing. This includes completing the setup of the physical infrastructure, conducting final staff training, and ensuring all logistical

arrangements are in place. We also continue to engage with students and families, providing support and information to ensure a smooth transition into the new school year.

The culmination of these efforts is the opening of Taino CoLAB Waterbury in September 2027. This marks the beginning of our mission to provide a transformative educational experience that prepares students to be critical thinkers, social advocates, and digital leaders. The meticulous planning and execution detailed in this timeline reflect our unwavering commitment to excellence and our deep understanding of what it takes to open a successful charter school. Through careful preparation, strategic community engagement, and a focus on innovation and quality, we are poised to make a significant impact on the educational landscape of Waterbury.

# Appendix K1: Community Partnerships and Support Letters