

**Cardinal Academy**

**CSP Grant Proposal**

**Application Narrative for Communities of Excellence**

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Co-Founders  
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## **Executive Summary**

Cardinal Academy is a new public charter high school opening fall 2021. Our program is tailored to the needs of pregnant and parenting teens and young adults, 14 to 21 years old. According to the National Dropout Prevention Center/Network, only about half of teen mothers get a high school diploma by age 22, compared with 89% of women who did not have a child during their teen years. One-third of teen mothers never get a diploma or GED.

Cardinal Academy is founded by veteran school counselor, Emily Bergstrom, and veteran educator, Deborah Hedden-Nicely, who have almost 30 years combined experience at the former Booth Marian Pritchett High School (BMPHS) for pregnant and parenting teens and young adults in Boise, Idaho. Cardinal Academy's strongest and most important partnership is with The Salvation Army, Boise Corps, which has provided services to young parents in the Boise area for more than 100 years.

As the only school of its kind in the state, Cardinal Academy continues a 60 year tradition of partnering with The Salvation Army (TSA) to educate young parents. The new, centrally and strategically located school and Community Center will provide better access to education and support services for young parents. Further, Cardinal Academy is strengthened exponentially by numerous other community partnerships developed and nurtured by Mrs. Bergstrom over her tenure at BMPHS, such as Family Medical Residency of Idaho, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), Boise State University, College of Western Idaho and the Department of Labor.

Cardinal Academy will take a comprehensive approach of educating the whole person by providing students with a rigorous and relevant educational experience while providing on-campus services necessary to support students staying in school. Students will work with the academic/career counselor to take responsibility for their educational future by mapping personal educational goals and plans.

This grant will enable Cardinal Academy to expand professional development prior to school opening in order to ensure we are prepared to welcome our diverse group of students on day one. It will allow us to provide our student population with new individual and classroom technology, including a state of the art business classroom for career-technical education. This grant will allow us to provide dependable transportation to and from school through the purchase of school buses, without having to pay monthly leasing costs. Last, this grant will help us boost our literacy instruction through the purchase of intervention software and state-aligned curriculum.

Cardinal Academy has the great privilege of serving the underserved and will continue to ensure our students are connected to educational opportunities and services that will help them to find success. By helping young parents, we also provide opportunities for the next generation of students who benefit from their parent's success. We are honored to be entrusted with this important work.

## **Part II Narrative**

### **A. Grant Project Goals**

Cardinal Academy envisions a world where pregnant and parenting students up to the age of 21 are empowered to complete their high school education in a caring learning community, further their education and career paths, and become self-sustaining and contributing members of their community and local economy.

**Goal 1 - Each student at Cardinal Academy will reach a 90% attendance record.** Consistent attendance is crucial to furthering students' education and career paths. The average rate of attendance for at-risk students in Idaho is 82%. We will achieve this improvement by lowering the barriers faced by at-risk students. Cardinal Academy will invest in transportation and per-student technology to lower these barriers. We propose to purchase vehicles to lower transportation barriers. We propose to provide every student with a device and at-home internet to ensure they can participate in homework and log in to school remotely when travel to the school is not possible (eg. while caring for a sick infant).

**Goal 2 - Eighty percent (80%) of Cardinal Academy's graduates will successfully complete at least one college level course or Career Technical Education industry certification.** Participating in advanced opportunities will help our students take the next steps to furthering their academic and professional paths. Each student will be advised of their options during individual education planning. We propose to pay for advanced opportunities at no cost to students.

**Goal 3 - Each student at Cardinal Academy will meet or exceed expected academic standards in reading/literacy.** At least 50% of Cardinal Academy students

who are enrolled for 90 days or longer will reach a Student Growth Percentile (SGP) of 60% or higher on the Renaissance Star Reading Assessment in one school year.

**Goal 4 - Cardinal Academy will serve a diverse student demographic within 5% of the surrounding community in our work with special education students and English learners while exceeding the local demographic of economically disadvantaged students and students of color.** Student recruitment will target our student demographic so enrollment will reflect the population in our primary attendance zone (economically disadvantaged, special needs, English learners, homeless, and Hispanic) within 5%.

## **B. Educational Philosophy, Instructional Practices, Curriculum**

**Section 1:** Cardinal Academy's **educational philosophy** consists of three guiding principles: **1)** Pregnant and parenting students will have the opportunity to engage in a rigorous and relevant educational experience that they helped create; **2)** Provide pregnant and parenting students with basic essential support and consistent environment that is judgment-free, where learning can occur; **3)** Establish a values-driven school culture, rooted in relationships.

**Instructional methods for a rigorous and relevant educational experience** for our demographic will follow best practices and research. Cardinal Academy will offer small class sizes and the Layered Curriculum instructional model to encourage participation and teacher interactions. The layered curriculum instruction model allows the teacher to customize the lesson for each student. Assignments and assessments are differentiated by using different starting points and different ways of achieving lesson objectives. A Layered Curriculum classroom is a dynamic space where

whole-class instruction can occur. Students work independently or with peers, with the teacher as guide, to learn background knowledge, develop, apply, and demonstrate that knowledge, and to think critically about their learning and connect it to the world and their own lives through a culminating assessment of their choice.

Engagement levels and school attendance is higher when learning is relevant and meaningful to students. To connect their high school coursework with their life and college and career, students at Cardinal Academy will collaborate with the academic/career counselor to develop and map their educational goals and plans into an Individual Learning Plan (ILP). The students will have choices and decision making power, taking responsibility for their education and future. They will understand why they are taking particular courses, and how the courses are connected to their goals, incentivising attendance. While at Cardinal Academy, students will continue to work with the academic/career counselor to explore career choices, work on financial aid, and monitor progress of goals and academic achievement. The ILPs will be distributed and discussed among the teachers for meaningful, relevant lesson plan development.

Cardinal Academy will use Block Scheduling (AB/AB/C) which provides many benefits including uninterrupted instruction time with 90 minutes periods and one day a week for enrichment and academic support. On *Opportunity Fridays* we will offer special enrichment classes with our community partners and teachers as well as providing additional support for students' regular classes. Students will have the opportunity to take AP and Dual Credit courses through College of Western Idaho, Boise State University, and Idaho Career Technical Education.

Cardinal Academy will remove barriers such as inadequate transportation, lack of resources for food, living, childcare, and physical and mental healthcare. Through already established community partnerships, essential services will be provided on-campus, facilitating academic study focused on students achieving their highest potential.

Cardinal Academy's **values-driven school culture** means that our core values of *learning, empowering, contributing, caring, and community* will be embedded into every aspect of the school community and practiced by everyone daily. Cardinal Academy is decisively affecting two generations: our students, and their child. Our values-driven school culture will not only benefit our students, but also their children. In creating a values-driven school culture, we will offer Social-Emotional (SEL) and Well-Being coursework which develops resilience and growth mindset. The Well-Being classes will include healthy pregnancy and parenting & child development among others. Cardinal Academy students will be proficient in the Idaho State Workplace Skills for Career Readiness standards. For example, Standard 1.1 is "demonstrate personal qualities and people skills." This can be achieved by coming to school every day on time, being honest and reliable, dressing appropriately, using appropriate language, and demonstrating conflict resolution skills and showing creativity and resourcefulness.

Cardinal Academy embraces the concept of keeping the social and emotional health of their students as a focus of learning and practice. As such, discipline policies at Cardinal Academy will use restorative practices to nurture a safe and supportive school environment, address conflict, improve school climate, and build a positive school culture that students are connected to. We will use processes like restorative

justice circle, preventative and post-conflict resolution, informal restorative practices, and social-emotional learning.

**Section 2:** In our years of experience, we found that **curricula** that engage students' interest and are relevant to their lives in the present moment offer the best chance for academic success. In researching and choosing curricula, we looked for research-based, rigorous, and relevant aspects. We selected curricula which complements Dr. Kathie Nunley's Layered Curriculum instructional model with its interactive components, real-life problem solving, critical thinking, and collaborative teamwork among peers, simulating a dynamic workplace.

The American government curriculum we will utilize aligns with the Idaho State Standards, and is evidence-based, engaging, and interactive. The iCivics curriculum developed by former U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor partners with Baylor, Tufts, and Arizona State Universities to conduct studies using the iCivics curriculum to provide evidence-based results and feedback that informs their continual curriculum writing and revision. iCivics free digital Civic Library includes more than 260 curricular resources, including digital literacy tools, professional learning materials, and educational video games. Among other resources, iCivics provides innovative games and resources that teaches students how our political systems work by allowing them to **experience** it first-hand and to address real-life issues. iCivics provides high quality, free digital resources that are easily adaptable by our teachers for classroom needs.

The History curriculum comes from New Visions for Public Schools and is aligned with the Idaho State Standards. It is enriched by the essential and supporting questions with students seeking answers using primary source documents and analysis,



geographical context, vocabulary activities and Close Reading. New Visions for Public Charter Schools has developed full scope and sequence curriculum frameworks for the U.S. History course. The curriculum integrates rich primary and secondary texts, maps, images, videos, and other reputable online sources into materials that provide students an opportunity to improve literacy skills by focusing on thinking critically while reading, writing, and speaking like historians.

The math curriculum we chose is College Preparatory Mathematics (CPM) aligns with or meets the Idaho State Standards. The developers of the CPM are guided by three fundamental principles which emerged from their research: “(1) Initial learning of a concept is best supported by discussions within cooperative learning groups guided by a knowledgeable teacher; (2) Integration of knowledge is best supported by engagement of the learner with a wide array of problems around a core idea; and (3) Long-term retention and transfer of knowledge is best supported by spaced practice or spiraling.” CPM math utilizes spaced practice and spiraling, and students work independently and with their peers to solve problems embedded in real-life scenarios. In their article summary, CPM developers state that in both individualized and random studies, they found a concept that repeatedly emerged: that social interaction increases the ability to learn ideas. With real-life scenarios and working in teams to solve problems using math, our students will understand the relevance of mathematics in their lives and career choices as well as learning the skills of problem solving and collaborating.

For the English Language Arts and Science curriculum, we found that the Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS) curriculum aligns with Idaho State Standards,

and is developed based on research and best practices. At-risk students need curriculum and lessons that connect the learning to their life situations. The first objective of the BCPS Curriculum Division is, “Research and develop curricular and instructional programs that provide for active and engaging learning for all students in all content areas.” Their mission includes “The development of curricula, based on research and best practices, provides teachers, students, and parents with a quality instructional program that is firmly based on the state standards.

Many of our older students already work to assist their families economically, or they live independently and have living expenses of their own. With participation in our program through Idaho Career and Technical Education, students will learn the skills which lead to better paying jobs. Our program will be aligned with the Idaho Workforce Readiness Standards, and job shadowing, mentorships, internships, and assisting students to interview and be hired, will be an essential part of our program.

Our Business Education offerings are critical in developing students’ computer knowledge and skills, as well as preparing them for career, college and personal use. Additionally, the elective choices are centered on empowering students to make informed personal financial decisions, while increasing relevance and meaning for them. Within the Business Management Career Technical Education Pathway, our students will study business marketing, accounting, finance, entrepreneurship, management, economics and communications. The students can take advantage of dual credit and internship opportunities.

Family and Consumer Science (FCS) courses will provide students with valuable life skills and pregnancy and parenting knowledge giving them the foundation of adult

life, while focusing on resilience and well-being. These are essential skills to success in transitioning into college, career, and life. The FCS courses also afford our students the opportunity to complete a certificate course and internship leading to job opportunities in early childhood professions. These courses are the stepping stones to studying early childhood education and elementary education at university.

The Certified Nurse Assistant course will equip our students with the knowledge and skills to be immediately employed, but is also a foundational step toward an associate degree or bachelor's degree in the health sciences.

**Section 3:** Many of our students come to us with deficient levels of literacy. Students who are reading deficient will have difficulty with most aspects of life, even using a computer. Literacy is particularly urgent to our student population in that they are or will become parents very soon. If the student does not read well or develop a love of reading, it has a direct impact on their child in a number of ways such as reading to their child on a daily basis to develop their language and literacy, or in daily living like correctly reading a prescription or the ingredients of a package of baby food.

All entering students will take the Renaissance Star Reading assessment to establish a baseline, and three subsequent times throughout the school year to monitor and record growth. We chose the Star assessment because independent groups such as the National Center on Response to Intervention, the National Center on Intensive Intervention, and the National Center on Student Progress Monitoring have rated the test highly for scientifically based screening, progress-monitoring, reliability, and validity. Teachers can assess students quickly and efficiently with results and data available immediately for analysis to monitor growth and inform instruction as well as provide

intervention with at-risk students. Reading and literacy resources will be available to all teachers so that reading will be encouraged and reading skills taught and implemented in all the classrooms across the content areas.

**Section 4:** Expanding our students' access to technology is expanding their access to the teacher and the classroom. All classrooms will have cameras, smart screens, and some desktop computers. Every student will be provided a laptop computer to use at school and at home as well as wireless access at home. Our ultimate goal is to have students on campus in order to utilize all of the services available, but when they are unable to attend due to pregnancy complications, parental leave, or family illness, students will already be equipped to continue their studies at home. By expanding access, we can ensure pregnant and parenting students are receiving the education for which they are entitled. Cardinal Academy will utilize an online educational platform for credit recovery and to supplement with courses we cannot offer onsite. Further, by having an online platform established, we will be better prepared in the event of another pandemic. Services can be offered virtually, as well. The fields of telehealth and telemental health have expanded this year in new and exciting ways. Counseling and social work services can be delivered safely and securely in accordance with HIPAA and state/national ethical guidelines.

The Layered Curriculum content units will be fully digital and shared for use in the classroom or at home, assignments can be turned into Google Classroom, and immediate formative feedback is shared using the "Comment" mode. Google Meets can be utilized for virtual instruction, discussions, and question/answer sessions.

Additionally, Google Classroom allows teachers and students to expand learning beyond the walls of the classroom.

**Section 5:** In response to the needs of our student population, many of whom must be employed, Cardinal Academy will offer a flexible schedule, an emphasis on workplace readiness standards, and the development and implementation of a vibrant CTE program which will offer practical courses that will lead to employment opportunities, mentorships, unpaid and paid internships, job certifications, and dual credit for college. One of the benefits of block scheduling includes students' ability to earn more credits per year than the six or seven period day. However, if students need to work and come to school later, or leave earlier due to employment, they can still graduate on time. Cardinal Academy will also offer, for credit, electives that contribute to and enhance students' knowledge and skills in parenting and healthy pregnancy, in keeping with our mission of being prepared for parenthood.

### **C. Teaching and Learning**

Cardinal Academy is an alternative high school for at-risk students. In her article, "The At-Risk Student's Journey with Online Course Credit: Looking at Perceptions of Care," published in the *Journal of Online Learning Research*, Karis K. Barnett of The University of Central Oklahoma, states that effective at-risk programs and strategies include "customized approaches, individualized instruction, low-student teacher ratio, and distinctive curriculum and instructional methods (2016)." We chose the multi-tiered Layered Curriculum instructional model developed and used by Kathie F. Nunley. Ed.D. It is a specialized instructional method that serves all students, but was developed specifically with at-risk and special needs students in mind. It incorporates individualized

instruction; differentiated assignments and assessments; different expectations for different students even with the same assignment; same objectives, different ways of achieving them; emphasis on personal growth from different starting points, and choice, all effective, critical elements for learning for our at-risk student population.

Students begin with Layer C to build background, knowledge and activate prior knowledge. This layer consists of a wide variety of assignment choices. Students learn basic facts, content, skills, and vocabulary. Layer B involves application and problem-solving. The B layer offers an assortment of projects or labs and other problem solving activities to choose from which allow students to demonstrate an application of the knowledge and skills gained in the C layer. Layer A moves students into critical thinking and analysis. The A layer requires students to critically analyze a current issue of their choice in the real world which relates to the unit of study and Layers C and B.

John J. Medina, author of the book *Brain Rules*, says “Individually, the worst kind of stress is the feeling that you have no control over the problem - you are helpless (2014).” What can help alleviate the stress of having no control? Dr. Medina says choice. Dr. Medina also says, the brain processes meaning before detail and “likes” hierarchy, processing from the general to the specific. The Layered Curriculum starts with the general idea of a unit of study, Layer C, then digs deeper into the specifics through application in Layers B and A.

Accountability is paramount with Layered Curriculum and is accomplished through daily individual oral defense or exit tickets, daily and/or weekly check in with the teacher; and small group discussion (informal assessments); and written quizzes and tests (formative/summative assessments); and/or presenting research projects.

Teachers are responsive throughout the classroom, engaging with students in question/answer sessions and discussions as students continually relate to the teachers what they are learning. There are multiple approaches built into the Layered Curriculum for students of all academic abilities to substantiate what they know, demonstrate the application of that knowledge, and think critically about the content. Analyzing and evaluating the informal, formative, and summative assessment data by teachers, occurs not only at the end of a unit, but as the learning progresses in order to inform, adjust, and further differentiate instruction promptly. Further measures of growth and achievement will occur quarterly and twice a year with the Star Renaissance Reading and Math assessment and the Idaho Standards Achievement Test, respectively. Layered Curriculum correlates well with the Response to Intervention process. Due to the high level of daily feedback, informal assessment, and interaction with students, teachers are able to identify and respond to student academic needs and deficiencies enabling them to intervene and adjust instruction immediately.

Cardinal Academy will utilize the AB|AB|C, 90 minute block scheduling format for classes. For at-risk students, this schedule has many benefits: concentration on fewer classes enabling students to focus and learn more deeply toward mastery. The day is less hectic with more time in class learning with teachers' attention and peer collaboration. And students can finish high school early or easily recover lost credits. Students can get more done in class with the scaffolding and attention of the teacher and have less homework. Homework is a barrier to completing high school for parenting students who need to attend to their child(ren) when at home or who must work in the off-school hours to support themselves and their families.

The Layered Curriculum instructional model transforms the traditional classroom into a dynamic place of inquiry, engagement, collaboration, and serious focus which looks and feels like a workplace or college lab class. Teachers can have students participate in a whole class lesson chosen from Layer A of a unit of study, or if a student or student team is presenting a lab, a demonstration, or findings in a formal presentation. The teacher can also hold a Socratic seminar or have students participate in a whole class discussion about a particular topic. Alternatively, the teacher can have the students working at their own pace, while moving around the classroom, sitting in an educational “conversation” with the student that is an oral defense of what they have been studying during the period. All students know that if they did not have an oral defense with the teacher during class, that they will need an exit ticket at the end of the period.

#### **D. Student Achievement Standards**

**Sections 1 & 2:** Cardinal Academy’s achievement standards fully align to meet or exceed the academic standards of the Idaho Public Charter School Commission’s Performance Framework. Cardinal Academy will use various assessments to monitor and record student progress and achievement. Our students will participate in all state-mandated testing as required by Idaho Code, including ISAT, ISAT Alt, PSAT, and SAT. Upon enrollment, each student will take the Renaissance Star math and reading assessments to determine an entry baseline, and quarterly to monitor and record progress and achievement.

Teachers will use Professional Learning Communities (PLC) and meetings with the Director of Academics to analyze, evaluate, and discuss data to inform and adjust



instruction to align with the needs of the students. We will utilize both formative and summative assessments to measure student progress. Teachers will use the data from these assessments to inform and plan their instruction and ensure students are progressing toward their ILP goals. Informal assessments will occur in classrooms where teachers use strategies such as oral defense or exit tickets to assess students' learning. Summative assessments will be utilized at the end of content units and will align with standards.

### **E. Student Demand and Community/Local Support**

**Section 1:** Students aged 14 to 21 that are pregnant or parenting are eligible for Cardinal Academy. Based on current state pregnancy statistics, we estimate that there are 900 eligible students in Ada county. Given our target enrollment numbers we will serve between 6% and 15% of eligible students. Our estimates come from data provided by the Center for Disease Control. An average of 80 women aged 15-19 years old without a high school diploma give birth in Ada county every year. Cardinal Academy is a four-year high school, therefore our estimate covers a span of four years in which teens or young adult women and men become parents. Specifically, we consider births to 14 year olds and women aged 20 and 21 without a diploma.

Our marketing strategy is based on data from The Pew Research Center and data collected from a focus group of pregnant and parenting students. We have purchased ads on Google, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Spotify, and radio, targeting pregnant and parenting youth and their parents, in both English and Spanish, driving them to our website and encouraging them to give us contact information. The social media ads consist of several full-color digital mini posters and videos that are rotated

weekly. Our marketing plan deliberately focuses on building on our already established relationship with our community partners who also provide services to our student demographic. We created and emailed a cover letter and digital, shareable brochure with links to the website that was distributed to over 100 community partners. A promotion plan of regularly dispersed press releases, public service announcements, website blogs, and email is part of the plan in order to enhance the advertising campaign. We have a built-in, five year budget line-item amount of \$10,000 for on-going marketing activities and will hire a full time executive assistant whose responsibilities include student recruitment, promoting school awareness, fund raising, and event planning.

We expect our enrollment to reflect the demographics of our primary attendance area of Ada County with 83% eligible for Title I, 12.5% special education, 8% English Language Learners, 19 % Hispanic, 87.5% female, 12.5% male, and 63% white.

**Section 2:** Through our 30 years of combined experience with this student population, we have developed and maintained important and essential community partnerships and local support. The Executive Director will continue to work with and nurture our community relationships, giving them direct contact to give input and feedback. Cardinal Academy's strongest and most important partnership is with The Salvation Army, Boise Corps. They will provide our program with the school facility, social work services, manage the on-campus childcare center, provide financial assistance for childcare, and provide nutritious and delicious meals to our students.

Cardinal Academy partners with many service providers and organizations such as: medical, legal, universities & colleges, state and county health and welfare

agencies, food & nutritional, state employment services, foster care, housing, early childhood education, reading, literacy, refugee and immigration, as well as various charitable and church organizations and individuals. Several of these community partners will provide on-campus direct services to our students. We are in the process of planning medical care with Family Medical Residency of Idaho, and working with Blue Cross of Idaho through a grant, to select a provider(s) for the counseling services.

Our student population between the ages of 18 and 21 and generally live independently, and many of our younger students are unaccompanied minors not living with their parents. When this is the case, we have daily engagement with these students/decision makers regarding their education. Parents of our students 17 years old and younger will be engaged through our website, and whatever means is their preference, including email, phone calls, texts, or messaging. Our website will be updated regularly with blogs, events, and a school activities calendar. Our full time executive assistant will coordinate these responsibilities, as they are essential. The Salvation Army will provide additional opportunities for families to engage with social services on our campus.

#### **F. Effectively Serving All Students**

**Sections 1 & 2:** Cardinal Academy is uniquely equipped to serve special populations, such as dropouts, due to its small size and experienced leaders. Only about 50 percent of teen mothers get a high school diploma by age 22. Our year round calendar and easily accessed and expanded services for all students will support them in continuing or returning to school. We recognize each student's learning path is individual and will serve students with diverse cognitive, physical and social and emotional needs. Each

student will receive equal access to educational opportunities in general education classes. Teachers will modify, differentiate, and accommodate for individual students' learning needs, which is readily accomplished with Layered Curriculum.

Cardinal Academy's Response to Intervention (RTI) process will utilize a multi-tiered system of support framework with three tiers of support and prevention. Tier 1 supports are the basis for the school's social-emotional learning and will be provided to **all** students. This will give most students what they need to be successful. **Some** students may need more intervention, practice, and feedback which they will receive in Tier 2, if necessary. Tier three is where we will identify students in need of more formalized support like 504 plans and IEPs.

The special education teacher will work with all members of the IEP team (parents, teachers, administrators and related service providers) to develop data-based, individualized educational plans that are aligned with student needs and will collaborate with faculty and staff to implement guidelines outlined in IDEA, Child Find, and the Idaho Special Education Manual. An academic support specialist will work alongside the special education teacher to ensure students are receiving all necessary support.

Other important supports for these special populations include: a school incentive store with an extensive stock of items for parents and babies, child care for our students' child, and child care scholarships and assistance in applying for the Idaho Child Care Program (ICCP), a program to help students pay for child care; professional development on working with students and families from low socioeconomic situations; on incorporating effective EL strategies, working with students with disabilities and trauma; teaching self-regulation and conflict resolution skills to all students; and

contracting services for speech language pathologists, physical therapy, occupational therapy and educational psychological testing as necessary.

**Sections 3 & 4:** Cardinal Academy is dedicated to removing barriers that prevent attendance as well as providing incentives that encourage it. Food and transportation are two crucial elements to getting and keeping students in school. We will collaborate with our partner, The Salvation Army, to administer the USDA National Breakfast and School Lunch programs. They will also provide an on-campus food pantry for our students which is supported by the community and the Idaho Food Bank.

Cardinal Academy will provide school bus services within our attendance area of Ada County, to **all** students who need it, and supplement the cost of driving to and from school by providing gasoline cards to eligible students who have a car. Students will work with the school counselor to provide proof of insurance, a current driver's license, and show financial need. We are currently working with community partners to possibly provide transportation for open-enrolled students. School buses will be utilized for field trips and any extracurricular activities.

## **G. Staffing and Professional Development Plan**

**Section 1:** Cardinal Academy has a smaller enrollment of no more than 140 students. We will have a lean faculty and staff, strategically developed, to deliver our academic and SEL programs and the overall operation of the school. We will employ one certified teacher in each of the four core content areas, one special education teacher, one academic/career counselor, one school nurse, and two certified Career and Technical Education elective teachers. Support staff include a full-time bus driver/route coordinator, two part-time bus drivers, an academic support specialist, a business

manager, and an executive assistant, whose responsibility will be student recruitment and promoting the school. We are recruiting faculty and staff through Teach For America, Handshake, university teacher career fairs, referrals, and through on-line employment forums.. Candidates must fill out an application that includes three compulsory, open-ended, short-answer questions, and two more of their choice, and submit a resume with the application. We developed an expectation manuscript to be read by all candidates. Our interview questions are open-ended, situational questions that are scored with a rubric. Faculty candidates will present the school leaders with a live or videotaped lesson plan presentation.

**Section 2:** Our faculty and staff share the common mission of serving the whole student. By providing high-quality professional development and time for the Professional Learning Community (PLC), teachers and staff will be better able to help all students to reach their potential. PLC time will be used to foster data driven academic achievement and growth, student skills attainment, and a positive school culture and a community of leaders.

Each teacher and staff member will create an Individual Professional Growth Plan (IPGP) to guide their growth and development in their positions. This will be completed during the first month of school. The IPGP will outline how the teacher/staff member hopes to advance their practice with professional growth goals and a plan for meeting those goals as well as a self-care plan, and will be monitored by the school leaders.

In addition to weekly PLC meetings, professional development (PD) will be held seven (7) times during the school year. PD will initially be led by the school leaders, who

have master's level degrees in emotional/social well-being and curriculum and instruction. Master teachers who have knowledge and experience in a particular area will also lead PD sessions. Prior to school opening fall of 2021, faculty and staff will also attend 4 full days of PD. Additionally, the Director of Academics will be in the classrooms at least once a week for short observances of the teachers and informally meet briefly afterward to casually dialogue about the day. The purpose of these meetings are to encourage teachers to not only use data and best practices, but also to innovate in their thinking around pedagogy and lesson planning. The Director of Academics will also plan a schedule of unofficial meetings with teachers to mentor and coach them as the observations direct. This system sets up a continuous input and feedback conversation with teachers that will lead up to the yearly official evaluation. The Executive Director will mentor and coach the other members of staff to make sure that all staff are meeting the mission and vision of the school.

## **H. Financial Management and Monitoring Plan**

**Section 1:** See our 3-year operating budget and assumptions that demonstrate financial viability, sustainability, and autonomy of the school long-term in the attached documents.

**Section 2:** Cardinal Academy will be located in a state of the art facility that was completed in 2019 for the purpose of serving a school for pregnant and parenting students. This facility will be leased from The Salvation Army, Boise Corps. The location of the school at 9492 W. Emerald St. in Boise, Idaho and the location in West Boise allows students in Ada County and Canyon County to easily access the school. In addition to the bussing arranged by the school, city busses can be utilized as Cardinal

Academy is located along a major city bus line. The facility provides eight ample classrooms, office space for administrative staff, and a sick bay and office for the school nurse and on-site medical care and space for the other services provided on site, such as: counseling, WIC appointments, vocational rehabilitation, and others. Students will have access to a library, a school store, gymnasium, showers, a cafeteria, and emergency laundry facilities. The on-site childcare center provides free, high quality childcare for Cardinal Academy students. Cardinal Academy and The Salvation Army have agreed to all material terms to a lease, including the annual lease amount equal to the state charter school facility funding rate, and the use of spaces within the building. The facility meets state and federal health and safety laws and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements and guidelines as provided in Idaho Code.

**Section 3:** See our budget narrative and assumptions.

## **I. Board Capacity and Governance Structure**

**Section 1:** Cardinal Academy identified a set of board member qualities, skills, and experience required to support the school. This list is actively used to identify, recruit, and select board members. The list we are using to recruit and select board members includes: gender, race and ethnicity, education experience, social service experience, finance expertise, legal expertise, post-secondary pathways, and experience with pregnant and parenting teens. Board member recruitment is the responsibility of the Governance Committee. Currently the Committee is searching for board members with an accounting and social services background, and who are from the Latinx community.

**Section 2:** The Board of Directors understands and values the difference between governance and management. Accordingly, the board will perform the proper functions



of governance and will: 1) maintain Cardinal Academy's vision and mission; 2) establish academic, operational, and financial goals; 3) monitor academic growth and achievement; 4) adopt policies and procedures; 4) ensure the financial viability of the school; 5) hire, evaluate, and determine the compensation of the school leader; and, 6) comply with all applicable laws, including, but not limited to laws on public information and open meetings. The board underwent training in open meeting laws and public information. A Conflict of Interest policy has already been approved by the board.

**Section 3:** The Board of Directors are dedicated to participating in *on-going* self-evaluation of training needs and planning for training in the essential areas of new board member orientation, finance, governance, responsibilities, strategic planning, and academic excellence through organizations like the Idaho Charter School Network, Idaho School Boards Association, and BoardOnTrack as well as other certified board trainers.

## **J. School Leadership and Management**

**Section 1:** Cardinal Academy's Executive Director is the lead school administrator and will be responsible for the overall leadership and operation of the school. Executive Director Emily Bergstrom, M.A., is a master's level school and licensed professional counselor with 20 years of experience in education. Mrs. Bergstrom believes schools should collaborate with various systems to support students and families. She is certified in Trauma-Informed practices and the Danielson Framework for Teaching evaluation tool. The Executive Director is formally evaluated by the Board of Directors annually using the Idaho Principal Evaluation Framework.

The Executive Director will work with the Board of Directors on the school budget and the overall governing policies. She will also manage other operational responsibilities, including: managing the finances with the Board finance committee, purchasing, payroll, and collaborating with The Salvation Army. The Executive Director has knowledge and skills in effective personnel management strategies, and in restorative discipline practices. The Executive Director will hire the faculty and staff, and will manage, and evaluate the Director of Academics and other non-faculty staff. Monthly, the Executive Director will report to the board on essential data points such as academic growth and achievement, financial stability, and enrollment. Monthly benchmarks keep the Board fully informed and gives them the ability to work with the Executive Director on any concerns and to get further context of situations.

The Director of Academics will report to the Executive Director and is responsible for the academic leadership and educational program of the school as well as evaluation of the faculty. Director of Academics, Deborah Hedden-Nicely, M.A., Curriculum and Instruction, has had an accomplished career as a professional educator. During her 18 year tenure at the Booth Marian Pritchett School, Mrs. Hedden-Nicely worked with faculty in analyzing and evaluating assessment data and best practices research in order to inform, enrich, and differentiate their instruction to improve student academic success. She worked closely with Mrs. Bergstrom in leading the faculty and staff in professional development inservices. In her 40 year career, Mrs. Hedden-Nicely has developed an extensive background in mentoring staff, in-house training, and human resources policies and procedures. Mrs. Hedden-Nicely believes that attaining an education looks differently for each of us, especially a young parent who is raising a

child. She believes a quality education begins with the teacher in the classroom. She is committed to collaborating with the faculty of Cardinal Academy to work for their achievement and professional growth and success, leading to the growth, achievement, and success of the students. Mrs. Hedden-Nicely is trained in the Danielson Framework for Teaching evaluation tool and certified in Trauma-Informed practices.

The Director of Academics will assist the Executive Director in monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the overall academic program to ensure that academic goals are met. She will develop and implement short- and long-term plans for curriculum and instruction, collaborate with faculty to create curricular materials, collect and share resources, and will identify and acquire academic resources making sure they are learner-centered and aligned with Idaho State Standards and the mission of the school. The Director of Academics will be current with best practices for student instruction and professional development, as well as Professional Learning Communities (PLC) and will lead the faculty in continuous improvement of instruction and school culture, and collaborate with faculty to analyze assessment and research data in order to inform and plan instruction around outcomes. The Director of Academics will coach and mentor teachers, modeling best practices across multiple content areas and grade levels. The Director of Academics will know and understand the reasoning and basis for the Layered Curriculum instructional model, and will plan professional development to ensure all faculty are knowledgeable and confident in executing this instructional model.

**Section 2:** Cardinal Academy is a small school with a lean staff. It is imperative that the Executive Director develop a team of leaders comprising the faculty and staff, and create an atmosphere of collaboration where faculty and staff members have

leadership roles and a voice in decision making, setting organizational goals and in the implementation of responsibilities. The faculty and staff will meet at least monthly to examine the instructional program, the operation of the school, student concerns, fundraising, and the achievement of the overall mission and vision of the school. Leadership team committees will be created to assist in the overall operation of the school. Knowing that our student population experiences food insecurity, Cardinal Academy will provide meals. Cardinal Academy is partnering with The Salvation Army who will administer the School Meal program for the school.

The school leaders have identified two important key risk factors. Cardinal Academy is a new charter school and building our brand and public awareness of the school, especially for purposes of student recruitment, will take time and substantial effort. We plan to hire a staff person experienced in marketing to assist the Executive Director in on-going student recruitment/marketing activities in order to get to full enrollment as soon as possible. Another risk factor is training the entire staff on trauma-informed and restorative practices, and the faculty in the Layered Curriculum instructional model. We will offer pre-opening sessions for teachers on Layered Curriculum, and plan a four-day training the week before school starts on trauma-informed and restorative practices as well as seven other professional development days throughout the year.