

**School Board**

Sally A. Harris, Chair  
Tamara P. Shamburger, Vice Chair  
Lynn L. Gray  
April Griffin  
Melissa Snively  
Cindy Stuart  
Susan L. Valdés



**Superintendent of Schools**  
Jeff Eakins

May 14, 2018

Hershel Lyons, Chancellor  
Division of Public Schools  
Florida Department of Education  
Turlington Building, Suite 1514  
325 West Gaines Street  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

Dear Chancellor Lyons:

The School Board of Hillsborough County has entered into an external operator contractual agreement with Phalen Leadership Academies (PLA), an Indiana based non-profit corporation. On July 1, 2018, Phalen Leadership Academies will assume management and oversight of Foster, Oak Park, Mort, Sheehy, Potter, B. T. Washington elementary schools and Memorial Middle School. Phalen Leadership Academies will not assume management and oversight of any of the above-mentioned sites if the school receives a grade of "C" or higher.

**1. Provide the outside entity/external operator's evidence of a demonstrated record of effectiveness per statutory requirement.**

The PLA education model has several unique elements that drive the strong growth of scholars. Rigorous curriculum; high quality professional development; a coaching cycle that develops teachers; enrichment opportunities for scholars; and authentic partnerships with parents are just a few of the elements that drive success for PLA scholars. Additionally, next year, every PLA school will have access to *STEMNASIUM*, an organization that exposes scholars of every age to STEM, including learning coding and Java Script; creating mobile apps; building underwater remote operating vehicles; building and piloting drones; and more.

The PLA model has a proven track record of helping children achieve remarkable success, including some of the following:

- Transforming multiple failing schools into A-rated schools;
- Having the highest IREAD scores in Indiana for two consecutive years (2015, 2016);
- Increasing scholars' passing rates on state ELA and math tests by 11% in just one year – the highest standardized test growth for all schools in Central Indiana in 2015-16;
- In 2016-17, two PLA schools ranked #4 and #5 in the district for strongest growth (with 8.2% and 8.1% increases in state test score proficiency growth respectively); and
- All, but one, PLA schools are outperforming their host districts. Two PLA schools – one in year five and the other in only year three – are within 6% of the state test average and will beat the state average this year.

The success of PLA scholars can be attributed to the comprehensive, high quality services that PLA provides to its school partners and scholars. While some educational management organizations only offer human resources and accounting support, PLA is a nonprofit that supports its partners in the following ways:

- Educational program (i.e., research-based curriculum, pacing guides, and assessments);

- Pre-service professional development and an on-going coaching cycle for teachers (e.g., PLA University);
- Human resources;
- On-site quality assurance monitoring and support;
- Behavior and classroom management systems; and
- Parental engagement framework.

**2. Explain the role of the outside entity/external operator in the recruitment, selection, and placement of instructional personnel with proven experience and capacity to serve students who may need intensive remediation and instruction. Include specific information about the external operator's authority in this area.**

As the external operator, Phalen Leadership Academies assumes management and oversight of the above-mentioned schools. PLA assumes the responsibility of recruiting, selecting, and placement of instructional personnel with a proven track record and have the capacity to serve students who need intensive support.

**Recruitment Strategy:**

Phalen Leadership Academies has specific standards with regards to instructional staff; a high expectation of what they should know and be able to do, as well as the ability to model and demonstrate consistently. Phalen Leadership Academies engages in best practice and standard processes reflected below to secure the best teacher talent who meet organizational objectives.

- Sound strategy planning grounded by data and theory of action that calculates the number of resumes vs. projected vacancies vs. actual openings to effectively support staffing openings by position type and required licensing
- Strategic plan supported by timelines, milestones and associated staffing benchmarks
- Dedicated regional recruiter with extensive HR and Tampa area experience to successfully support school leaders and deeply partner to source top talent
- A marketing department available to push multi-media advertisement and promote employer branding
- PLA driven diversity recruitment (including partnerships with historically black colleges and universities)
- PLA driven teacher recruitment (utilizing traditional and non-traditional approaches)
- PLA driven community recruitment to raise awareness and attention to positions within the region and neighboring areas
- Leveraging partnerships with national teacher associations
- Leveraging partnerships with like-minded and mission driven organizations
- Staff referrals

**Hiring Strategy:**

The Phalen Leadership Academies hiring is operationalized, normed and bifurcated processes that deeply vet candidates for best fit and a profile for start-up, district, turnaround or traditional models. Processes includes:

- Selection criteria that assesses candidate's comprehensive skill and mastery across specific content areas
- Partner work with school administrators to determine culture of individual school and talent profile that matches
- Work within compliance parameters of Hillsborough HR processes, i.e. April and May transfer windows and displacement and/or teachers within the pool
- Work with school leaders to schedule and execute interviews and Hillsborough HR to process hires

**3. Explain the role of the outside entity/external operator in the recruitment, selection, placement, training and oversight of the school leadership team, including specific information about the external operator's authority in these areas. Provide evidence the school leadership team has a proven record of success in turnaround schools and the qualifications to support the students served.**

Having management and oversight over the above-mentioned schools, Phalen Leadership Academies assumes the responsibility of recruitment, selection, placement, training, and oversight of the school's leadership team.

**Leadership Recruitment and Selection**

Phalen Leadership Academy engages its targeted network and out-of-network efforts to identify transformative leaders. The interview and evaluation process is rigorous and ensures school leaders meet the human capital and performance requirements of the organization. Interview process consists of blended methodology of traditional, behavioral and scenario based evaluation to assess the below skills, knowledge and abilities:

- Philosophy alignment
- Strategic visionary (understands big picture, small picture and can articulate)
- Operational proficiency (school calendaring, staff hiring)
- Instructional expert (performs staff observations/assessments and implements professional development)
- Data-driven (uses data to set school-wide growth goals and staff and team conversations, as well as past success tracking goals)
- Effective communication (leadership voice and presence)
- Interpersonal/relationship management with staff, parents and community (visible and inclusive)
- Cultural competence

**Leadership Training**

Phalen Leadership Academies provides customized Professional Development training based on the needs of our school partner. Traditionally, we provide a 1-2-day School Leader Training which focuses on Curriculum, Data-Driven Instruction, Information System Management, Network Expectation, and School Culture.

**Foster Elementary**

The school leadership team has a focus on high quality teachers to teach instruction. Kimberly Thompson has been the principal of Foster Elementary for 4.5 years. Prior to Foster, she was the principal of Potter Elementary for 3.5 years. Foster's school leadership team has embraced DA support with a focus on teaching the standards and improving rigor. The school leadership team has a sophisticated progress monitoring system that identifies the needs of the students. From data analysis the school leadership meets with their ILT and PLCs to plan for the needs of the students. Supporting and coaching around core instruction has been a focus for the school leadership with a strong focus on small group instruction. The MTSS process is used by school administration to pinpoint interventions to address students' pre-requisites skills, misconceptions, and future skill focus.

**Mort Elementary**

Principal Woodland Johnson has been the principal of Mort Elementary School for five years (since 2012). Prior to leading Mort, Principal Johnson was the principal at Palm River Elementary School for five years. Palm River maintain a solid "C" rating under Woodland's leadership. Mort has experienced a steady increase in student achievement over time and a dramatic shift in school culture. Last year Mort was one point away from earning a "C" grade. Interim data and other key metrics suggests that Mort is well on its way to achieving a "C" or higher.

**Oak Park Elementary**

Principal Marlou Bates has been the principal of Oak Park Elementary for five years. Prior to Oak Park, she was the principal of Foster Elementary for four years. The principal has been using proven techniques and strategies

learned from her turnaround leadership Ed.S. program. She has conducted a thorough root causes analysis of barriers that restrict learning and strategies that accelerate learning. Clear and focused instructional priorities have been established. Progress monitoring of these priorities through the ILT and PLCs ensure implementation and execution occur in the classroom. In addition, progress monitoring data and MTSS allows teachers to target the specific needs of the students. Principal Bates facilitates planning sessions that support differentiated standards-based teaching to ensure that learning gaps are filled, pre-requisites skills are mastered, and student misconceptions addressed.

### **Potter Elementary**

Principal Melanie Hill has been at the helm for almost two years. Although Principal Hill was hired as a new principal, we have put the following intensive supports in place. Potter is exclusively supported by the Assistant Superintendent of Leadership and Professional Development. This team's primary focus is Potter Elementary School. Support includes weekly coaching visits from an assigned principal coach and a Potter Support Team representing different divisions that meets with the principal and her leadership team each month to provide needed resources and training.

Potter also has two experienced assistant principals and a high performing leadership team including two math coaches, a reading coach, an Academic Intervention Specialist, a behavior coach, and three full time student services staff. The team provides regular coaching for teachers and incentives and interventions for students.

Benchmark data, school culture and climate data, and teacher performance data collected during walkthroughs support our belief that student outcomes are advancing at Potter under Principal Hill's leadership.

### **Sheehy Elementary**

Phalen Leadership Academies has requested removal of the principal with the expectation of hiring an experienced with a proven track record.

### **B. T. Washington Elementary**

Jaime Gerding is an experienced principal with ten years of experience. She spent the first five years as a principal at Apollo Beach which maintained an "A" grade. She then moved to the principalship of Phillip Shore Elementary School, where she stayed for three years and improved the culture by reducing behavior incidents and improving instruction. The scores improved as well and she was able to maintain a "C" grade. Mrs. Gerding was then tapped last year to take on B. T. Washington Elementary School which had a grade of "F". She went to work putting the right team together in order to make her high expectations a reality. Last year she worked on the culture and academics and was able to gain 33 points, which was a good start but did not pull the school out of the "F" range. This year there is an improved culture with far fewer behavior incidents, a laser like focus on standards instruction, and a team that plans lessons appropriate for each individual student. She has made alliances with community partners in order to get the extra support her students need. Every person knows the urgency involved in moving this school the 110 points necessary to move out of DA status. She is the leader needed at that school.

### **Memorial Middle**

Principal April Gillyard is a veteran school leader with a strong track record of building high performing teams that keenly focus on increasing student outcomes. Principal Gillyard led Roland Park K-8 school for three years. Under Principal Gillyard's leadership, Roland Park K-8 consistently performed well above district and state averages, achieving "A" school grade each year she was at the helm. When the opportunity surfaced to lead a high needs school, April stepped up and volunteered to answer the call. Principal Gillyard is nearing her first year as principal of Memorial Middle School. Interim data and other key metrics suggest that the school is on course to earning a "C" or higher.

**4. If the district had a partnership with the outside entity/external operator, explain the difference in the proposed services changing from a partnership to an operator.**

The district did not have a prior partnership with Phalen Leadership Academies.

**5. Provide a detailed budget for the contracted amount with the outside entity/external operator.**

<u>School</u>	<u>Student Enrollment</u>	<u>Monthly Payment 8/10/18 – 6/10/19</u>	<u>Annual Management Fee</u>
Foster Elementary	475	\$26,818	\$295,000
Memorial Middle	636	\$29,545	\$325,000
Mort Elementary	860	\$31,818	\$350,000
Oak Park Elementary	615	\$29,545	\$325,000
Potter Elementary	608	\$29,545	\$325,000
Sheehy Elementary	436	\$26,818	\$295,000
B. T. Washington Elementary	477	\$26,818	\$295,000

Please feel free to reach out to me with any further questions, concerns, or recommendations.

Sincerely,



Jeff Eakins  
Superintendent

cc: Dr. Julio Valle-Nazario, Regional Executive Director  
Harrison Peters, Chief of Schools  
Debbie Cook, Chief Academic Officer