

Executive Summary

Elevate Academy is a 6-12th grade start-up charter alternative school in Caldwell Idaho designed for meeting the needs of at-risk students. Elevate opened in August 2019 with 312 students. The school expects to enroll at least 462 students by 2021-22. The school's founders, Monica White and Matt Strong, are veteran educators and community leaders with a combined 40-years of education experience, including service as the principal and assistant principal of Caldwell's alternative Canyon Springs High School. Elevate Academy was founded on the premise that every student has a gift to give to the world. The job of education is to help students find their gift and provide them with the opportunities to realize their potential. Students that struggle in traditional settings must have options to find a school that better fits their needs.

When a student falls behind in a traditional high school setting, they lose their options for course electives. Unfortunately, for many at-risk students this is often where their talents are most recognized and their motivation for learning triggered. Elevate Academy serves students that have struggled elsewhere. The school's leadership believes that through "purposeful instruction students will take responsibility for leading their own lives and studying a career track that may include vocational and college paths or a combination thereof. By owning their educational pathway, students will become contributing members of their community and local economy upon graduation." Elevate Academy offers students a second or even a third chance if they commit themselves to the opportunity to learn.

Elevate operates on a year-round model, and students attend a four-day school week. The fifth day is dedicated to intervention for academically deficient students (most of our students), enrichment for students that are on or above grade level, and extended CTE opportunities. Dual credit opportunities are available for students. As a Caldwell-based CTE focused school, White and

Strong interviewed business leaders throughout the community. During their interviews, common themes emerged: 1) students need to have the literacy skills necessary to read and comprehend technical manuals; 2) students need a strong work ethic; and 3) students must be able to follow technical plans. Elevate’s academic model works to embed these skills throughout its curriculum and its instructional programming.

Through community partnerships and an innovative approach to hiring teachers Elevate offers multiple career options for its graduates. These career tech options were chosen based on the needs of the Treasure Valley manufacturers and businesses who will employ Idaho’s next generation work force. Elevate has chosen to serve grades 6-12 because academic failure in the 6th grade is a significant indicator of a student becoming a high school dropout. Through its intervention strategies, Elevate teaches a student math and reading, but at the same time educates him or her on how to take control of their decisions, how to live life from a responsible perspective versus a victim mentality, how to find purpose in their education, and how to engage even when it isn’t fun.

Based on their professional experience and the research and interviews they conducted over a planning year as Idaho New School Fellows (funded by the J.A. and Kathryn Albertson Family Foundation), White and Strong are equipping their teachers and school with accountability measures that reflect the actual skills and dispositions students are learning within a CTE school setting. Far too many schools serving large numbers of students in poverty or at-risk are losing their best teachers to burn-out. Top administrators are hesitant to lead these schools for fear of being labeled “failing,” and students become reluctant learners as their academic targets are based on raw achievement scores rather than on authentic measures of academic growth and achievement.

Elevate CSP Narrative

A. Project Goals

1. *Provide high-quality Career Technical Education (CTE) opportunities for at-least 460 at-risk students who have struggled in their traditional schools. We will measure effectiveness by awarding a minimum of 80% of students with two or more industry certifications (e.g. Welding, manufacturing, culinary, construction etc.) upon graduating within 5-years.*

2. *Take students that are severely credit deficient and move them towards high school graduation at an accelerated pace. During our start-up year (2019-20) we will develop a baseline documenting where our incoming students are per high school credits and from this establish targets that meet or exceed Idaho's 5-year graduation cohort rate.*

3. *Take students that are chronically absent and ensure that they attend school not less than 93% of the time. The average in Idaho for at-risk students is an attendance rate of 82%.*

4. *Ensure our students are making or exceeding expected growth targets based on the STAR assessment (which is nationally normed for at-risk youth) for reading and math.*

5. *Ensure not less than 80% of our graduates are employed or enrolled in college or a trade school or in the military. This will be documented by using exit surveys of our graduating students in 2020-21 through 2022-23.*

B. Educational Philosophy, Curriculum, Instructional Practices

Elevate's educational philosophy is founded on the belief that students who are disenfranchised by traditional education need different learning options. We make learning real for young people by connecting their academic learning with real life CTE. For example, students that participate in Culinary Arts have the opportunity to make math real. When students are working in our culinary kitchen they will actively engage in measurement, ratios and proportions. These skills

are based on Idaho standards that are connected to graduation requirements, but implementation is based on a real-life activity. For at-risk students like ours this is how they make sense of their world and learn.

Curriculum: Elevate Academy has designed and implemented a targeted curriculum model. Over the past year Elevate staff engaged a curriculum designer to construct our curriculum. The primary curricular focus was to create purpose driven lessons that connect CTE standards to Idaho's core academic content standards. Elevate built its curriculum by cross-walking between Idaho's state content standards and career technical standards. The curriculum is designed and delivered so that each student can manage and monitor their own progress throughout cycles (a 10-week cycle for high school students and 5-week cycle for middle schoolers). Each cycle is developed around the CTE course that a student is studying.

Core content is made available to our instructional team through our "Infinite Campus" learning management system. Target standards are chosen for each block and students work toward mastery in the content area standards. Students must meet the Third Tier of the learning hook to reach a mastery point in each standard. In addition to the assessed and performance recorded standards teachers will also weave in additional core standards while maintaining a focus on the standards that will impact the CTE courses and the knowledge needed to be successful in that particular career path. (More on this below).

Based on STAR assessment data from September 2019, a majority of current Elevate students are severely academic deficient. Three in four (73%) students score in the bottom quartile in reading. These academic deficiencies create additional curriculum challenges. Delivering on grade level content is challenging based on student's ability to read and comprehend basic text, and instructions for assignments. To meet students where they are, we are working with our teachers to

differentiate through small group direct instruction, utilizing leveled curricular materials and creating student intervention opportunities based on individual student needs.

At Elevate, our Career Technical Education courses are aligned to both state and federal CTE guidelines. To develop and align our CTE curriculum to local needs and opportunities, school co-founders White and Strong spent two months visiting local businesses and interviewing local business leaders. The interviews focused on two questions. First, what are you missing in the workforce for your business to grow and excel moving forward? Second, what specific skills do students need to have upon graduation to be successfully employed in your organization? What we learned from these conversations informed both our curriculum and our plans for school accountability. The most common answers to the first question “what are you missing in the workforce for your business to move to the next level” included: a) employees who show up to work and arrive on time, b) employees who understand you can’t use your cell phone during work hours, c) employees who understand you can’t take vacation during your first week of work, d) employees who use appropriate language, and employees who are drug free.

The second question, “what specific skills do students need to graduate to be successfully employed in your organization” yielded two strong points. Both are now embedded in the Elevate curriculum and instructional program. The first issue raised by employers was that too many current employees cannot read basic manuals and guides that are needed to do their jobs. The second pain point was that students are coming out of high school with Industry Certification, but their skills are not actually up to par with any basic skills needed to do the job. Employers reported this caused a serious disconnect with young employees who thought they were well trained and could not handle the realization that they were in fact unprepared despite having earned a paper certificate.

Elevate's curriculum and school culture is designed to engage students in the process of what it means to be a valuable employee. Our curriculum focuses on both necessary basic skills and the soft skills employers demand. We emphasize technical reading based on industry specific standards. We partner with local industry professionals to guide teachers and students in increasing the rigor and relevance of learning, so that when industry certifications are issued and endorsed by Elevate, they have real value to local business owners.

We develop students' soft skills through our use of the Power 100 curriculum. The Power 100 curriculum was developed by Monica White and Matt Strong for at-risk students. It was informed by teachers who work with at-risk students and a life-coach. The curriculum is designed to help a student move from a victim mentality (a mentality that they are a result of their circumstances and they have no control over their own lives) to a responsibility mentality (a mentality where their circumstances are a result of their decisions). This curricular model was tested by Boise State University professionals in its introductory year. Students that took Power 100 showed significantly higher growth in mathematics than their like peers that were not exposed to Power 100. Students that participated in the Power 100 curriculum had higher attendance rates and lower discipline rates.

We use an inclusive model to serve our special populations for their core content. They receive all instruction on grade level with their peers, and they attend the CTE courses with their peers. Curriculum specific to their Individualized Education Plan is delivered in small group or individual settings by Elevate's special education team.

Reading curriculum and differentiation for our diverse readers is a targeted focus for Elevate Academy. With recent data showing that a majority of our students are in the lowest quartile in reading, adjustments have been made to add additional reading instruction school wide. This

approach is happening two-fold. Younger students are working in ability groups with targeted interventions focused on their deficient skills. Our older students are working with one-on-one literacy coaches.

Instructional Program: our instructional program is comprised of four essential components: 1) Mastery learning that utilizes Problem Based Learning (PBL); 2) Career Technical Education to create purpose in core content classes; 3) Intentional intervention; and 4) Personal Development. These components work together to help students attach meaning to their learning and create a pathway that provides them with purpose and hope for their future.

Middle school students are divided into eight learning blocks. Each block lasts five weeks and focuses on one of the trades Elevate offers. In the first three years of school, students will explore each trade and be tasked with solving a problem directly connected to that trade. During that five weeks, students will also focus on specific state content standards that have been aligned with the CTE standard they are learning. During each block students are expected to reach mastery in the selected standards for math, English language arts, and either social studies or science. Social studies and science standards have been divided between the trades based on which standards aligned best with each trade.

High school students will start specializing in the 9th grade by narrowing down their CTE focus to just four trades. In 10th grade, they will have the opportunity to specialize and choose two fields of practice. During their 9th and 10th grade school years, all of the trades are aligned to a project-based learning process. In 11th and 12th grades, students will focus on the trades, and acquiring their remaining core content credits in English, math, economics, and government. Projects are aligned to their career technical goals, while at the same time aid students in working towards life after graduation. This may include college or direct entry to the workforce.

The instructional day is designed the same for all grade levels. Students take three core classes and a CTE class. Students are expected to meet mastery in the selected standards for the core classes and progress through the state defined standards for CTE as defined by the pathways created for CTE courses. Students begin the instructional part of their day in project lead. This is the time for teachers to connect with students one-on-one and check their schedule for the day. Once a student's schedule has been checked, they begin working on the skills and activities that they need to complete their projects. During the instructional day a student is scheduled into direct instruction time based on needs identified by their teacher. The only time that a student is not working on his or her core content is during 'shift' time when students attend their CTE courses. Students attend this course for one hour every day. During this time, the skills that they are learning in math, English, science and social studies are reinforced through the teaching of the CTE course. This is how connections are made between core content and their actual hands-on learning.

Eight CTE courses are offered at Elevate Academy. Courses that are offered were chosen based on local community and industry recommendations. Founders White and Strong spent two months interviewing local community leaders and business owners in an effort to gather data on which CTE courses would actually benefit students and local community businesses. As a result of this study, Elevate Academy offers manufacturing and welding, construction, culinary arts and graphic arts and design. This is the **production side** of our CTE offerings. The **service side** includes, business and marketing, medical arts with an EMT focus, criminal justice and firefighting. All programs are approved and supported by the Career Technical Education Division of the Idaho State Department of Education.

Every student ends their instructional day with targeted instruction based on their identified intervention needs. Monday and Wednesday are dedicated to reading, Tuesday and Thursday are

dedicated to math. This is an area that is modified everyday based on individual student needs. Overall this is a large focus of the work at Elevate Academy. With the academic deficiencies of our students, a focused intervention program for all students is absolutely critical. STAR 360 is used to derive which standards each student is deficient in, and to help teachers provide targeted grade level instruction.

Each student starts their day in a home room class based on the Power 100 curriculum. This is time that is dedicated to each student's personal development. Students are guided through activities that are based in reflection of themselves and their experiences. They then work to understand those experiences and choices they have control over. Students then move to understanding how to navigate situations and to understand that they have control over how they choose to navigate those situations. This work is designed for students to understand that they are not victims of circumstance, that for every action there is a cause and effect relationship that occurs. Once they gain this understanding, they become more deliberate in their decision making. Homeroom is also important in relationship building and setting school culture.

All core instructional materials, and some intervention instructional materials, are delivered through the Infinite Campus learning management system. Students track their progress through this system, they submit their work through google documents, and they use google calendar to schedule each day. Students also have designated Elevate Academy email addresses that are used for communication with their teachers. Each student is assigned a chrome book to use throughout the day. Elevate Academy is equipped with one-to-one devices to ensure that all students have access to all programming. Specialized technology is provided to students in CTE courses that require specific technology. For example, the business classes are equipped with HP computers that can utilize traditional office products that are particularly important to business operations. Graphic

arts and design use Adobe software and runs it on Apple computers that are specifically equipped for the design process.

Technology is also critical to the Elevate Academy assessment process. In order to provide timely interventions for students our STAR benchmark testing must be administered efficiently and often. One-to-one device deployment allows for this to happen. During the standardized testing window, we have the capability to efficiently test all students. This minimizes the loss and disruption of teaching and learning time.

In each learning block students are presented with a problem that they work to solve. They are required to apply their learnings to the solution and each block ends with students presenting their solutions and their learnings in presentation format. During the middle school years students have the opportunity to experience all of the trades we offer. This provides opportunity for a student to find areas that they enjoy, are talented in, and find purpose for their future studies and career.

Curriculum delivered in this way provides at-risk students an opportunity to engage in learning that they lose in more traditional school settings. When an at-risk student falls behind in a traditional school, they are forced to take more of what they have fallen behind in. For example, if a student fails a math class, the following semester they have to retake that math class and take another math class at the same time. Once this cycle begins a student will lose their elective courses and be forced to take the same course in the same way over. Their electives are often the areas where a student may excel, however, they lose that opportunity, their talents go untapped and they become increasingly frustrated. Career Technical Education courses are always offered as elective courses in traditional schools. Through our model, Elevate Academy is able to offer CTE

courses that embed core content as part of our core curriculum. This provides opportunity where opportunity otherwise would not occur for at-risk students.

C. Teaching and Learning

Elevate Academy was designed by a veteran team of educators that researched “Visible Learning” best practices and applied them to at-risk students and their learning environments. Through this research three keys emerged: 1) students need to know what it looks like when they learn something; 2) students engage at a higher level when their content is purpose driven and they can attach meaning to it; and 3) students learn better when they understand their own process of learning and what their brain endures when developing new learning. In addition to those three keys, Elevate Academy relies heavily on STAR benchmark data to understand the specific learning needs of students and to help create and implement differentiated and targeted interventions.

The “Learning Hook” is the Visible Learning process that Elevate uses. Each state content standard has been scaffolded with learning targets that students must meet to show mastery. The learning targets and the progression of the hook uses SOLO taxonomy as a guide to put the learning pieces together in an order that connects meaning for students while scaffolding their learning in a way that they can see and understand. Each learning hook has a ‘why’ attached to it. The why is used to create purpose for why a student has to learn a particular standard. Since all core content standards have been cross-walked with the professional trades, this process lends itself to creating purpose and relevance for students. Students no longer ask, ‘why do we have to learn this.’ The reason is transparent and connected to a real-life trade. The third, and possibly the most important, piece of the Learning Hook is the concept of cognitive conflict. Cognitive conflict is taught to the students through a series of lessons where students learn how dendrites are formed, and how to recognize their own metacognitive abilities. Students are taught that the process is a struggle. This

piece of the learning hook proves to be invaluable in helping students to recognize that the struggle of learning is real, and that just because they 'don't get it' doesn't mean they are dumb.

Learning hooks are utilized in both core content areas and in the CTE courses. Each learning hook is uploaded into the Infinite Campus learning platform and is referred to by the students and the teachers as they work through particular standards. If students can show mastery in a standard upon the introduction of the standard, they are exempted from doing additional work in that area and are allowed to focus their work where they struggle.

Each student at Elevate is regularly assessed and monitored to determine their academic proficiency levels. The daily schedule is designed to take into account what individual students need in order to be successful and make progress towards garnering academic credit. In addition to classroom assessments, STAR data and the accompanying STAR 360 intervention, instructional strategies are utilized to fill learning gaps, and create extension opportunities for students that are achieving at or above grade level. Elevate's administration shares assessment data with individual students and works with them to set intentions for improvement over time. Based on the initial data derived from the STAR assessment in September, 75% of students fall into a traditional tier three support and two percent of students score in the top quartile or fall into tier 1. Because of this generally low level of academic achievement we have reversed the traditional RTI thinking, and intervention is now our primary focus. Teachers deliver and work with students to learn on grade level standards, and spend significant time focusing on interventions for each student to repair deficiencies. Teachers also work with the handful of students that are in the top quartile to ensure that they continue to extend their learning beyond grade level standards and reach their full potential.

The special populations at Elevate are taught through an inclusionary model. Their schedule looks similar to their peers. However, their specific needs are met through scheduling specific pull out times with experts to address their individual needs and skills. Elevate employs a full-time special education teacher and three intervention specialists and has a certificated English as a New Language (ENL) teacher that manages all of the students ELP's and provides instruction for students new to the English language. All students that require additional support also receive grade level instruction in core content areas and in CTE courses.

D. Student Academic Achievement Standards

Elevate has created a broad and thorough Performance Management plan for all students. We use multiple measures to assess student academic achievement. Elevate utilizes data from the ISAT (Idaho Standardized Achievement Test), STAR benchmark testing for reading and math, mastery assessments in classrooms and skills assessments accompanied with industry specific exams for CTE courses. Teachers and administrators receive formal training on the administration and data collection for STAR, ISAT and CTE tests. Classroom teachers receive training on formative assessments that drive instruction daily.

STAR data is the primary indicator of growth towards goals for students at Elevate. Students are tested quarterly. Teachers analyze the data, construct intervention strategies, and apply curriculum to meet the specific needs of each student based on gaps identified in the STAR data. This assessment process happens every quarter, unless a teacher finds a disconnect between a student's specific skills and the intervention that was prescribed. Students may be retested if the calibration between test results, and their abilities seem inaccurate.

ISAT testing occurs one time annually. STAR data is then cross-walked with ISAT data to ensure that our benchmark measurements correlate with our state accountability reporting. This

data is presented to the board of directors during the June meeting. This is important data that is used to recommend and make adjustments to the budget to better meet the academic needs of students. This year, for example, once we received and analyzed the STAR data, we quickly realized the need for additional reading programs, and a reading consultant was hired to work one-on-one with the most deficient older students. The school's leadership and teachers are also looking at schoolwide strategies to combat our low-level reader epidemic.

Elevate Academy utilizes Idaho's Continuous Improvement Planning tool to plan and adjust benchmarks for each school year. This planning document is reviewed and discussed by administration and our teachers' leadership team, then presented to the Board of Directors for their feedback and approval. All assessments and reviews are calibrated to ensure they meet the expectations in our charter performance certificate with the Idaho Public Charter School Commission so as to stay aligned with state expectations and standards.

The final performance measures are Industry Specific CTE exams. These exams are given at the completion of a student's specific program that he or she has chosen to study during the final two years of high school. When analyzing this data Elevate administrators will compare completion and passage rates with statewide data in order to improve processes to ensure students are meeting high level expectations in all of the CTE courses we offer.

E. Student Demand and Community/Local Support

We know there is student demand for our school because Elevate Academy started its first day of classes in August 2019 fully enrolled. We already have a wait list of over 175 students. Elevate Academy is committed to serving all students. Our student demographics are far more diverse than statewide charter school averages and more diverse than the averages within the Caldwell School District where Elevate operates. Our student demographics, as reported in

September of 2019, are captured in Table 1 below and show how they compare to the local Caldwell school district.

Table 1: Student Demographics for Elevate Academy and Caldwell School District

Student Group	Elevate (August 2019)	Caldwell School District (2018-19)
Female	44.0%	48.3%
Male	56.0%	51.7%
Asian	1.0%	.3%
Black / African American	1.0%	.4%
Hispanic / Latino	79.0%	62.0%
Native American	1.0%	.6%
White	18.0%	33.9%
Free / Reduced Lunch Program	89.6%	>99% (CEP Program)
Received Special Education (IEP Students)	18.6%	13%

Downtown Caldwell, and surrounding areas, have a high concentration of Hispanic population. A recent report prepared by Coles and Associates for the Caldwell Salvation Army shows a projected increase of 6.3% of school aged children 10-14 and a 9% increase of school aged children 15-19 within a 1.5-mile radius of Elevate Academy. Students in these areas are traditionally high in poverty and mobility. These numbers provide confidence that a CTE school for at-risk students like Elevate Academy will be in demand for years to come.

In our first month of operation as a CTE school for at-risk students we have heard from parents that Elevate is ‘a breath of fresh air.’ Focused efforts have been made by founders, board members and community members to recruit students that will benefit from Elevate Academy’s unique instructional program. We have already been asked to share our school model and approach with groups in Idaho Falls and Twin Falls. We have also received visits to our school from the former Idaho State Board of Education President and long-time educator Linda Clark and from the U.S. Department of Education’s U.S. Undersecretary of Education Mitchell Zais. Zais summed our school

up when he told reporters, “Low-income kids can learn anything...Appropriately led, appropriately motivated, they can darn near learn anything you ask them to.”

Local support and buy-in has been one of the things that makes Elevate Academy special. Co-founders Monica White and Matt Strong have used their deep connections to Caldwell as long-time educators, coaches and community leaders to garner an estimated \$1.5 million of in-kind support from area businesses and supporters. The school also received a \$1 million start-up grant from the J.A. and Kathryn Albertson Family Foundation. A combination of local community and family support has been critical to our early success. *The federal CSP grant being sought in this application will ensure that we have the resources necessary for the long-term success of our program, and most importantly for the success of our students, today and in years to come.*

The first layer of community support is the Caldwell Mayor Garret Nancolas. Mayor Nancolas and his office of Urban Renewal were instrumental in securing the Elevate school property, helping create the vision of Elevate and its place in the larger community. Local business partnerships have been critical in helping Elevate build its facility and equip the school with the necessary tools and items for career pathways. Some examples include Rule Steel donating TECLA software to help speed up the construction time of the school. Rule Steel also held roundtables with local industry to gather information on programming, and practices that are needed in individual local industries. Rule Steel provided Elevate with monetary donations that helped secure equipment for the welding and manufacturing shop. R&M steel donated the metal used for the construction of our CTE building. R&M’s Rob Roberts continues to support our programming through tours, and mentorship on industry needs. Additional community partners include Franklin Building Supply, Merrit Construction, West Valley Medical Center, Caldwell Fire and Police departments, Lurre Construction, Royalty Electric, Caxton Printers and Rose Masonry.

Elevate Academy has its own Career Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). Many of our community partners serve on the TAC. This committee is designed to keep Elevate tied to the community, provide jobs and internship opportunities for students, and keep our CTE teachers abreast on current trends in the workforce. The following individuals are members of the ELEVATE TAC: Brooke Stephenson (Rule Steel), Corporal Devin Riley (CPD), Drew Tavares (TVM Recycling), Kevin Smith (Franklin Building Supply), Rick Serratos (The Sign Shoppe), Brad Ward (Merit Construction/Board Member), Kyle Byerly (Rule Steel/Board Member, Kelly Foreman (St. Lukes/Board Member), Dr. Richard Radnovich (EMS). This group is expected to meet every three months to advise Elevate Academy teachers on CTE changes and needs within their individual industries.

Elevate has a parent advisory committee. Our parent advisory committee meets quarterly and advises administration on trends, concerns, and happenings within the school. Parents have also become a part of the Friday extension days by sharing their talents and experience with students. Some examples include parents teaching students guitar, cosmetology lessons, barbering lessons, helping the EMT classroom and working with students as mentors through our Mentoring Network. Founder Matt Strong works closely with parents to develop relationships that are fostered into parents becoming a part of the larger Elevate community. Elevate works to ensure that parents are hearing from teachers and have an understanding of where their students are academically. Teachers are required to communicate with parents weekly. At Elevate the focus is on the positive. Teachers work to be proactive and make positive phone calls home. At the end of each academic quarter Elevate will showcase students first block work. This is a time for parents and the community to experience what students have worked on for the last 10-weeks. Staff is available to answer questions and for parents to reach out to with their concerns.

Parent involvement is an evolving process at Elevate. Many of our parents have been disengaged from their children’s education. Elevate believes parents have to engage in their child’s education in whatever ways they can. We are continually trying new strategies to engage parents and families at a deeper and more meaningful level. Elevate is working with Cognia (formerly Advanced ED) for accreditation. Cognia will provide all parents with the opportunity to take a survey and provide feedback about their child’s experience at Elevate. This qualitative data is used in conjunction with conversations and other inputs to the board of directors to make adjustments to programming as needed.

F. Effectively Serving All Students

While Elevate is a public charter school and is open to all students that enroll, our focus and mission is to serve at-risk students. Traditionally at-risk students are an underserved population. The intent of our charter with the Idaho Public Charter School Commission is to focus primarily on underserved youth. Elevate academy is guided by IDAPA code defining at-risk youth. Elevate will be guided by Idaho code as to what makes a student “at-risk.” An at-risk youth is any secondary student, grades 6-12, who meets any three of the following criteria in Column A or any 1 item in Column B.

Column A	Column B
Has repeated at least one grade	Has a documented or pattern of substance abuse
Has absenteeism that is greater than 10% during the preceding semester	Is pregnant or a parent
Has an overall grade point average that is less than 1.5 (4.0 scale) prior to enrolling in an alternative secondary program	Is an emancipated or unaccompanied youth
Has failed one year or more academic subjects in the past year	Is a previous dropout
Is below proficient, based on local criteria and/or state standardized tests	Has serious personal, emotional, or medical issue(s)
Are two or more credits per year behind the rate required to graduate or for grade promotion	Has a court or agency referral
Has attended three (3) or more schools within the previous two (2) years, not including dual enrollment	Demonstrates behavior that is detrimental to their academic progress

During Elevate's enrollment phase, every student interested in attending the school has a "1 on 1" intake meeting with school leaders. This meeting focuses on the individual needs of each student and helps determine if they qualify as at-risk under Idaho code.

Elevate is designed to meet students most basic needs. Due to our commitment to remove barriers for students, our building has been constructed with individual showers, a laundry room and a barber shop for use by our students. These elements were added to Elevate to make sure that the basic needs of students are being met. Additionally, we have partnered with the nonprofit Lifeway's. Lifeways is a mental wellness organization that brings a full-time counseling presence to Elevate for students and families.

To meet the academic and behavioral needs of students, we are committed to evaluating the overall needs of our student population and to hiring the right people to meet those needs. Elevate Academy employs a full-time special education teacher (that specializes in trauma and behavior), three behavior intervention specialists, a full-time counselor, an English as a new language instructor, and two safety aids. Approximately 40% of students enrolled at Elevate are on and Individualized Education Plan (IEP), a section 504 plan or an Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) for their language accusation. Elevate has also secured consultants to help with engaging older students to read and has increased the tiered intervention time significantly to ensure all students are receiving work at their academic level. This federal grant proposal, if funded, would allow Elevate to develop and provide additional and necessary supports and expertise for our at-risk student population.

Elevate academy manages transportation for our students. We run four bus routes daily, and a sports bus is provided at the end of each day for students that participate in athletics at local public high schools. Elevate borrowed funds to purchase a handicap bus in the event that a student

will need that resource to attend our school. Elevate also utilizes our busses for community service trips, and trips that expose students to CTE opportunities throughout Canyon County.

Elevate provides a full breakfast and lunch food service program. Elevate has elected to provide all students with meals for the first year. Currently 90% of Elevate students qualify for free and reduced lunch. Elevate has committed to cover the remainder of the funds for the few students that do not qualify. This ensures that regardless of family priorities or income a student will not go hungry during the school day.

G. Staffing and Professional Development Plan

Elevate Academy is unique in the fact that over one third of the staff must be certified in CTE fields. These are some of the most challenging teachers to find in our state today. During the hiring phase Elevate Academy received over 200 applications for the traditional subjects and we have been working with Industry partners to find highly qualified people to teach our CTE courses and help lead our young people. Four of Elevates teachers are past teachers of the year in their respective districts or schools, and some are top talent in the CTE arena.

Professional and staff development is a passion for co-founders Matt Strong and Monica White. As veteran educators and administrators they utilize the *1/3-1/3-1/3 model*. This model is to ensure that all staff is developed personally, professionally, and has fun. With this model we expect a high level of staff morale, low staff turnover, a willingness to go out of their comfort zone to try new things, and overall higher job satisfaction. In our school calendar we have developed an A, B, C, PD schedule. In this schedule, the fourth Friday of each month teachers will engage in professional development and planning to ensure we are meeting the needs of both students and staff. In our first year we will focus on creating and refining Elevate's instructional and operational systems,

ensuring the curriculum is sufficient in meeting the demands of the students, and all state academic requirements.

Additionally, each teacher will be paired with an experienced teacher for mentoring purposes and our career technical teachers will be engaged with the State Department of Education's CTE teacher mentoring program. Elevate will annually hold a staff retreat. The retreat is designed to do three things: a) reflect on the past year, b) implement new skills for the next year, and 3) have fun and grow as a team. The focus of our initial development will be aligned with the mission of our school's charter and includes: a) a focus on the learning hook, b) SOLO taxonomy, c) the learning cycle, and d) mastery-based concepts and reporting.

H. Financial Management and Monitoring Plan

Elevate Academy has submitted a three-year budget with this grant request that accounts for a strong foundation that ensures financial stability. Elevate Academy has worked with the school facilities non-profit Building Hope to secure financing and to build a state-of-the-art educational facility that meets the needs of its Career Technical Education program. Elevate Academy's campus is located on 114 W. Chicago St. in Caldwell Idaho. We chose one of Caldwell's most blighted areas of town for the school so that we are able to attract our community's neediest students. We have identified teachers and allocated building resources to meet the needs of special education and our ENL population. Elevate has surrounded itself with some of the strongest school finance minds to ensure proper policies and procedures for fiscal accounting as well as for budgeting and planning. Our staff includes CFO Darren Uranga who was Idaho's "2018 School Business Official of the Year."

Darren is a long-time school finance officer in Idaho. Daren understands enrollment trends, school finance law, school finance data and is master in his field. Darren also has a background in auditing and is a certified public accountant. He works closely with the Elevate Board of Directors to

ensure they have a solid understanding of cashflow, the effects of enrollment and attendance changes, and the state funding formula so that they are able to make sound budgeting decisions for Elevate. For additional information on our financial management please see the budget narrative, the operating budget, and our facility lease.

I. Board Capacity and Governance

Elevate Academy is legally and operationally an independent entity established by its non-profit corporation's Board of Directors. The Board of Directors is legally accountable for the operation of the school under the Idaho Non-Profit Corporation Act and the state's public charter school statute. Elevate Academy complies with all federal and state laws and rules and acknowledges its responsibility for identifying essential laws and regulations and complying with them. Elevate Academy has complied with Idaho's Open Meeting and Public Record laws. Elevate is in good standing with its authorizer and lenders.

The Board of Directors will serve as the public agent governing Elevate Academy. There will be no less than five and no more than nine members on the Board of Directors. Annual selection for board members of the Board of Directors will be held according to Elevate Academy's approved bylaws. Each board member upon selection will complete a conflict of interest form and agree to all board development activities.

These activities include strategic planning, school finance training, the role of the Board of Directors and any other training deemed needed by the board through a reflective process. Elevate's Board of Directors has partnered with Heather Williams, a certified board trainer to conduct trainings for its members. The Board is responsible for annual reviews of leadership, policy development and the review of current policies, and educational goals, both short and long term. The Board oversees the financial well-being of the school, long term operational oversight (not day

to day), legal affairs, adopting and over-seeing a responsive school budget that meets school goals and needs of the students, conducting an annual self-evaluation of its own leadership, governance and teamwork, communicating and interpreting the schools' mission and vision as well as other matters to stakeholders and the general public, and evaluation of the charter school administrator.

Elevate has an outstanding and diverse board of directors with strong ties to Caldwell and education in the city. The board has skilled expertise in educating at-risk students, law and juvenile probation, business and manufacturing, and school finance and operations. Elevate's board includes the following:

- 1) **Chairman: Kellie Foreman.** Kellie serves as a dual role both on our board of directors and on our technical advisory committee for Medical Arts. Kellie works as an RN for St. Luke's Regional Medical Center and in her past role she was the education director for West Valley Medical Center.
- 2) **Rick Tuha** is an attorney for the Idaho Law Group. Rick provides legal expertise for the board.
- 3) **Amia Vicandi-Bowe** works for Canyon County Juvenile Probation and is very well connected to Caldwell and the needs of its youth. Amia is strong in community relations, advocating for underserved students, and helping Elevate meet the needs of bi-lingual students.
- 4) **Amy Rojas** is a local business owner and a very well-respected member of the Hispanic community. Amy has deep roots in the Caldwell community.
- 5) **Brad Ward** is owner of Merritt Construction. Brad brings a solid knowledge of the area's real estate market as well as an advisor to the residential construction program.

6) **Brooke Stevenson** is the lead TECLA engineer at Rule Steel. Brook understands systems and system thinking. Brook brings a strong knowledge to our manufacturing and welding programs.

7) **Eric Bullock** is Director of the Caldwell YMCA and the Horsethief Y Camp. Eric knows youth leadership, especially working with at-risk youth, and risk mitigation.

Elevate Academy's Board is committed to securing adequate and appropriate board leadership and training through experts like professor Heather Williams or other certified trainers for training on school finance, ethics, school governance and strategic planning. The Board has received training on board responsibilities, school finance and strategic planning. The Board will annually evaluate its needs and request training accordingly in addition to refresh training and repeated training for new board members. Board training is an ongoing process.

J. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Roles and responsibilities of the Elevate leadership team are as follows: additional information about leaders can be found in the bio and resume upload section of the grant application.

1) **Monica White** is the lead charter administrator. Monica oversees all operations and ensures compliance with Idaho Code as it applies to all school operations. This includes all back-office operations and overseeing the administrative staff. Monica White is evaluated by the Elevate Board of Directors using a 360-evaluation model.

2) **Darren Uranga** is Elevate's Chief Financial Officer. Darren is responsible for managing the daily bookkeeping, setting the yearly budget and ensuring the health of the school's finances and financial management. Darren is evaluated by Monica White.

- 3) **Matt Strong** is the building principal. Matt is responsible for day-to-day operations and teacher evaluations. Matt also oversees and evaluates all paraprofessionals. Elevate utilizes the “Frameworks for Teaching Model” that has been cross-walked with Visible Learning expectations to evaluate teachers and paraprofessionals. Matt oversees all discipline issues and is evaluated by Monica White using Idaho’s teaching administrator framework.
- 4) **Desiree Rivera** is special education director and she oversees all special populations, manages special education staff, which includes aids and behavior interventionists that are dedicated to the special education program. This position is evaluated by the Monica White.
- 5) **Jessica Cooper** is the school counselor. Jessica manages all McKinney Vento identification and support, 504 plans and migrant student identification and support. Additionally, she supports all academic and career counseling and trains teachers as needed on all areas of special programs including migrant and homeless. Jessica is school liaison to Lifeway’s counseling and is the primary referrer for students that need additional assistance. This position is evaluated by Monica White.
- 6) **Diane Alvarado** is food service director. Diane manages the food service program. Diane is evaluated by Monica White and Darren Uranga.
- 7) **Kelly Culver** is the director of school transportation. Kelly manages the financial and day-to-day operations of student transportation. Kelly is evaluated by Monica White and Darren Uranga.

The Elevate leadership and management team is made up of education veterans and is well positioned to meet the needs of Elevate’s students and staff while remaining in compliance with state and federal law. The leadership team is diverse in its thinking and collaborative in nature to ensure that the all decisions are based on what is best for students.