**Student Opportunity Act Plan: SY 2021-2023**

***Innovation Academy Charter School***

→ **Commitment 1: Focusing on Student Subgroups**

**Which student groups will require focused support to ensure all students achieve at high levels in school and are successfully prepared for life?**

Innovation Academy Charter School seeks to ensure that all students are positively engaged in our academic and extracurricular program. Moreover, as a regional school consisting of 10 cities and towns, IACS is working to ensure that we successfully recruit from all communities and student demographics within those communities. Historically, IACS has successfully recruited students with disabilities (above state averages and Comparison Index values), however have fallen short of Comparison Index in recruiting Economically Disadvantaged and English Language Learner students. IACS wants students to improve the rate at which students of color, students with disabilities, and English language learners to participate in programming that helps better prepare them for early college programming (dual enrollment classes) and career exploration (high school internship program).

In addition to improving participation in our internship and dual enrollment programs, our school’s strategic plan, IACS 2025, set goals to support positive experiences and engagement for our students and families of color. IACS has used internal and external (ex: VOCAL) school climate surveys to ensure that the student experience in the aggregate at the subgroup level are positive. Additionally, IACS 2025 has set goals to diversify our staff from current levels (approximately 9% staff of color) to 20% based on research which shows greater staff diversity can increase student engagement for students of color.

→ **Commitment 2: Using Evidence-Based Programs to Close Gaps**

**What evidence-based programs will your charter school adopt, deepen, or continue to best support the closure of achievement and opportunity gaps? What resources will be allocated to these programs?**

1. **Early College & Career Readiness programs focused primarily on students under-represented in higher education** (I). Since 2010, IACS has created and managed a student internship program for juniors and seniors. This program has grown significantly since its inception and we track student participation in our current Accountability Plan. Our annual goal is to have at least 33% of juniors and seniors participate in a weekly internship that last either a semester or a full year. Improving access to this programming requires specialized staffing to help students and families make community connections as well as problem-solve logistical challenges such as transportation, workplace requirements, etc. In terms of college readiness, IACS has grown its dual enrollment course offerings. This program includes courses taught by faculty at a neighboring community college as well as IACS faculty who have adjunct appointments by the same college. Recent high school graduates have earned college credits that has saved their families thousands of dollars in tuition. These savings would be even more critically important for our economically disadvantaged students.

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| **FY21 budget item** | **Amount** | **Foundation Category[[1]](#footnote-1)** |
|  HS Student Internship Coordinator (0.5 FTE) |  $30,000 |  Administration; Employee Benefits/Fixed Charges |
|  Participation in Dual Enrollment Programming |  $7,000 |  Other Teaching Services  |
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| **Evidence-based program identified by the Department:** |  Equitable Access & Connections to Careers |
| **SOA program categories:** |  D (Hiring School Personnel) & I (Career Readiness) |

**2: Diversifying our administrator/educator workforce & aligning high quality, culturally responsive curriculum.**  IACS has supported a team of educators to form a Racial Justice Committee. The staff members organize the larger scope of school-wide initiatives that are all designed to support our students and families of color. The leadership of this group will provide additional mentoring to other staff of color as well as mentor affinity groups for students of color. Moreover, members of this committee will also engage in professional development, such as that offered by the DESE Diversity Network, to help strategize new approaches to recruiting teachers of color. In addition to helping diversify the teacher workforce, members of the RJC are reviewing our curriculum to check for high quality in terms of cultural proficiency. Lastly the school has contracted with external consultants to mentor the RJC as well as school administration to see how the school can be more supportive and responsive to our students and families of color. In subsequent years, additional funding through sources like the SOA may enable IACS to higher personnel who have specific expertise and ongoing focus on issue of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

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| **FY21 budget item** | **Amount** | **Foundation Category** |
|  Teacher Leadership Stipends |  $25,000 |  Instructional Leadership |
|  Culturally Responsive PD |  $10,000 |  Professional Development |
|  High Quality Aligned Curriculum |  $5000 |  Instructional Leadership & Professional Development |
| **Evidence-based program identified by the Department:** |  Diversifying our administrator/educator workforce  |
| **SOA program categories:** |  E (Professional Development) & F (Curricular Purchases) |

→ **Commitment 3: Monitoring Success with Outcome Metrics and Targets**

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| 1. **Department outcome metrics:**
	* Percentage of 11th and 12th graders completing advanced coursework (dual enrollment courses)
	* Four-year cohort graduation rate
	* First semester college matriculation rate
 | 1. **Custom metrics (must include targets as well):**
	* Student Engagement (measured by internal school climate surveys as well as external DESE Surveys (ex: VOCAL), if available
 |

→ **Commitment 4: Engaging All Families**

**How will your charter school ensure that all families, particularly those representing the student subgroups most in need of support, have the opportunity to meaningfully engage with the charter school regarding their students’ needs?**

IACS has a long-standing commitment to developing family engagement with the belief that it is critical for the success of students, and by extension the school. We stay connected to families through larger scale structures such as newsletters, family surveys, town hall forums, etc. More importantly, we engage with families in more personalized spaces such as student conferences (2x/year for all students), team meetings, and parent advisory councils.

While these structures have been effective for many families, we recognize that there are obstacles that can make engagement challenging. For example, we have expanded the use of video/phone conferencing for student conferences when standard meeting times (after an early dismissal) or transportation is a challenge. IACS will also explore how to implement best practices regarding home visits. On a less formal note, way we can help build connections is by creating casual settings for families to interact with each other as well as IACS staff. For example, last year our high school piloted a world culture dinner prior to our student exhibition night.

**Certifications:**

[x]  **By checking here, I certify that our charter school has engaged stakeholders in our community in accordance with the Student Opportunity Act**

**Please summarize your stakeholder engagement process, including specific groups that were engaged:**

Innovation Academy Charter School uses annual survey data and personalized conversations with families to inform our programming. Our student intern coordinator not only supports students, but conferences with families as well as the field supervisor. This two-way communication helps ensure that our programming meets the needs of students as well as the internship site. IACS also engages with parent advisory councils at both our middle school and high school to get feedback on our programming. Lastly, our newly formed Racial Justice Committee includes parents and students who provide additional insights on the effectiveness on our programming.

[x]  **By checking here, I certify that the Innovation Academy Charter School Board of Trustees voted on our Student Opportunity Act Plan.**

**Date of vote: January 11, 2021 Outcome of vote: Vote was unanimously approved**

1. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)