Evaluation of the Application for

I3 Academy

For the Alabama State Department of Education

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Introduction

Charter schools in the state of Alabama were authorized by the state legislature in 2015 as a result of the passage of Act 2015-3, the Alabama School Choice and Student Opportunity Act. As a result, the Alabama Public Charter School Commission (APCSC) was established by the governor to authorize high-quality public charter schools in the state. To realize this goal, the eleven-member commission instituted a process of review of charter school applications in the state. To date, a number of charter school applications have been approved, and several applications have been found to not meet the rigorous and demanding specifications set out in the legislation and by the commission. The current review is of an application to establish the I3 Academy, a public charter school beginning in 2020.

History of I3 Academy Application

I3 Academy, the school that is applying for the charter, is named "I3" to stand for three words that being with the letter I: imagine, investigate, and innovate. The application notes that these three words will "represent the skills that teachers and leaders will foster and develop within learners who attend I3 Academy." This application has been submitted in order to create a school in Birmingham, AL that will serve students in the Woodlawn community and surrounding areas. The application was submitted on November 29, 2018.

Current Application Review

In June of 2018, the commission partnered with the Auburn Center for Evaluation (ACE) to review charter school applications, including the present I3 Academy application. Located within the College of Education on the Auburn University campus, ACE currently provides evaluations for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the National Science Foundation, the U.S. Department of Education, the Department of Labor, the Alabama State Department of Education,

McGraw-Hill Incorporated, and charter schools in the state. ACE also provides a variety of evaluation and consulting services in partnerships throughout the Southeast. The process of the present application review was as follows:

     1. The scoring team met and reviewed the guidelines established by the APCSC for evaluating applications. A rubric was distributed along with the application.

     2. Individual raters used the rubric to review the proposal and submitted their rubrics, along with descriptors and rationale to the director.

     3. Questions about the application process and state laws governing public charter schools were answered by Logan Searcy, who is the public charter school education administrator.

     4. Questions about the content of the application and rubric guidelines were raised at a capacity hearing held at the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) offices on March 11, 2019. The meeting was attending by I3 board members, Logan Searcy, Dr. Dan Henry (the ACE director), and Dr. Lisa Simmons (a reviewer). A question and answer session clarified details of the application.

     5. Following the capacity hearing, final consensus among the reviewer ratings was established. This report reflects that final consensus, which asked raters to examine whether each point of the evaluation framework was met, and whether the application, both in individual sections and in overall content, met or did not meet the standards established by the Alabama Public Charter School Commission. Although this report contains a thorough examination of the application and recommendations for approval or disapproval of the application, the final decision about whether to grant the charter exists entirely with Alabama Public Charter School Commission (APCSC).

Rating Scale

Application reviewers used the following scale (which reflects the criteria and scale in the rubric provided by the APCSC):

Meets the Standard

The response reflects a thorough understanding of key issues. It addresses the topic with specific and accurate information that shows thorough preparation; presents a clear, realistic picture of how the school expects to operate; and inspires confidence in the applicant's capacity to carry out the plan effectively.

Partially Meets the Standard

The response meets the criteria in some respects, but lacks detail and/or requires additional information in one or more areas.

Does Not Meet the Standard

The response is completely undeveloped or significantly incomplete; demonstrates lack of preparation; is unsuited to the mission of the authorizer or otherwise raises substantial concerns about the viability of the plan or the applicant's ability to carry it out.

Executive Summary

This application represents the plan to establish a public charter school, the I3 Academy in the Woodlawn community of Birmingham, Alabama.

The rationale for establishing the school is the poor performance of students in this region (e.g., the application states that 62% of third graders and 58% of fifth graders scored in the lowest category, "In Need of Support," on the Reading section of the ACT Aspire in 2017) as well as the low socioeconomic status of the community (e.g., the application states that in Woodlawn, "30.9% of households earn less than $15,000 compared to 22.7% in the City of Birmingham").

I3 Academy has not retained any educational service providers for the charter school implementation.

The table below illustrates the enrollment projection plan and timeline as it was presented in the application for years 2020 - 2025:

Campus Enrollment Projection

	Academic Year	Planned # of Students	Maximum # of Students	Grade Levels Served
Year One	2020-2021	420	420	K-5
Year Two	2021-2022	420	420	K-5
Year Three	2022-2023	420	420	K-5
Year Four	2023-2024	420	420	K-5
Year Five	2024-2025	420	420	K-5
At Capacity	2024-2025	420	420	K-5

I3 Academy Charter School Application

<u>Recommendation to APCSC:</u>   **<u>Approve</u>**

EDUCATION PROGRAM DESIGN & CAPACITY……………………………p.8
Meets the Standard

OPERATIONS PLAN & CAPACITY…………………………………………p.17
Meets the Standard

FINANCIAL PLAN & CAPACITY……………………………………………p.24
Meets the Standard

<u>Discussion:</u>

The Auburn Center for Evaluation has determined that the proposal for the I3 Academy does

meet the standard for approval based on both the submitted application and the subsequent

capacity hearing.

The I3 Academy presents a largely adequate application for approval by the Alabama Public

Charter School Commission. Almost all components are thoroughly discussed and thoughtfully

planned in order to satisfy the standards on the rubric. The review panel is of the opinion that the

application in aggregate demonstrates a sufficient capacity to implement a successful charter

school with very few areas that necessitating further development.

The educational curriculum is well-described and focuses on the individual needs of students

through a three-tiered system of intervention. The applicant has demonstrated plans and

strategies for community and family involvement (even though the areas addressing parental

outreach are less developed). There is a clear policy for student discipline and the culture of the

school is (and individual classrooms are) discussed. The operations plan offers compelling

support for professional development and student and teacher evaluation and assessment, but the

grievance/complaint process is underdeveloped. The proposed organizational structure and

leadership is a strength of the application, and a specific 5-10 year growth plan would help

delineate the sustainability of the Academy. Almost all elements of the school's financial plan

are developed and satisfactory, including fundraising and financial management.

Because there are many notable areas of strength in this application, the lack of clarity in a few

areas does not overshadow the strengths of this application. The panel is in agreement that the

application of I3 Academy is strong and comprehensive and that this school is likely to be

successful if granted a charter.

Educational Program Design and Capacity

Overall Panel Consensus: Meets Standard

Summary:

The educational plan presented in the present application is an ambitious and wide-ranging document. Plans covering school climate, the daily/yearly schedule, curricula and instructional design and strategies, and student and teacher recruitment are included and detailed. I3 Academy will implement a number of curricular components as part of an overarching three-tiered approach to intervention. In addition, the leadership capacity is clearly described and detailed. Specific information about how the application addresses (or doesn't address) points of the application rubric is presented below.

Analysis:

The review panel found that in all applicable cases related to educational program design and capacity, the application either partially or completely met the standards set forth in the rubric for charter school applications approved by the APCSC.

In particular, it was noted that I3 Academy will implement a number of curricular components which are aligned with Alabama state standards including a three-tiered approach to intervention, specific math and literacy labs for students, and the incorporation of extracurricular activities within the extended school day. In addition, programs aimed at addressing school climate and culture through social emotional learning are included along with a plan to incorporate restorative justice practices into the disciple policy. The daily and yearly schedule is included and the framework for evaluating and promoting students is sufficient.

While the sections of the application that denote services for students that will receive special

education services is nonspecific and underdeveloped at times, the sections addressing ELL, at-

risk, and high capacity learners were all sufficient.

The plan for community involvement is robust and the programing capacity is comprehensive

and compelling. Although aspects of cultural responsiveness will be addressed through morning

meetings and the discipline policy, this is an area that could be further developed through

intentional, specific cultural integration throughout the curriculum.

Overall, I3 Academy presents a robust plan for teaching and learning in the proposed public

charter school, and almost all of the details of that plan are sufficiently developed in such a way

that suggests a successful education program.

Program Overview

Panel Consensus Educational Program Terms: **Meets Standard**

 •The plan articulates the goals of improving STEM subjects and reading.

 •The essential program elements include a social-emotional component, high quality teachers, and a collaborative culture.

Panel Consensus Research Driven Program: **Meets Standard**

 •The program utilizes research supported programming including Response to Intervention, STEAM project based learning, and Professional Learning Communities.

Panel Consensus Culturally Responsive Program: **Meets Standard**

 •There is a three-tiered plan for instruction and intervention throughout this application.

 •The social-emotional programming (i.e., Second Step and CASEL) aim to create both a common language and a common culture for students.

 •The applicant presented further evidence during the capacity hearing that they are planning for and providing culturally responsive community building.

Curriculum and Instructional Design

Panel Consensus Basic Learning Environment: **Meets Standard**

 •There is an emphasis on flexible student grouping and small group interventions.

 •The student collaboration and discourse will be achieved through hands-on, inquiry-driven learning experiences for students.

Panel Consensus Curriculum Overview: **Meets Standard**

 •There is a framework of problem based learning and basic skill remediation to educate students.

 •The proposed curricula include supplemental literacy and math labs.

Panel Consensus Curriculum Development: **Meets Standard**

 •It is noted in the application that the curriculum development is to be the joint responsibility of the board, the school leaders, and the teacher leaders.

•There is evidence that planning time is to be incorporated into the structure of the school schedule through professional learning communities as well as common grade level planning time.

Panel Consensus Instructional Strategies: **Meets Standard**

•The application explains and gives examples of project-based learning and an integrated curriculum using a research-based justification.

Student Performance Standards

Panel Consensus Student Performance Standards: **Meets Standard**

•The standards set for each grade level are based on the Alabama Course of Study.

•The application states that the standards will also be used in "an intentional and systematic way that allows educators to leverage the state standards for targeted student instruction and a strong feedback system for students and parents."

Panel Consensus Academic Standards Beyond State Standards: **N/A**

•Although I3 includes additional standards for students related to social emotional learning, there are no additional academic standards beyond the state standards.

Panel Consensus Grade Promotion: **Meets Standard**

•Grade promotion is to be aligned with state placement and promotion requirements.

•There is a three-tiered intervention system for all students, and students being considered for retention will receive tier 3 intervention before retention decisions are made.

High School Graduation Requirements

Panel Consensus Exit Standards: **N/A**

•I3 Academy proposes serving students in grades K-5.

Panel Consensus Career/College Readiness: **N/A**

•I3 Academy proposes serving students in grades K-5.

Panel Consensus Dropout Prevention: **N/A**

•I3 Academy proposes serving students in grades K-5.

School Calendar and Schedule

Panel Consensus Annual Academic Schedule: **Meets Standard**

•The academic schedule includes 180 school days per year with an extended day (i.e., 8am – 4pm).

•There are 7 dedicated professional development days along with inclement weather days built in to the 10-month schedule.

Panel Consensus Daily and Weekly Schedule: **Meets Standard**

•The application includes sufficient information on the daily and weekly schedules including an explanation of the schedule.

•A strength of the application is the way tier 3 intervention time is incorporated into the schedule such that it does not take away from core academic time for students.

School Culture

Panel Consensus Culture of the School: **Meets Standard**

•The application emphasizes a culture and climate that is safe, warm, and inviting and that is built around shared values, beliefs, and expectations.

Panel Consensus Establishing and Maintaining Culture: **Meets Standard**

•A plan for establishing the school culture includes teachers and students working together to build classroom norms while administrators, teachers, and community leaders build the culture for the school.

•These norms will be created and implemented starting on the opening day of the school.

Panel Consensus Cultural Responsiveness: **Meets Standard**

•Elements of cultural responsiveness are incorporated into daily morning meetings.

•The capacity hearing allowed for an explanation of cultural responsiveness through the implementation of restorative practices, too.

Panel Consensus Typical School Day (Student and Teacher): **Meets Standard**

•The descriptions of student and teacher typical days are thorough and complete, and they are consistent with programming delineated throughout the application.

Supplemental Programming

Panel Consensus Summer School (if applicable): **Meets Standard**

   •The application indicates that summer enrichment program opportunities will include the services of local providers.

   •The applicant proposes an expansion of two-week sessions if the school is funded.

Panel Consensus Extra or Co-Curricular Activities: **Partially Meets Standard**

   •All extra- and co-curricular activities will be built into the regular school day.

   •While there is some discussion of extracurriculars, including relationships with local businesses, there is a general lack of detail including funding support.

Panel Consensus Student Mental, Emotional, and Social Development and Health: **Meets Standard**

   •A clear and compelling description of wrapround services including 3 tiers of social-emotional learning is included: tier 1 instruction will be given to all students daily, tier 2 includes one-on-one or small group instruction, and tier 3 will involve specific and intensive plans for students.

   •The school will employ a counselor, a community liaison, and a social worker.

Panel Consensus Supplemental Programming Parent Outreach: **Partially Meets Standard**

   •While the application mentions parental involvement, there is a notable lack of specific parental programming for parent outreach.

   •However, the capacity hearing provided a platform for the applicant to discuss these plans and they were satisfactory.

Special Populations and At-Risk Students

Panel Consensus Special Populations Plan: **Partially Meets Standard**

   •While there is a description of the overall plan to address special populations in the application, a limitation of the application is the limited special education staffing as well as the ratio of students with special needs to teachers and paraprofessionals.

Panel Consensus Expected Special Populations: **Partially Meets Standard**

•The application sufficiently explains its plans for meeting the needs of at-risk student groups, but the projection that "I3 Academy can expect to serve students with special needs" is nonspecific and insufficiently informed.

Panel Consensus Special Education: **Partially Meets Standard**

•The application demonstrates a process to identify and address the needs of students receiving special education services. There will be a lead teacher and the program will comply with all regulations.

•One area of concern related to the Special Education programming is that the current budgeting allotment of one Special Education teacher for the whole school seems unrealistic.

Panel Consensus ELL: **Meets Standard**

•The application articulates how ELL students will be identified through a home language survey and the WIDA ACCESS Placement Test.

•Although several types of accommodations will be used (e.g., translation services for parents), students will primarily receive instruction through the 3-tiered system.

Panel Consensus At-Risk: **Meets Standard**

•I3 Academy will utilize the services of a social worker, a counselor, and lead teachers to provide wraparound services to all students.

•The curricula and other supports for at risk learners are included (e.g., RTI, 3 tiers of instruction, math and literacy labs).

Panel Consensus HICAP: **Meets Standard**

•The application articulates how I3 Academy will identify gifted and talented learners and describes the program that will serve them.

•It is noted that leadership for the school has experience in this area.

Student Recruitment and Enrollment

Panel Consensus Recruitment and Enrollment Plan: **Meets Standard**

•Students will be recruited from the Woodlawn neighborhood revitalization footprint through a variety of marketing strategies. It is notable that the community outreach efforts have already begun.

•The enrollment plan in the application includes registration and waitlist procedures in detail, but the application lacked information on withdrawals, reenrollment, and transfers. During the capacity hearing, the software used to manage these enrollment changes was described and seems sufficient.

Panel Consensus Enrollment Policy: **Meets Standard**

•The process for enrolling students, including contingencies for over- and under-enrollment, is detailed clearly in the application.

Student Discipline Policy and Plan

Panel Consensus Discipline Policy: **Meets Standard**

•The applicant provides a tiered system of discipline that includes levels of offenses that corollate with levels of discipline.

•The discipline policy was discussed in the capacity hearing, at which time a restorative justice model was articulated.

Panel Consensus Distribution Plan: **Meets Standard**

•I3 Academy will utilize robocalls, parent meetings, social media, a parent newsletter, and an orientation to the school in order to distribute the student discipline policy through the code of conduct and the student handbook.

Family and Community Involvement

Panel Consensus Family and Community Assessment and Engagement to Date: **Meets Standard**

•There have already been and there will be community meetings, food sales at sporting events, parent surveys, and focus groups for teachers, education providers, and the community at large.

Panel Consensus Family Engagement and Cultural Inclusiveness (Ongoing): **Meets Standard**

•Although the application discusses cultural inclusiveness, few details are offered.

•The application includes multiple vehicles for parent engagement along with ways for the community to be involved.

Panel Consensus Community Resources/Contractual and Other Partnerships: **Meets Standard**

•School leaders have had meetings with 33 individuals from 24 local organizations including academic enrichment programs, museums, parks, camps, and cultural institutions.

•During the capacity hearing, more foundations and businesses were named as potential partners.

Educational Program Capacity:

Panel Consensus Leadership Panel Capacity: **Meets Standard**

•The application identifies qualified personnel for leadership and management roles, including a compelling group of board members.

Panel Consensus Community Relationship: **Meets Standard**

•The applicant provides convincing evidence of community support.

Panel Consensus Partnerships: **Meets Standard**

•The applicant has provided a compelling and diverse list of community partnerships, all of which would be assets for the proposed school.

Panel Consensus School Leader Capacity: **Meets Standard**

•The application names Dr. Martin Nalls as the Head of School and acting Principal of the school. His biographical sketch demonstrates that he has the experience and skills to lead the faculty of I3 Academy.

Panel Consensus Leadership and Management Panel: **Meets Standard**

•No ESPs have been hired because the applicant declined to utilize the services of an Education Service Provider.

•The assembled board demonstrates diversity and a commitment to public education.

Operations Plan and Capacity

Overall Panel Consensus: Meets Standard

Summary:

The operations plan presented by the I3 Academy addresses professional development, confirmed and potential community partnerships, and student performance assessments. Plans for staffing the school is presented, and the expertise of board members is outlined through individual biographical sketches. The application contains information about strategies and performance objectives to be applied to the school, and specific information about how the application addresses (or doesn't address) these and other points of the application rubric is presented below.

Analysis:

The review panel found that in all applicable cases the application for I3 Academy either completely or partially met criteria for the standards set forth by the rubric for charter school applications that is approved by the APCSC. In particular, the panel found that the proposed organization structure and leadership is strong: the governing board and advisory bodies are well-described and the qualifications of that leadership is compelling. The plan for hiring, managing, and evaluating staff is sufficient along with the related allocations for professional development of staff. The plan for facilities is appropriately developed in the application and the operations capacity is also sufficient. The areas of concern include the absence of a specific 5-10 year growth plan in the application, however this was not a requirement of the application form specific to Birmingham City Schools. It is notable that district partnerships were generally excluded from the application, but establishing such relationships with Birmingham City Schools

is a goal of I3 Academy if and when the application is approved. Overall, I3 Academy presents a

satisfactory plan for school startup and operations with very few limitations.

Legal Status and Governing Documents

Panel Consensus Legal Status: **Meets Standard**

>•The application reports that I3 Academy has filed for status as a 501(c) 3 organization.

Panel Consensus 5-10 Year Growth Plan: **N/A**

>•There is no specific 5-10 year growth plan included in either the application or the attachments. However, this was not a requirement of the Birmingham City application.

Organization Structure and Partnerships

Panel Consensus Organizational Charts: **Meets Standard**

>•The organization charts are presented along with the application.

Panel Consensus Proposed Partnerships: **Meets Standard**

>•Proposed partnerships include community organizations, universities, and out of school education providers.

>•A meeting of possible partners has been held and letters of support have been provided by many diverse entities.

Governing Board

Panel Consensus Philosophy: **Meets Standard**

>•The governance philosophy is described and the bylaws are based on best practices for charter schools from the National Charter School Association.

>•The philosophy will be reviewed by the board and shared to solicit input.

Panel Consensus Structure: **Meets Standard**

>•The structure and membership list of the board is included in the application.

Panel Consensus Membership: **Meets Standard**

•There are currently 11 members of the board that include parents, community leaders, community organizations, and education leaders.

Panel Consensus Selection: **Partially Meets Standard**

•The applicant indicates that members will be "strategically selected for a variety of skills necessary."

•The specific criteria for board membership are not detailed, but it was noted that a total of four parents will serve on the board. Two of those four seats had been filled at the time of the capacity hearing and the other two will be filled if and when the application is approved.

Panel Consensus Capacity: **Meets Standard**

•The extensive history of the board members working in the field of education distinguishes this applicant.

Panel Consensus Ethics: **Meets Standard**

•The application states that all board meetings will comply with the Open Meetings Law of the State of Alabama.

Panel Consensus Existing Relationships/Conflict: **Meets Standard**

•The Board will conduct regular meetings consistent with principles of transparency and avoidance of actual or apparent conflicts of interest in the governance of the school.

Panel Consensus Existing Nonprofits: **Meets Standard**

•The Goodrich Foundation will work with the I3 Academy, and it was noted during the capacity hearing that other foundations are potentially interested, too.

Advisory Bodies

Panel Consensus Advisory Bodies: **Meets Standard**

•There will be a Student Advisory Council, a Parent/Guardian Advisory Council, and a Community Advisory Council.

Grievance/Complaint Process

Panel Consensus Grievance/Complaint Process: **Partially Meets Standard**

•An incomplete discussion of how grievances will be handled appears in the document. The application says that students, parents, and guardians may initiate the procedure, but

the procedure itself lacks a determination about how the final administrative appeal will be heard.

District Partnerships

Panel Consensus District Partnerships: **Partially Meet Standard**

•No district partnerships with Birmingham Public Schools currently exist, although I3 Academy leadership expressed a desire to establish that in the future.

Education Service Providers (ESP) and Other Partnerships

Panel Consensus Evidence of Prior Success: **N/A**

•Because there are no named ESPs, the evidence of prior success of those ESPs is not applicable.

Panel Consensus Term Sheet: **N/A**

• This section is not applicable.

Staffing Plans, Hiring, Management, and Evaluation

Panel Consensus Employer/Employee Relationship: **Meets Standard**

•The application indicates that employees will be at will.

Panel Consensus Compensation: **Meets Standard**

•The application outlines a pay scale that will be slightly above the prevailing rates of surrounding districts, and the salary schedule is front-loaded per the capacity hearing.

•The benefits include state retirement and PEEHIP insurance.

Panel Consensus Recruitment: **Meets Standard**

•The school's strategy for recruiting teachers includes fostering partnerships to develop a pipeline, at least one inventive program, and an open house for prospective employees.

Panel Consensus Hiring/Termination: **Meets Standard**

•The hiring process will include an oral interview, a writing sample, a demonstration lesson, an interview with the principal, and a background check.

•Since employees will be at will, they may be dismissed at any time with or without cause.

Panel Consensus Staffing Chart: **Meets Standard**

•A completed staffing chart is included in the application.

Panel Consensus Senior Administration and Staff Relationship: **Meets Standard**

•The application clearly describes the relationship between senior leadership and staff.

Panel Consensus School Leader Evaluation: **Meets Standard**

•The process of evaluation for school leaders was discussed in the capacity hearing. It was noted that this will be the responsibility of the board.

Panel Consensus Teacher Evaluation: **Meets Standard**

•The applicant is considering three options for teacher evaluation: the Danielson model, the Marzano framework, and Kim Marshall's strategies for supervision and evaluation.

•It is clear that one goal of teacher evaluations will be to create an individualized plan for struggling teachers.

Professional Development

Panel Consensus Responsible Parties: **Meets Standard**

•Dr. Nalls, the Head of School, and Dr. Ferniarny, the Director of Student and Adult Learning, will be primarily responsible for professional development.

•I3 Academy will also use a train the trainer model with teacher leaders being trained during the zero year.

Panel Consensus Core Components: **Meets Standard**

•The 11 core components of professional development are outlined in the application and are linked to the stated goals of the school.

Panel Consensus Schedule: **Meets Standard**

•A schedule and description of the professional development that will take place prior to the school opening is included in the application along with a note that annual professional development is to occur throughout the year in a variety of contexts.

Panel Consensus Time Allotments: **Meets Standard**

•The application includes adequate time for staff development.

Performance Framework

Panel Consensus Academic and Organization Goals: **Meets Standard**

•Academic and performance goals are clearly elucidated throughout the application.

Panel Consensus Interim Assessments: **Meets Standard**

•The applicant notes that AIMSweb and MAP will be used for interim assessments and at the capacity hearing it was noted that other interim measures are under consideration as well.

Panel Consensus Student Growth and Proficiency: **Meets Standard**

•The school will measure and evaluate academic progress through the use of state standards.

Panel Consensus Academic Progress: **Meets Standard**

•Tools to measure academic progress will be used to monitor student progress and to identify students in need of support.

Panel Consensus Data Analysis and Management: **Meets Standard**

•A plan to collect and analyze student achievement data is presented in the application.

Panel Consensus Responsible Parties: **Meets Standard**

•School leaders (specifically the Director of Student and Adult Learning), teacher leaders, and interested board members will be responsible for monitoring progress.

Facilities

Panel Consensus Requirements: **Meets Standard**

•The school outlines the necessary facilities and square foot requirements, and it was reported during the capacity hearing that renovation plans are already underway.

Panel Consensus Specialty Classroom Needs: **Partially Meets Standard**

•Specialty classroom needs are loosely outlined, but it was noted that the renovation plans consider architectural input in order to address federal and state requirements.

Panel Consensus Administrative Office Needs: **Partially Meets Standard**

•Administrative office needs are loosely outlined, but it was noted that the renovation plans consider architectural input in order to address federal and state requirements.

Panel Consensus Athletic Program Needs: **N/A**

•The application does not include an athletic program.

Panel Consensus Other Needs: **N/A**

•There are no other specific needs outlined in the application.

Panel Consensus Steps Already Taken: **Meets Standard**

•Architecture plans, lease agreements, and financing plans were presented in the application and at the capacity hearing.

•The Goodrich foundation has put down a deposit to hold the facilities pending approval of the application.

Start-Up and Ongoing Operations

Panel Consensus Start-Up Plan: **Meets Standard**

•A startup plan is presented and includes a zero year for planning.

Panel Consensus Transportation Plan: **Meets Standard**

•I3 Academy has included an incomplete transportation plan in the application.

•During the capacity hearing, it was emphasized that this plan will be further developed closer to year one.

Panel Consensus Safety and Security: **Meets Standard**

•The application includes a safety plan and the budget includes multiple methods of security (e.g., resource officers, security personnel and equipment, background checks, etc.).

Panel Consensus Insurance Coverage: **Meets Standard**

•The applicant will obtain insurance that meets or exceeds the minimum state requirements.

Operations Capacity

Panel Consensus Applicant Team Capacity: **Meets Standard**

•The capacity for operations is demonstrated through board members with extensive school experiences.

Financial Plan and Capacity

Overall Panel Consensus: Meets Standard

Summary:

The Head of School and the CFO will create an annual operating budget for the school, which will include supporting financial information with forecasting and planning, with the guidance and support of the I3 Academy Board of Directors Treasurer and the I3 Academy Finance Committee. The budget will be approved and adopted by the Board of Directors during a regularly scheduled annual meeting of the corporation. Accounting operations, including management of annual audits, will be provided by third-party vendors when possible.

Analysis:

The review panel found that almost all of the financials required by the rubric satisfy the related standards. The systems, policies, and processes for financial management, including accounting, annual audit plans, the financial plan workbook, and the budget narrative, are all strengths of the application. The applicant team is qualified and capable, and the roles and responsibilities of each board member is well established.

However, the proposed financial plans lacked sufficient funding in a key area: special education teachers. While the budget includes one lead special education teacher and one paraprofessional to serve all 420 students, it was noted in the capacity hearing that I3 Academy will recruit teachers with a dual certification in elementary education and special education in order to address this limitation.

The application does include a budget for the proposed planning year and it incorporates fundraising and support from family foundations, in particular from the Goodrich Foundation. Overall the panel found that this application does present evidence suggesting the proposed

charter school maintains the financial capacity and expertise to manage a successful charter

school.

Financial Plan

Panel Consensus Systems, Policies, and Processes: **Meets Standard**

•A detailed description of the systems, policies, and processes the school will use for financial planning and oversight is included in the application.

Panel Consensus Roles and Responsibilities: **Meets Standard**

•The Head of School and the CFO will create the budget, which will then be approved by the finance committee and the board.

Panel Consensus Audit Plans: **Meets Standard**

•Annual audits will be completed by an independent CPA.

Panel Consensus Financial Plan Workbook: **Partially Meets Standard**

•A Financial Plan Workbook is included and it is mostly complete.

•Although a budget is included in the application, there seems to be an insufficient allocation for special education teachers.

Panel Consensus Budget Narrative: **Meets Standard**

•The included budget narrative is detailed and extensive.

Panel Consensus Fund Raising Plan: **Meets Standard**

•A viable fundraising plan is included in the application. In particular, fundraising will come from the Mike & Gillian Goodrich Foundation, community members, and community organizations.

•It was noted during the capacity hearing that there are other family foundations that have expressed interest in supporting I3 Academy.

Financial Management Capacity

Panel Consensus Applicant Team Capacity: **Meets Standard**

•The application describes the individual and collective qualifications of the team to manage the financial matters, the fundraising efforts, and the accounting matters. The application details training and compliance as well.

Panel Consensus Internal Financial Statements: **Meets Standard**

•The application includes a plan for preparing and distributing internal monthly financial statements. It is noted that these statements will be available on the school's website.

Panel Consensus <u>Audits</u>: **Meets Standard**

•The application indicates that annual audits will be conducted by an independent CPA.

Biographies of Panel Members

Daniel Henry, Ph.D.

In his last 40 years as an educator, Dr. Daniel Henry has been a high-school English teacher, a community college writing teacher, and a professor of educational psychology at Indiana, Central Michigan, and Auburn Universities. He began his career in program evaluation at the Indiana University Center for Evaluation where he directed the Michigan Small Class Size Evaluation, the Ohio Local Report Card Project, The Learning Perspectives Initiative, and several other large educational evaluations. He also directed the Kelly School of Business' evaluation of the Cisco Networking Academies. Dr. Henry has taught research and program evaluation at the graduate level and serves as a grant reader for the US. Department of Education. He has conducted program evaluation for entities as diverse as the USDA and Stenden University in Port Alfred, South Africa. In 2014 he founded the Auburn Center for Evaluation which has since its inception has conducted large-scale evaluations for the ALSDE (Alabama Reading Initiative evaluation), the National Science Foundation, Murray State, and McGraw-Hill Incorporated.

Lisa Simmons, Ph.D.

Dr. Lisa Simmons is an Assistant Research Professor at the Auburn Center for Evaluation. She began her career in education working at a residential school for students with severe to profound developmental delays. After earning her Masters in Developmental Psychology from Teachers College, Columbia University, Lisa began teaching in an early intervention classroom while she earned her K12 Exceptional Education teaching credential from the University of West Florida. Lisa then earned her Ph.D. in Educational Psychology from Auburn in 2017 where she worked as a graduate research assistant at the Auburn Center for Evaluation. Upon graduation, Lisa accepted a full-time position at the Auburn Center for Evaluation to continue her work there. During her tenure at the Auburn Center for Evaluation, Lisa has worked on 15 Federal 21st Century Community Learning Center grants and she has also spent time collecting data in public charter schools in Alabama.

Chadwick Springer, Ph.D.

Dr. Chadwick Springer is a Clinical Lecturer in the College of Education at Auburn University. He began his career in education as a graduate teaching assistant while earning his alternative master's degree in Business/Marketing Education. After earning his masters, he began working as an instructor at a community college helping to implement industry credentials while also pursuing his Ph.D. in Career and Technical Education. Upon earning his Ph.D., Dr. Springer started a computer science program at a Title I school where he was a Sara Spano Top Teacher nominee and he also mentored two National Center for Women and Information Technology (NCWIT) Award for Aspirations in Computing winners. In addition, Dr. Springer evaluated local industry to develop courses that provided a pathway to employment upon graduation. In his current role at Auburn University, Dr. Springer partners with the College of Business and teaches courses with embedded industry credentials to help ensure undergraduate students are prepared to enter careers in business.