UNIFICATION PLAN

August 30th, 2016

Dear Orleans Parish Families and Community,

When Act 91 was signed into law a little over three months ago, it established a historic opportunity for the Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB) to redefine local oversight of all public schools in New Orleans, more than 10 years after the tragedy of Hurricane Katrina. As Superintendent, Act 91 has charged me with presenting a plan to the School Board by September 1st that details how the task of unifying the RSD schools with OPSB schools under local oversight will occur. The release of this plan will commence a two-year period of transition before unification is completed on July 1st, 2018.

Much has changed in the landscape of public education in New Orleans over the past decade. First and foremost, our students are performing at higher levels than we have ever seen – on state tests, high school graduation, and other measures. Our progress has dramatically outpaced the rest of the state, although we still have much further to go in order to close the achievement gap with the rest of the state and nation. We have made these gains by embracing several core values, including: choice for families, empowerment of schools and educators, strong authorization and accountability standards for schools, and a focus on equity so that more resources are provided for those students who need additional supports. We believe these same values will propel our schools toward further progress in the future.

Our plan for unification is necessarily detailed; there is a tremendous amount of work to be done over the next two years to re-imagine OPSB and prepare to work with all public schools and families in the city. We've worked closely with RSD Superintendent Patrick Dobard and his team to develop this plan, and appreciate our ongoing partnership through this transition process. We hope all in the community take the plan to heart and hold us accountable for the work we are committing to complete. In this brief note, I'd like to share a few key themes that stand out from our plan:

First, community involvement is critical

Our belief is that the process of unification must be led by the community itself. To that end, over the past 2½ months, we've had the opportunity to engage more than 500 community members: through public meetings of the Unification Advisory Committee, four community town hall meetings, eight task force sessions with educators and nonprofits, focus groups with families, and teachers, and many individual meetings with community leaders. We are committed to continuing to work in this open and transparent fashion throughout the transition process and beyond.

We asked the community to help shape a set of guiding principles to inform all our work on unification. Through the range of perspectives that were shared, we believe there is strong alignment on the following principles, which we revised from our earlier draft plan to reflect the input we received:

1. **High standards:** Every child in every neighborhood should have access to great public schools
2. **Continued progress:** We cannot be comfortable with the gains of the last 10 years; we must continually raise expectations, expand what is working, and cultivate new leaders and new ideas
3. **Choice for Families:** Every family should have access to a diverse set of school options for their child through a clear and fair process
4. **Ensuring Equity:** Differentiated resources and attention must go to ensuring that schools are succeeding for each individual student, based on his or her unique gifts, talents, and needs
5. **Empowering Schools and their Communities:** Educators closest to students and families must be empowered to make instructional decisions, and the community has a transparent understanding of their school options, the progress being made, and the way in which funds are being used

We heard from the community on many topics through our engagement efforts. Some of this feedback is directly reflected in the plan that's being presented today. For other areas, we will continue to work through multiple venues and in partnership with school operators, other government agencies, and our nonprofit partners where appropriate, to elevate and address these concerns. As a specific next step, we are committed to naming and convening a Citywide Vision and Strategic Goals Task Force within the next 60 days, to help us fashion a strategic plan for a unified OPSB for 2018 and beyond.

Second, as OPSB becomes the authorizer for all public schools in New Orleans, careful planning and hard decisions will be necessary

New Orleans, today, is, and must remain, a system of autonomous schools. As reflected in our guiding principles, we believe that students are best served when educators closest to them are empowered to make instructional and school-level decisions. With wide latitude and autonomy must come rigorous accountability for schools, which is one of the most important responsibilities OPSB will have as a unified district. This is a role we refer to in the plan as "portfolio management."

What does this mean, in basic terms? It means that we need a plan for how many schools are needed in each part of the city, taking into account the variety of programs available at each school. It means we need a clear system to tell us how all of our schools are performing, not just in terms of test scores but also in the services they provide to all students (e.g. equity of enrollment practices, provision of special education services). And it means that we will have the authority to make hard, informed decisions where needed: to open new schools in neighborhoods that need it, to close or turn around schools that are failing to meet our standards, or to otherwise intervene when schools are not meeting their responsibilities. Over the coming months, we will be working on a modified School Performance Framework that clearly articulates these high standards, including how we will monitor issues of equity in areas such as enrollment and special education. As Superintendent, I will have the authority to recommend all decisions related to school opening, renewal, and closure, subject to an override vote of two-thirds of the OPSB Board.

It is through these decisions and the ongoing work of planning and oversight that the district can move the city even closer to the vision that a great public school is available for every child in New Orleans.

Third, the plan includes a financially sustainable structure for OPSB

We have identified six key capabilities that will be critical to the success of a unified district. Apart from the portfolio management function described above, they include Citywide Services and Enrollment, Facilities, Family and Stakeholder engagement, Finance and Operations, and Local Education Agency (LEA) Responsibilities. Today, the work of each of these functions (with the exception of LEA Responsibilities, which affects only OPSB) is divided between the RSD and OPSB. Part of our planning over the past few months has been to determine how these functions will come together – not to replicate the structure of the RSD or to continue working as we at OPSB have historically, but to define a new vision and new structure for central office and citywide services.

Of course, this structure must also be financially sustainable. We estimate that, in the 2018-19 school year when unification is complete, the annual revenues available to support a central office and citywide services will be approximately $20 million. Our plan includes a budget outline that works within these revenues and that maps directly to the organizational capabilities above. We emphasize that this budget is not just supporting central office personnel; to the contrary, about half of the budget that we envision is dedicated to citywide services that directly serve students and families, including EnrollNOLA, the Therapeutic Day Program, the Youth Opportunity Center, the Youth Study Center, and Exceptional Children's Services, which provides special education services for children throughout the city. The full plan document provides more detail on each of these programs and services.

This budget outline meets all our statutory requirements, doesn't rely on fund balance or one-time revenues to fill recurring costs, and aligns with our strategic priority of maximizing resources flowing to schools and students. We've already begun the hard work of restructuring OPSB to live within our means, and these efforts will accelerate as we transition to unification.

At the same time, this is a very lean central office model, and there are tradeoffs that the plan begins to detail. As we further our community engagement and strategic planning work in the coming months, the conversation we will have around the future vision for OPSB goes hand-in-hand with consideration of whether additional resources are needed. As we begin the transition to unification, our long-run budgetary goal is to ensure that there is complete alignment between the resources for central office and citywide services vs. the priorities we need to take on.

Finally, we are prepared to begin the work ahead

We have a clear view of the work to be done over the next two years to make unification a reality, and offer this plan with clear quarterly milestones in order to allow the community to hold us accountable for progress. The process of transition is one that requires a host of policy and operational decisions: to reconcile any differences in the ways that OPSB and RSD have managed different functions, to provide clarity to schools and the community about their obligations and accountability under unification, and to prepare the systems and structures required for OPSB to be effective in a citywide governance role.

Early on in our planning process, we convened task forces of leaders and experts from across the city to help us identify and prioritize those decisions. And while this transition plan itself is not the forum for resolving these open items, our plan provides complete transparency on the work to be done. We enumerate each of the decisions to be made, and describe our perspective on the issues at hand, when we anticipate each issue to be resolved, and how we will engage different stakeholders in the process. And while there will almost certainly be unforeseen issues or priorities that arise, through this transition period and beyond, the capacity we are building as an organization will allow for smart and decisive responses that can work in real time for our schools.

In the end, the goal of this portion of the plan is to empower the community to join with us in this process, and to hold us accountable for progress at each step. By holding to this plan, we can build confidence among all community members OPSB's readiness to lead a unified district, and ensure that unification is completed in 2018 in the most transparent, seamless way possible.

It is a privilege to lead OPSB and our community through a period of unique opportunity to help define the future of public education in New Orleans. The process of unification, created by Act 91, has created the chance for robust community conversation. I am grateful for all of the community's input to this point, and I look forward to deepening our work together through the next few years of transition.

Sincerely,

H Lewis

Henderson Lewis Jr., Ph.D.
Superintendent, Orleans Parish School Board

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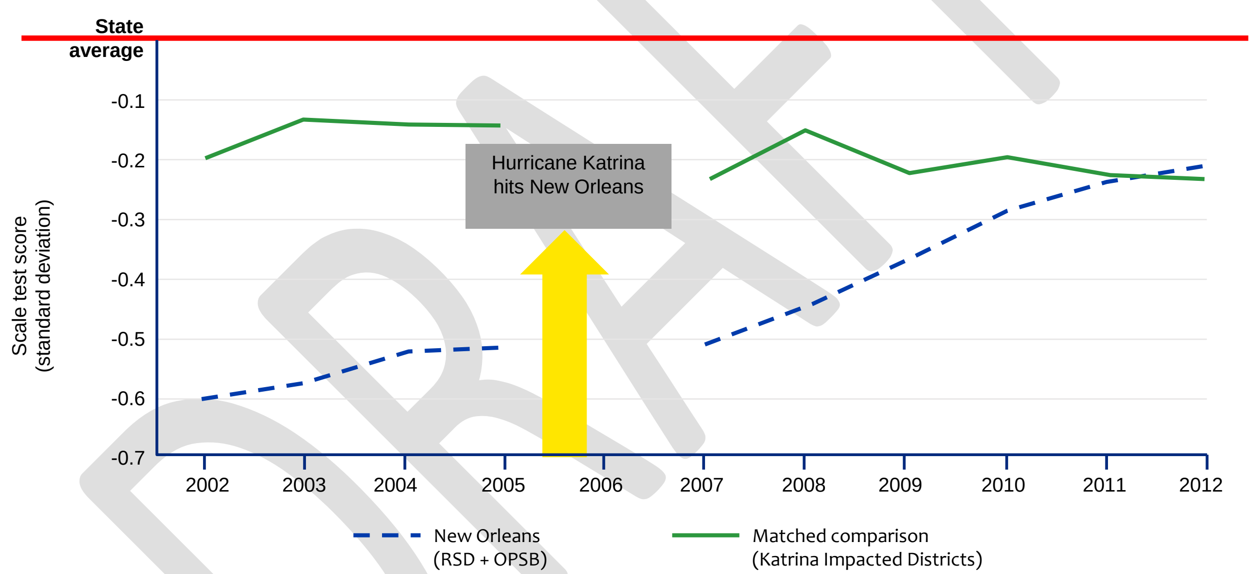
Overview and Purpose

Historical Context

More than ten years ago, public education in New Orleans suffered both from the results of decades of systemic decay and from the devastation of a natural and man-made disaster. Since then, the transformation of public schools in New Orleans has been remarkable – both for the dramatic change in the landscape of school options available to families, and, most importantly, for the improved outcomes for thousands of students each year. Core skills in literacy and numeracy, high school graduation rates, and college matriculation all show significant gains, and robust research has affirmed these gains by comparing them to similar populations of Louisiana school systems affected by Hurricane Katrina. [1]

Figure 1
Student Performance in New Orleans vs. Other Districts Affected by Hurricane Katrina



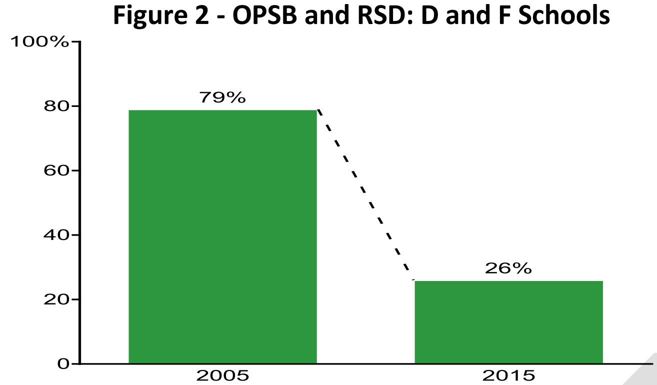
Source: Doug Harris, "Good News for New Orleans." Education Next, Fall 2015

With the passage of Act 91, New Orleans has the opportunity to build on this progress, by developing a unified system of public schools that enshrines the core principles that enabled such rapid progress, while also setting the stage for further improvement as New Orleans moves forward. The local school district that this plan envisions will operate differently from any other in the country: a city of autonomous schools, that empowers educators to make decisions in the interest of the students they know best, within a system overseen by a democratically elected Board that has its own obligations to advance quality, maintain financial accountability, and safeguard equity across the system.

[1] Harris, Doug. "Good News for New Orleans." *Education Next*. Fall 2015 <http://educationnext.org/good-news-new-orleans-evidence-reform-student-achievement/>

During the last decade, student achievement rates have risen dramatically. In 2005, only 35% of Orleans Parish students were proficient on state assessments, while in 2015-2016, 61% were proficient. This improved performance in New Orleans has closed the gap with the rest of the state by 17 percentage points over the last 10 years. In terms of school quality, the percentage of D and F schools (Figure 2) in New Orleans has dropped from 79% in 2005 to only 26% in 2015[2].

Figure 2 - OPSB and RSD: D and F Schools



At the same time, students in New Orleans face substantial hurdles every day, and the state (BESE and LDE) is raising its expectations for districts and schools across Louisiana. The number of students identified as at-risk[3] (as defined in state law) in Orleans Parish is over 37,000 (84% of all enrollment), and initial estimates show that ~7,200 (16%) of Orleans Parish students have exhibited symptoms of trauma.[4] There are now over 1,800 (4%) ELL students, and over 5,400 (12%) students with identified disabilities (as defined in IDEA and state law), enrolled in New Orleans public schools.[5]

Moreover, the data show the room for improvement that schools will face as expectations across Louisiana rise from “basic” proficiency to “mastery” in core subjects. While 61% of students in New Orleans achieved “basic” proficiency in 2016, only 31% of students achieved “mastery”. These numbers are slowly increasing, yet a continued sense of urgency is necessary in order to see students achieve at a “mastery” level.

Act 91

Act 91 lays the groundwork for a democratically-elected, local school district that can continue to build upon the progress that has been made over the past decade. This law, signed by Governor John Bel Edwards in May, is the product of work done over many years to unify New Orleans schools under a single democratically elected school board. Conversations around this topic have been ongoing for the past six years but were elevated in 2015 when Representative Joseph Bouie Jr. sponsored legislation on the return of schools to local oversight. Building on this foundation, Senator Karen Carter Peterson and other members of the New Orleans delegation charged the Superintendents of OPSB and RSD with working together and in partnership with school leaders and educational community stakeholders to develop the framework of what became Act 91.

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[2] “10 Years after Katrina: Academic Outcomes” *Louisiana Department of Education.* http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/katrina/final-louisana-believes-v5-academic-outcomes.pdf?sfvrsn=2

[3] “At-risk” includes economically disadvantaged students and students who are otherwise “at-risk” of not graduating *(See appendix).*

[4] [1] “Emotional Wellness and Exposure to Violence: Data from New Orleans Youth Age 11-15.” *Institution of Women and Ethnic Studies.* April 2016. http://iwesnola.org/resources/publications-articles/download-info/emotional-wellness-survey-report/

[5] Internal OPSB Data.

Act 91 enacted Louisiana R.S. 17:10.7.1, which codified the process for returning 49 RSD Type 5 charter schools to the jurisdiction of the Orleans Parish School Board as a unified system of schools over the course of the next two years. The law enshrines the concepts that have made New Orleans schools successful over the past 10 years, including: 1) Autonomous public schools, 2) Citywide family choice, 3) School authorizing and accountability standards, and 4) Focus on student equity.

Act 91 establishes the following for unification of the two school districts:

- The Orleans Parish School Board will be the primary governing authority for public education in New Orleans.
- All RSD schools and facilities (with the exception of those under active construction) in Orleans Parish are required to return by no later than July 1, 2018
- Consistent with the powers granted to local superintendents in other Louisiana school districts, but adapted to address the unique context of Orleans' system of autonomous school operators, the OPSB Superintendent is granted the authority to recommend and implement school authorization actions (charter approvals, extensions, renewals, closures, and monitoring and intervention), subject to review by the School Board with a 2/3rds majority required to overturn a decision.
- All schools are required to participate in common systems that protect access and ensure equity across the system, including common enrollment (EnrollNOLA) and common expulsion; and the School Board is fully empowered to adopt policies to govern these systems and incorporate these provisions in common charter operating agreements
- OPSB is required to provide a differentiated allocation of funds to schools based on student-level characteristics, and according to a locally-determined formula for this purpose
- Charter schools will maintain their autonomy over most aspects of school operation, with existing School Board policy language now elevated to state statutes, and
- All existing OPSB charter schools will have the opportunity to petition the School Board for independent LEA status, as RSD Type 5 schools currently enjoy.

In addition, to the community and other stakeholders, Act 91 defines the responsibilities of the Orleans Parish School Board, the OPSB Superintendent, the Unification Advisory Committee, and the Louisiana State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) within unification (Figure 3). The School Board is responsible for approving the unification plan presented by the OPSB administration and the Unification Advisory Committee, as well as continual oversight of the process. BESE is responsible for setting the financial and programmatic obligations of charter schools who are in their own Local Education Agency (LEA). The Unification Advisory Committee, in addition to advising on the different aspects of this plan, will assist the OPSB Superintendent in assessing the implementation of this plan. Following the approval of the plan, these reviews will occur in quarterly meetings throughout the unification process, as required by the law. Should the advisory committee determine that sufficient progress is not being made, the committee may request OPSB or BESE consider a delay of up to one year in the transition date by a majority vote of the full membership of the committee. OPSB and RSD will collaborate throughout this process to ensure a smooth transition for all public schools in New Orleans. Additionally, OPSB is statutorily obligated to convene the Unification Advisory Committee quarterly and provide quarterly written reports to various bodies, including BESE, the local school board, RSD, LDE, and the education committees of the Senate and House of Representatives.

Figure 3 – Roles and Responsibilities As Mandated by Act 91

School Board

- Ensures system's overall financial health and compliance with laws, establishes fair performance standards for all schools
- Can overrule Superintendent's recommendations with a 2/3rds majority vote
- Responsible for approving the unification plan

OPSB Superintendent

- Present recommendations to School Board regarding all charter authorization decisions, including the monitoring, closing, and opening of schools
- Identify emerging needs of school system and advocate for schools and students in partnership with community
- Responsible for presenting a plan to the School Board

Unification Advisory Committee

- Technical expertise and support the Superintendent in the development of the Transition plan for unification
- Serve as a venue for community input and feedback regarding the transition process
- Assist the Superintendent in the implementation of the plan and in resolving challenges

BESE

- Set the financial and programmatic obligations of charter schools who are their own LEA
- Authorize the state superintendent to revoke a charter school's right to act as its own LEA if schools do not meet obligations established

Public Engagement

Throughout the unification planning process, the OPSB has created many opportunities to engage with members of the community to ensure that local voice is reflected in this plan. There are numerous points throughout this plan that call for additional engagement from the community, school leaders, students, parents, civic leaders, and other stakeholders. This is an ongoing process, and OPSB understands that in order for this to be a successful unification, it is imperative to have input from those who work with students and schools every day. The planning process has included the following community and stakeholder engagement:

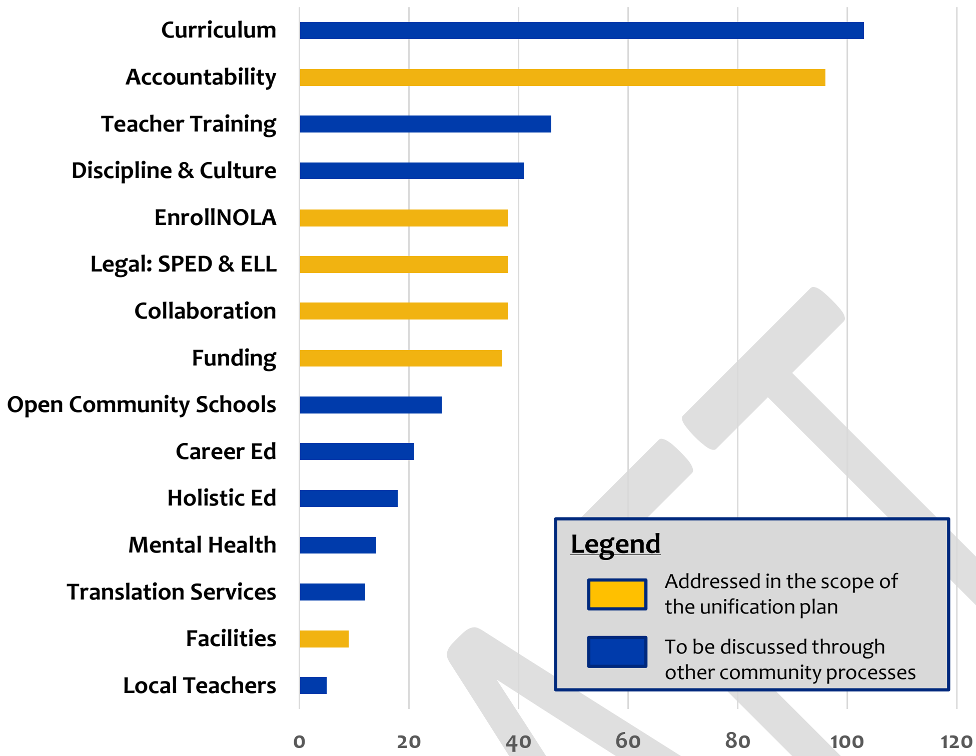
- **Four public meetings of the Advisory Committee,** including presentation of a draft plan in July and subsequent opportunities for public comment through public meetings, office hours, and the OPSPB website.
- **Over 250 community members** participated in four community meetings in July and August.
- **More than 100 leaders were invited to eight Task Force meetings**, convened in June and August to focus on Authorization, Accountability, and Planning; Facilities; Systemwide Services; and Transparency.
- **Focus groups with parents, and educators**
- **Charter Board and School leaders, elected officials, clergy, and community groups**

While all areas of community engagement have informed this plan and have helped drive the work of unification forward, engagement of over 250 members of the community in open meetings made clear the importance of continuing the process of reaching out to all education stakeholders in New Orleans. Community members were asked to give their reflections and opinions on the five guiding principles of unification, which include: High Standards, Continued Progress, Choice for Families, Ensuring Equity, and Empowering Schools and Their Communities (these are discussed in more detail in the next section of the plan)—as well as express the community's aspirations and frustrations with the city. Much of the conversation indicated strong alignment between our guiding principles and the community's feedback. The core ideas of high standards, continued progress, and ensuring equity strongly resonated with community members. Parents also voiced strong support for a choice based system and the importance of accountability for schools.

At the same time, participants voiced many of the challenges that characterize our work in public education. In various forums, there was concern expressed over needed resources to address some of the challenges our students and schools face. Specifically, while some related frustration with the EnrollNOLA process, others were happy with the outcomes for their families. Additionally, community members voiced support for neighborhood schools, but others demanded that they continue to have choice from a broad set of options. This feedback reflects the challenge of balancing families' demand for school choice in a period where not every neighborhood in the city has a quality school option. And while community input during this planning process surfaced some frustrations and continued mistrust from some stakeholders of the EnrollNOLA system, it is important for all to also recall the lack of transparency and equity that surrounded school enrollment prior to the development of common enrollment, and the burden that was imposed especially on families of limited means.

Much of the conversation around curriculum, accountability, teacher training, and discipline and culture was related to the principles of high standards and continued progress. Parents, grandparents, educators and other members of the community who attended these meetings described that these are the components that they believe that high performing schools are made of. In focus groups specifically with parents, they additionally highlighted personalized learning experiences and effective communication with teachers as critical to student success. Community engagement also highlighted the need for translation services for families and students for whom English is not the first language. The chart below lays out the additional areas that community members focused on throughout these meetings. Many of these issues will be directly and thoroughly addressed in the unification plan (accountability, OneApp, funding, etc.) while others (curriculum, teacher training, career education, etc.) will be addressed through ongoing dialogue with the community as well as through a Citywide Vision and Strategic Goals Task Force that will be convened beginning in the Fall of 2016.

Figure 4 - Key Themes from Community Meetings



OPSB recognizes the value of engaging the community, not just through unification, but continually. A school district cannot achieve its full potential without significant public and stakeholder involvement, and New Orleans is not an exception. The progress achieved over the past 11 years is not the product of a person, a district, or a storm. It is the product of a community that has come together in unprecedented ways to do what is right for the children of this city. As a district and a community, OPSB is committed to continue to push our schools to be the first of its kind in the nation.

I. Guiding Principles

Unification offers a tremendous opportunity to continue the momentum of the last ten years, while pushing for further progress and developing even stronger structures to guarantee effective choice and equitable education opportunities in New Orleans.

OPSB's aspirations for what unification can deliver to students, families, and educators over the long term are embedded within a set of guiding principles that reflect these ideas – principles informed and validated in large part by the feedback received through community conversations both before and during this planning process. Over the next few years, as OPSB works with stakeholders to more deeply define a future vision for the district and works internally to transform the organization, these guiding principles will help to ground conversations and move the work of unification forward:

1. **High Standards: Every child in every neighborhood should have access to great public schools**

   OPSB is committed to a vision that access to high-quality public education should not depend on one's Zip code, socioeconomic status, race or background. The feedback from the community over the past few months has reinforced what the community already knows: that despite the remarkable student achievement gains of the last decade, many families are frustrated with the options available to them in their neighborhoods. All of the work OPSB does as a district and a community should ultimately be focused on ensuring that all children and every part of the city have great public schools.

2. **Continued Progress: We cannot be comfortable with the gains of the last 10 years; we must continually raise expectations, expand what is working, and cultivate new leaders and new ideas.**

   There is much work to be done to build on the progress of the last decade. The same urgency that has enabled the transformative work of the last 10 years has to characterize the future as well. The best school operators in the city are already focused on how they can improve and expand to meet the needs of students. As a district, OPSB must work with schools to continue to set appropriately high standards, seek the best leaders and school operators to run schools in New Orleans, and work with partners to seek out new ideas that can advance equity and bolster innovation for the city.

3. **Choices for Families: Every family should have access to a diverse set of school options for their child through a clear and fair process.**

   Even if OPSB succeeds in the first guiding principle of providing great schools in every neighborhood, the feedback received from families is that they still value choice as a paramount value. So while OPSB seeks high-quality schools in every part of the city, those schools must also present diverse options for students and families – representing different philosophies, styles, and approaches. By combining high quality and diverse options, and then empowering families to choose, OPSB will create a system of schools that helps every child enroll in a school that will be their best fit.

4. **Ensuring Equity: Differentiated resources and attention must go to ensuring that schools are succeeding for each individual student, based on his or her unique gifts, talents, and needs.**

   In recent years, both RSD and OPSB – along with schools and community members – have been committed to improving equity for all students through efforts such as differentiated funding and new programs for at-risk students. The district has a critical role to play in monitoring equity issues, intervening where necessary, and developing citywide solutions to address unmet needs. The district is legally bound to protect the civil rights of students and is committed to doing so. This includes that students and families have access to many school options of their choice, and OPSB will ensure that all schools and individuals in the system are held accountable to protecting this right.

5. **Empowering Schools and their Communities: Educators closest to students and families are empowered to make instructional decisions, and the community has a transparent understanding of their school options, the progress being made, and the way in which funds are being used.**

   OPSB recognizes that schools and school networks are best positioned to make educational decisions for the students they serve and is committed to giving them the independence and autonomy that they need. Schools will retain the independence to be responsive to their students' needs through control of their staff, curriculum, and budget – protections that were adopted in School Board policy, and are now elevated into law. At the same time, it is necessary to empower the community to be partners with OPSB in improving public education in the city to provide them with the information on the system of schools to make informed choices about what is right for their children.

In sum, these guiding principles create a school system that is the first of its kind in the nation – one where schools are given the autonomy and resources they need to improve, while the district focuses a set of system-wide functions that can advance quality and equity for the city.

What Schools Do

- Make all curriculum and instructional decisions, based on the best interests of their students
- Provide training and support to educators and staff
- Make all personnel decisions consistent with their mission
- Control their own budgets, including (increasingly) facilities planning

What the District Does

- Promote standards of school quality that create a focus on improvement and equity
- Monitor school performance, and take action when needed
- Work to develop new schools and programs for students and/or neighborhoods that need better options
- Promote choice and equity through Enrollment and other citywide programs
- Set policy that directs school and facilities funding to reflect student and citywide needs

II. Strategic Priorities

OPSB's work over the next several years is to make the benefits of unification increasingly clear to schools and to the community at-large. Building on the guiding principles that state the long-term aspirations for public education in New Orleans, there are a set of strategic priorities that drive the near-term work that OPSB will take on to help make those guiding principles a reality.

A. We will uphold stringent standards for school authorization, performance, and accountability while empowering those closest to students.

What this means: As the authorizer for all public schools in New Orleans, OPSB will have to make hard decisions that advance student interests: to open new schools in neighborhoods that need it, to close or turn around schools that are failing to meet stated standards, or to otherwise intervene when schools are not meeting their responsibilities. Underlying these decisions are a set of policy constructs, namely a school performance framework, an agreement with school operators, and related OPSB Board policies. Some of the most urgent and important work OPSB must undertake in planning for unification is to determine – in collaboration with school leaders and community members – how these policies should be modified now that OPSB will be overseeing all public schools in the city.

The work to be done: Creation of a modified School Performance Framework, charter operating agreement, and related Board policies. The process associated with this is described further in Section V.

B. We will ensure a set of citywide services and policies are in place that address equity issues for all students.

What this means: In a system of autonomous schools, there are a set of services and programs that must be provided on a citywide basis, to promote equity and ensure that supports exist for all students, especially those with high need. Today, these services are overseen by OPSB, RSD, and a range of non-profit organizations. The most prominent of these is the EnrollNOLA system managed by RSD, which includes OneApp, the student hearing office, and other key functions. A full description of all current citywide services is provided in Section III.

The work to be done: Ensure a responsible transition for EnrollNOLA and other citywide services. The role of OPSB is not to manage and direct all of these efforts, but to help support these services where appropriate, coordinate connections with schools where needed, and work with leaders throughout the city to identify unmet need. This work is discussed in more depth in the Organizational Capabilities section of the plan.

C. We will be financially efficient and operationally lean.

What this means: Over the past year, the Orleans Parish School Board has begun a restructuring effort to better align resources against key priorities and maximize the funding that flows directly to schools. The transition to unification will require this work to continue and be accelerated, as we re-imagine a model for OPSB that can live within the ongoing revenue streams available to a unified school district.

The work to be done: Continue restructuring OPSB to address key citywide priorities and succeed within the ongoing revenues available to support a unified system. The plan to achieve financial sustainability is described in Section IV of this plan.

D. We will ensure that facilities are appropriately maintained and provide the best possible environment for teachers and students.

What this means: Over the past several years, OPSB and RSD have undertaken the most expansive facilities rebuilding program in the city's history. With $1.8 billion in investment in school facilities, it is imperative that these facilities are clean and safe and maintained for years to come. OPSB must properly balance high, clear standards for facilities with the respect for school autonomy that OPSB is committed to providing. At the same time, there is much work to be done both in policy and education for school leaders to prepare schools themselves for a more direct role in owning facilities planning, as called for in the School Facilities Preservation Fund that is funded through a share of sales tax revenue and ad valorem tax.

The work to be done: Align maintenance standards and protocols for enforcing those standards, while preparing to launch the School Facilities Preservation Fund. Additional detail on these areas of work is provided in Section V.

E. We will collaborate with our stakeholders to define policies in the best interest of students.

What this means: OPSB's belief is that the process of transitioning to unification must be led by the community itself. The task force on transparency and community responsiveness reinforced the need to continue to ensure effective communication with stakeholders on the important policy decisions moving forward. As OPSB works through the unification transition process, the district will bring together a diverse set of decision makers, including school and community leaders, who care deeply about the future of our schools and students to help us develop the policies and structures to meet our guiding principles.

The work to be done: This plan provides a detailed set of policy and operational decisions that must be made over the next two years to enable a successful transition to unification. OPSB has proposed instituting a School Leader Advisory Board and engage the community continually throughout unification and beyond to ensure that the district is working with the right set of stakeholders, in the right way, to make informed decisions. These plans are presented in Section V.

F. We will set long-term goals and a vision for a unified school district by engaging our community.

What this means: Unification is a historical milestone for public education in the city, but it is much more of a beginning than an end. Even as OPSB works during this transition period to prepare for unification, the district will work with the community in parallel to articulate a vision and goals for the long term, well beyond the 2018 completion of unification. This process should speak both to the community's broader aspirations for public education in the city, and to the specific role that OPSB can play to best support those aspirations considering the core values of empowering families and educators.

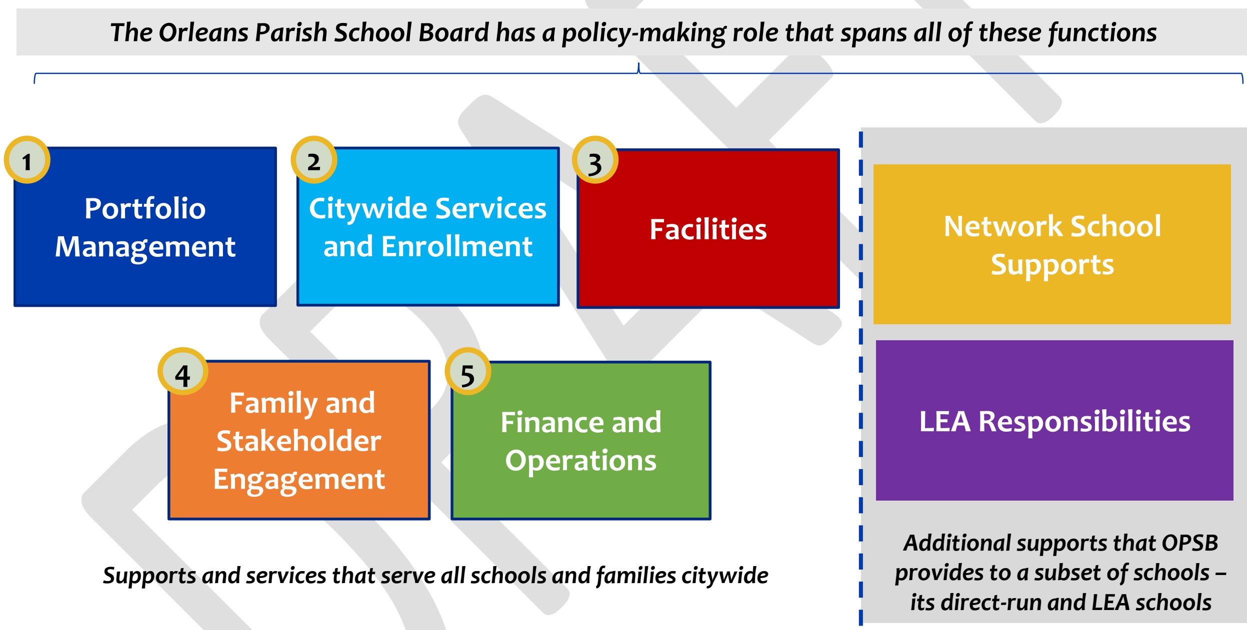
The work to be done: To continue the community conversation and help develop long-term goals and vision for OPSB, the Superintendent will announce and convene a Citywide Vision and Strategic Goals Task Force to begin in the next 60 days, and to continue its work over the course of 2016-17.

The specific activities that flow from these strategic priorities are some of the most important milestones for the transition to unification, though they represent only a subset of the capabilities that the organization must be prepared to take on. The next section of the plan details in a comprehensive fashion the responsibilities that are anticipated for OPSB as a unified school district.

II. Organizational Capabilities

The transition to unification will call on OPSB to take on a different role as an organization in order to serve all schools and students in New Orleans. Over the past year, OPSB has begun the work of transforming its organization, a process that will continue over the next two years. By July 1, 2018, OPSB will need the capacity to excel across a range of organizational capabilities, most of which today are spread across OPSB and RSD. Some others may be new responsibilities that neither district currently provides as strongly as is required. This section of the plan details all of the work that OPSB will be responsible for as a unified district, and describes the initial investments that OPSB will make during the transition period to make this a responsible and gradual change for schools and the community.

By July 2018, the organizational structure of OPSB will be built around the following capabilities, based on the principles and priorities that outlined earlier in this plan:



This structure includes five key capabilities that will benefit all schools and families: portfolio management, citywide services and enrollment, facilities, family and stakeholder engagement, and finance and operations. In addition, OPSB has two key functions – supports for its direct-run Network Schools, and "LEA Responsibilities"[6] – that offer additional supports to a subset of schools. The Orleans Parish School Board has a policy-making role that cuts across all of these functions.

While the work of supporting OPSB's direct run schools is not directly affected by the transition to unification, it is important to note that OPSB will continue to support these schools in ways that are

[6] LEA Responsibilities are the services that OPSB is legally required to provide to schools for which OPSB serves as the Local Education Agency (LEA). While all schools in the RSD serve as their own independent LEAs, all OPSB direct-run schools and most OPSB charter schools currently do not today. LEA responsibilities include, most prominently, providing special education services and grants management supports. These responsibilities, and the implications for OPSB and schools, are described in greater detail later in this section.

consistent with the guiding principles that inform a citywide focus: empowerment and autonomy for schools, maximizing the resources that flow to schools, with strong and consistent accountability standards. OPSB has structured its Office of Network Supports to function independently within the district, providing holistic support to those schools in the same way that high-performing charter organizations in the city support their own networks of schools.

Below, the work required within each of these capabilities is defined in greater detail.

Portfolio Management:

Unification calls for OPSB to be the oversight organization for all public schools in New Orleans, which means that OPSB will make all decisions about school openings and closures, among a broader set of monitoring and interventions to ensure that schools are meeting their responsibilities. In academic circles, this set of activities is known as *portfolio management*, and a district that operates in this fashion is one where schools and educators are empowered to run their own schools but are held to standards set by the district—which regulates the system of schools.[7] The sets of decisions that come along with portfolio management – planning, accountability, and authorization – lead to the continuous improvement and innovation that will enable the vision that a great public school is available for all children in New Orleans.

Key Activities:

a. **Planning:** The basic role of planning is to ensure that there are an appropriate number of school seats and programmatic options in each area of the city, and to work with partner organizations to ensure that there is a pipeline of high-quality school leaders / operators ready to take on new needs as they arise. With changing demographics and differing needs across the city, careful planning is required to maintain ongoing quality in education for students.
    a. *Assessment of need through collaboration and strategic use of data:* OPSB will assess the needs of students through engagement with the community and analysis of demographic data to develop a strategy of for filling those needs. OPSB understands that the planning process is a collaborative one, and involves both consulting external stakeholders and coordinating internally to synthesize data from enrollment (where is there the highest and lowest demand for schools?), facilities (what is the condition and utilization of buildings in different parts of the city?), and performance (what is the quality of the school seats that do exist in each area?), among others.
    b. *Pipeline:* A second key function related to portfolio planning is to recruit and cultivate school leaders and organizations to form a strong pipeline of new school candidates. While OPSB does not need to take the lead on all aspects of its work, and indeed looks to Charter Boards as well as the non-profit sector to drive many of these efforts, the portfolio team within OPSB should coordinate with those partners where needed, be available to help make the case to potential leaders that New Orleans is an ideal environment in which to lead new

[7] The Center on Reinventing Public Education is a research and policy analysis center at the University of Washington that has advanced much of the work related to the portfolio management approach in school districts. Over 45 cities are pursuing the portfolio strategy approach.

school creation, and integrate any information about the potential pipeline of leaders into its overall planning for new school openings or school turnarounds.

b. Accountability: OPSB will maintain clear, consistent and high standards for all schools through three main instruments of school accountability: the School Performance Framework, charter operating agreements, and related School Board policies. Together, these three instruments serve as the backbone for OPSB's charter performance standards. Although student achievement is the most important component of accountability, standards must also include clear expectations for financial and organizational performance, and issues of equity. OPSB recognizes that some re-balancing of its current Framework and policies is needed, in a context where its school portfolio will soon include many more schools with a different balance of student characteristics. New policies will need to clarify how or why OPSB will intervene with any school, to include factors related to student growth, to ensure expectations are appropriate for school operators doing turnaround work or leading alternative schools, and to calibrate performance expectations appropriately relative to the range of actual outcomes observed in the city today. OPSB wants to ensure that our performance framework balances the community's unrelenting ambitions for students with an understanding of and respect for the context and circumstances in which our schools are doing the hard work of delivering on this promise.

a. *Data Analytics:* Strong data analytical capabilities are at the heart of an effective portfolio management and accountability function: to be able to dig deeply into school population and performance data, look flexibly at the landscape of student need for different sub-groups and different parts of the city, and organize and communicate this data effectively to a range of internal and external stakeholders. Data and analytics feeds OPSB's ability to make informed portfolio decisions, and helps schools and the community understand how the district overall is progressing toward its principles and priorities.

b. *Monitoring School Performance and Equity:* Accountability as defined in policy is then reinforced by OPSB's capacity to monitor schools on an ongoing basis and identify issues that suggest concerns around school performance (academic, financial, or operational) or equity – in particular potential concerns related to schools' enrollment practices or their provision of services to students with disabilities or English Language Learners. OPSB will also work with Charter Boards to make sure that they understand their own governance obligations and responsibilities to operate with the transparency called for in the law, while being respectful of their autonomy.

c. *Communication to Schools:* Key to the success of school performance and accountability will be a clear articulation of the School Performance Framework. OPSB will ensure that schools understand the expectations to which they are held and delineate the exact process by which the district will elevate concerns or create interventions when school monitoring or data analysis indicates performance or equity issues.

c. Authorization: The role of portfolio management for the city inevitably will require OPSB to make hard, informed decisions about individual schools. Once unification is complete, the OPSB Superintendent has the authority to recommend portfolio decisions, subject to a two-thirds Board override. This set of activities includes: opening new schools in neighborhoods that need it, closing or turning around schools that fail to meet established standards, or otherwise intervening when schools are not meeting their responsibilities. Additionally, OPSB may also publicly elevate monitoring issues such as enrollment, special education, or Charter Board governance.

Changes during transition period to ensure OPSB can perform these key activities:

The portfolio management capabilities of the OPSB will need to expand substantially over the next two years in preparation for the transition of the remaining 49 RSD schools to the OPSB. In preparation for this development, OPSB has begun to restructure its organization to reflect all of the activities described above within planning, accountability, and authorization. Most recently, this includes bringing on a new leader of the school monitoring function within the Portfolio team.

Moving forward, OPSB is most immediately focused on building additional capacity in two key areas over the course of 2016-17:

- School Performance Monitoring and Oversight: As the number of schools that OPSB oversees more than triples, increased capacity will be necessary to monitor school performance, manage relationships with schools, and support school development. Expansion of this capacity will be gradual over time depending on the rate of return of schools from the RSD. In 2016-17, OPSB will focus on building capacity specifically to focus on Alternative Schools, including its work with the ALI and YSC programs.
- Data analytics: OPSB will increase capacity in its data analytics function to be able to manage citywide analysis for portfolio planning and other purposes. This team will work closely with the RSD to ensure consistent and accurate data across the city throughout the transition to unification.

In addition to the operational work of building OPSB's internal capacity for portfolio management, there is the substantial policy work to modify the main instruments of accountability: the School Performance Framework and related policies and contracts. This work is described in greater detail in subsequent sections. Finally, OPSB will coordinate closely with the RSD as each district (the OPSB and the RSD) continue to independently make portfolio decisions subject to their own policies over the next two years until unification is complete.

Citywide Services and Enrollment:

The role of Citywide Services and Enrollment is to ensure that all students and families can access the schools and services necessary to succeed in college, career, and life. Many students have unique needs and require access to services that meet those needs, which often make sense to provide in a citywide structure rather than through individual schools. Today, some of these services are provided by the RSD and OPSB, while others are provided by non-profits. Still other needs are seen in the community as unmet. Part of the citywide role that OPSB will play is to work in partnership with the community to develop solutions to these unmet needs, even if OPSB itself does not always manage or directly operate the programs that are developed as solutions.

Key Activities:

a. Enrollment: OPSB will maintain a unified enrollment system that facilitates school choice and ensures that families are enrolled equitably. EnrollNOLA runs OneApp, the Family Resource Centers and Early Childhood enrollment throughout the city, and has provided a consistent, fair method for families to access schools. Community engagement to date, in fact, indicates how strongly parents value choice—which EnrollNOLA makes possible on an equitable basis for all families. Today, the annual enrollment process offers students the opportunity to easily apply to all participating schools using one application. At the same time, OPSB approaches the work of enrollment in the spirit of continuous improvement, and will continue to engage school leaders and the community at large to bolster understanding and trust in how EnrollNOLA works today, and to find ways to provide even better access and choice for families across Orleans Parish.

   a. *Early Childhood:* EnrollNOLA plays an active role in Early Childhood programs, helping families determine which programs they are eligible for and then running the enrollment process for various types of schools including Early Head Start, Head Start, PK4 and Nonpublic Schools. These programs represent a significant expansion of work beyond K-12 enrollment. It is necessary per law but is also highly effective for ensuring access to early childhood programming for families. Currently, these programs are not supported financially by Early Childhood service providers. However, it represents an investment in the future of our students that OPSB aims to continue.
   b. *Student Hearing Office:* EnrollNOLA also manages the Student Hearing Office, which provides a common process and set of standards for student expulsion, and places expelled students in alternative school settings.

b. Citywide Services: Especially in a system of autonomous schools, students with unique and intensive needs, as well as differentiated types of schools and programs, require some citywide coordination to ensure equity. Today, the RSD and OPSB manage some of these services, while non-profit organizations are critical service partners in other areas. There are a range of such citywide services today that will fall under OPSB's oversight as a unified school district, and/or that must be supported financially by the resources available for a unified school system; these current services and programs are enumerated below. In addition, part of the Citywide Services function that OPSB will take on is to help spotlight where the services that exist today are not adequate to address student need and community demand, and to work with partners to both develop solutions and marshal resources to expand programming where necessary. In key areas such as early childhood and career and technical education, there are strong emerging partners such as NOEEN and YouthForce NOLA that can play a leadership role in coordinating a citywide approach. OPSB must have the capacity to coordinate effectively with these organizations, help problem-solve to develop new solutions, and represent the interests of its schools and students where needed.

   a. **NOTDP**: The New Orleans Therapeutic Day Program is a joint collaboration between the OPSB, RSD, and Tulane Medical School's Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. It is a separate school setting serving New Orleans students with the most severe behavioral health disabilities in grades K-8. The NOTDP provides individualized mental health services and placements to students whose health needs cannot be met in a traditional school setting—while preparing them to eventually return to their home school. NOTDP is starting to explore the possibility of becoming its own 501(c)(3), a process that could continue during much or all of the transition to unification. Throughout this process, OPSB and RSD will continue to support the program financially through the Harrah's CEA. Should the NOTDP becomes its own non-profit, consistent communication between OPSB's Portfolio office, schools and NOTDP will be essential as NOTDP will continue to serve New Orleans students with behavioral health needs.

b. **YOC**: The Youth Opportunity Center is a joint initiative of the RSD and OPSB that is currently managed by the RSD. The YOC serves as the citywide safety net for students at risk of disengaging from and dropping out of school, by connecting students and families to services they need to get back on track and in school and set up with supports needed for long-term success. In its second year of operation, the YOC has expanded to work with students who are referred from courts, psychiatric facilities, or otherwise dealing with significant mental health or discipline challenges. Through individual case management, the YOC advocates for, monitors, communicates, and evaluates all of its students and families. City leaders, service providers, and community members continue to be interested to explore additional ways that the YOC can meet a range of youth needs, especially in interactions with court-involved youth and the juvenile justice system. Leadership of the YOC and the RSD are working to hone the right scope of responsibilities for organization, and OPSB will work with the YOC and the RSD to develop a responsible management transition by 2018.

c. **YSC and ALI:** The Youth Study Center and the Alternative Learning Institute both serve students in secure care, whether at a juvenile detention center or an adult jail. The educational services at both institutions are delivered by OPSB, and both are aimed at providing quality educational programming for delinquent youth. The YSC's purpose is to provide quality evidence-based juvenile detention practices and foster accountability, personal growth, and character development.

d. **CENF**: The Citywide Exceptional Needs Fund is a special purpose fund housed by OPSB and jointly operated between the RSD and OPSB to help all public schools meet the needs of their special education students. The fund distributes up to $1.3 million annually for schools to build the capacity to serve students whose level of need requires services that are more costly than MFP allocations or the differentiated funding formula can support. The funds are student-specific and awarded after an independent review process that requires schools to include a cost estimate for the resources required for serving that particular student—which is awarded only after the differentiated funding formula is applied.[8]

[8] Last year, those services needed to cost more than $22,226 in order to be eligible for receiving funds from CENF.

c. **Mandatory Responsibilities:** Certain functions that are the traditional responsibility of a district must reside within OPSB, even if it is not the LEA for any particular school, because OPSB is the citywide organization with oversight of public education. This set of functions may be described as OPSB's LEA responsibilities for the entire city, distinct from OPSB's LEA Responsibilities to its Charter and Network Schools, as depicted to the right. These include:

OPSB's Dual LEA Responsibilities

	LEA Responsibilities for the City	LEA Responsibilities for Charter/ Network Schools
Overview	Certain LEA responsibilities that OPSB will retain regardless of whether any individual given school is in its LEA or not	LEA Responsibilities that OPSB has to each school in its LEA
Specific Responsibilities	• Child Find for early childhood, non-public school students, youth in secure care, or unenrolled students • Services for homeless students • Services for neglected/delinquent youth, including court involved youth • Parental engagement/ translation requirements	• All SPED services (including Child Find) for students in the LEA • Fiscal agent of all state and federal funds and allocate funds to these schools • Apply for and administer grants while ensuring compliance • Data Management and Reporting

- Child Find, which requires OPSB to provide identification and evaluation services with the intent of locating all children with disabilities who are not yet enrolled in a school
- Services for children with disabilities who are not otherwise enrolled or assigned to a public school ("nonpublic students")
- Services for homeless students[9]
- Services for neglected/delinquent youth, including court involved youth or those in secure custody
- Parental engagement/translation functions

Further description related to the other half of OPSB's LEA responsibilities—related to the Type 1 and 3 schools in its LEA—are enumerated upon in the LEA Responsibilities capability of this plan.

<u>*Changes during transition period to ensure OPSB can perform these key activities:*</u>

OPSB's capacity to oversee citywide services will need to expand as it takes on many of the functions that the RSD has filled over the past few years. The first example of this will be that in 2016-17 OPSB will take on coordination of early childhood programmatic work (which today is supported by the RSD), in partnership with NOEEN. Coordination between OPSB and the different citywide programs listed above will be a key function of the OPSB portfolio team.

In particular, OPSB and RSD are committed to a responsible transition of EnrollNOLA. Recognizing the substantial importance of EnrollNOLA to schools and families across the city, OPSB and RSD will take time to develop a more detailed transition plan specifically for all EnrollNOLA functions by December 2016. This plan will be informed by several key parameters:

[9] If OPSB were not an LEA of any status, it would not be obligated to provide services to homeless students.

- Starting immediately in the 2016-17 school year, OPSB leadership and EnrollNOLA leadership will deepen coordination with regular management check-ins
- The EnrollNOLA team will co-locate within OPSB offices sometime during the 2017-18 school year, to bring the operations closer together and ensure that all EnrollNOLA functions are coordinating effectively with related citywide teams in advance of unification
- The formal administrative transition from RSD to OPSB will occur in the spring or early summer of 2018 (not later than July 1), taking into account the workflow of the EnrollNOLA team as they manage the student enrollment process for the 2018-19 school year

Facilities:

OPSB's role is to plan for how all district-owned facilities are used and where new buildings may be needed, to set standards around maintenance and design, and to oversee a pool of maintenance funds that schools can draw on to support their own planning priorities. Prior to the significant construction and renovation effort that began 10 years ago, public school buildings in Orleans Parish suffered considerably from neglect and the misappropriation of resources. OPSB is committed to ensuring that facilities under OPSB are well maintained and all students have the opportunity to attend school in a safe environment. Under Act 91, all buildings, facilities, and property controlled by the RSD will be transferred to OPSB oversight when a school is returned. However, any property belonging to a charter operator will remain property of the school. RSD will continue to administer FEMA-funded capital projects for its schools until those projects are substantially complete, per funding requirements.

Key Activities:

a. **Building Oversight:** Monitor the general maintenance and longer term issues with buildings as outlined in facilities guidelines. Ensure issues are addressed by school operators and plans are developed for individual issues.

b. **System-Wide Planning:** Assess and help set priorities for building utilization, new buildings, transition of buildings, and sale of unused buildings. This work should be done in conjunction with the Portfolio office in order to make sure all relevant information is considered.

c. **Building Assessment**: Periodically evaluate the current state of buildings in order to make certain that adequate funding is available for future needs.

d. **Design Standards:** Normalize criteria for new construction and renovations in order to best utilize funding. These standards should be put into place to ensure that buildings are safe and built using best practices.

e. **Facilities Preservation Fund:** The development of the Facilities Preservation Fund and the policy that will manage the allocation of the Fund is a major need over the next few years. This work must begin with a facilities needs assessment necessary to evaluate buildings that will be under OPSB control by July 2018, so that policies and procedures around the allocation of Facilities Preservation Fund dollars are allocated to the highest-need work and so that the fund itself assures long-term solvency. Policy work must ensure both that schools have an understanding of how to access funds that are currently being collected to support facilities preservation (including understanding what is a permissible use of those funds), and developing the parameters of the revolving loan fund that will be available to schools with district oversight starting in 2021. A final aspect of this function will be the development of plans to secure long-term funding beyond the current millage. The new millage is up for renewal in 2024 and ensuring that there is a clear plan for these funds will be vital for a successful renewal.

Changes during transition period to ensure OPSB can perform these key activities:

During the 2016-17 year, OPSB intends to build capacity specifically around the role of Facilities Finance, to ensure that there is leadership in place in the district with the knowledge and skills to oversee the development of policy and procedure for the Facilities Preservation Fund as well as longer-term capital planning considerations.

In addition, the facilities department will need to prepare for the influx of school buildings as the number of schools under OPSB's oversight will more than triple. As part of the transition process, the OPSB and RSD facilities departments will lead an evaluation of current maintenance policies with school operators from throughout the city. This process will help determine the resource needs of the facilities department going forward. This process is scheduled to be completed by spring 2017 and will define the structure of the facility department going forward.

Family and Stakeholder Engagement

As a unified school district with a democratically-elected School Board, OPSB has an obligation to work closely with all stakeholders and the community at-large to communicate priorities, share information on school performance, gather feedback, and collaborate with to develop policies. The Community and Transparency Task Force, the focus groups, and the community meetings that OPSB has conducted over the course of the planning process have highlighted the need for the district to deepen its commitment to stakeholder engagement, bolster transparency, and to make the frequency and depth of engagement of the last few weeks characteristic of the next two years of transition to unification.

Key Activities:

a. **Family Engagement:** Provide ongoing communication with families and a clear channel for input, including the need to gather student voice.

b. **Community Relations:** Ensure that OPSB is responsive to family and student concerns and issues.

   Task forces indicated that OPSB should authentically engage the community through multiple flexible means of communication while providing clear, consistent and concise information to students, families and community members. Channels of communication include PSAs, advertisements, social media and the OPSB website.

c. **Communications:** Translate the vision, strategy, and actions of the district transparently to all families and community members.

d. **Intergovernmental Affairs and Policy:** Develop proposals and support the OPSB Board in its policy-making role. Liaise between state, local, and federal governmental agencies and advocate for policy that advances the needs of Orleans Parish students and schools.

e. **Strategy:** Set the vision and strategic priorities for a unified system in collaboration with key stakeholders.

Changes during transition period to ensure OPSB can perform these key activities:

To address both the intensive engagement required for the transition process as well as OPSB's longer-term commitment to transparency, the district is significantly expanding its capacity to drive work with families, stakeholders, and community members. This includes increased capacity in OPSB's communications, an intentional bolstering of its web presence, including a forum to answer questions 24/7 online, and numerous physical forums for community dialogue. More substantively, OPSB is committed to enhancing its family engagement function that will enhance how OPSB interacts with and connects with students and families.

Finance and Operations:

The role of finance and operations is to provide both resources and a targeted set of support services to schools and the central office. This role is primarily focused on OPSB central office and schools in OPSB's LEA, as the majority of schools who are in their own LEA handle the vast majority of their financial and operational affairs.

Key Activities:

a. **Finance:** Oversee financial matters in the district, including taxing and bond authority for all schools, insurance, budgeting, payroll, and audits.

b. **Differentiated Funding**: Operationalize the differentiated funding policy and create a policy and process for ensuring that funding levels remain aligned with student need throughout the district.

c. **Human Resources**: Manage system-level aspects of HR, including recruiting, safety, employee relations, benefits, and compliance. HR is also responsible for management of legacy health benefits.

d. **Legal**: Provide legal oversight on district matters to ensure that the district is operating within its proper authority. Legal also ensures that all legacy obligations are being met.

e. **Information Technology**: Maintain and update IT infrastructure, hardware, software, and IT related contracts for central office and some LEA schools.

Changes during transition period to ensure OPSB can perform these key activities:

Because the schools returning from the RSD are all charter schools that function as their own LEA, the additional financial and operational responsibilities associated with overseeing these schools is modest and can generally be absorbed by existing OPSB capacity. Per policies that the OPSB Board adopted prior to Act 91, the district is already charged with taking leadership over the differentiated funding formula. As part of the overall restructuring that OPSB will continue over the next two years, these financial and operational functions within the district—like all other parts of the organization—will be streamlined to ensure that it is fiscally responsible and operationally lean. Recently, OPSB has brought on a Chief Operations Officer (COO) who will be leading this charge.

LEA Responsibilities:

The LEA term is a new one for many, and is "often used as a synonym for a school district…though it holds special meaning under federal and state policy."[10] As the Local Education Agency (LEA) for its network (direct-run) schools and Type 1 and Type 3 charter schools, OPSB is obligated by law to provide a targeted set of services for these students and schools. By contrast, each RSD Type 5 charter school and OPSB Type 3 charter school currently serves as its own LEA for most purposes. Per Act 91, schools currently under the OPSB LEA will have the option to request that the Board make them their own LEA. Schools returning to the OPSB as Type 3B charters will choose whether to remain their own LEA or join the OPSB LEA.

Key Activities:

a. **Special Education Services:** Provide services for all students enrolled within its LEA, including both charter and direct-run schools. These services include assigning diagnosticians and other special education staff, conducting evaluations, writing IEPs, and coordinating partner organizations in order to assist schools in compliance with IDEA.

b. **Federal Programs:** Serve as the fiscal agent for federal programs, collecting funds and allocating these funds to schools. Specifically, OPSB is obligated by law to equitably distribute Title funds and ensure schools' compliance with program and funding requirements.

c. **Grants:** Apply for and administer grants while ensuring compliance by overseeing the financial and programmatic aspects of the grant.

d. **Data Management & Reporting:** Collect, aggregate and submit required data and reporting to the state and other relevant authorities (e.g. Independent monitors for litigation) while maintaining student records for schools. Ensure that data monitoring and reporting is consistent with any active consent decrees.

Changes during transition period to ensure OPSB can perform these key activities:

The decision to leave the OPSB LEA of OPSB Type 1 and 3 charter schools has important financial implications for both OPSB and for schools. Today, the internal functions that OPSB maintains to support its LEA responsibilities are tied up with its mandatory citywide responsibilities (described in the Citywide Services role earlier this section), and in its supports to direct-run schools. In order to provide schools in OPSB's LEA with the transparency required to make an informed decision regarding their LEA status,

[10] Dave Hand, Cowen Institute. LEA Status: Why It Matters for Local Control

OPSB will be conducting a deeper analysis in the 2016-2017 school year to delineate exactly what it costs to provide support to schools in its LEA, versus its citywide LEA responsibilities. As it dives into this analysis, OPSB may restructure its LEA functions, particularly the district's special education function. All analysis and restructuring will thoroughly consider OPSB's legal obligations to ensure that OPSB is appropriately providing LEA services in accordance with its legal responsibilities.

The end result of this work will be to allow the district to be fully transparent about the costs of LEA services, how these costs may shift depending on the number of schools that remain in the LEA, and what additional obligations schools would assume should they choose to exit. Once OPSB has clarity on the preferences of schools with regard to LEA status, it can undertake additional restructuring to ensure that services can be provided in a way that is both effective for schools and financially sustainable for district.

Together, the six organizational capabilities described above summarize what a unified OPSB district must excel in according to guiding principles and strategic priorities articulated in previous sections. While there will almost certainly be unforeseen issues or priorities that arise through this transition period and beyond, the capacity OPSB is building as an organization will allow it to be flexible in responding to those needs and to create smart and decisive responses that can work in real time for schools, students, and families.

IV. Budget Implications

The previous sections of this plan make clear that OPSB as a district will need to take on new work as a part of the transition to unification, and bolster certain key capabilities of the organization. OPSB has to design an organization that can excel at the priorities that it has established, while also ensuring that it is financially sustainable once unification is complete. This section outlines the current projection of how the district can succeed with its strategic priorities and achieve sustainability, while also being clear around some of the associated tradeoffs that may be required.

To understand the budgetary implications of unification first requires getting to a consolidated view of the ongoing funding streams that are available to support central office and citywide services, and then estimating the costs of key functions regardless of whether those functions sit today within OPSB, within RSD, or do not currently exist.

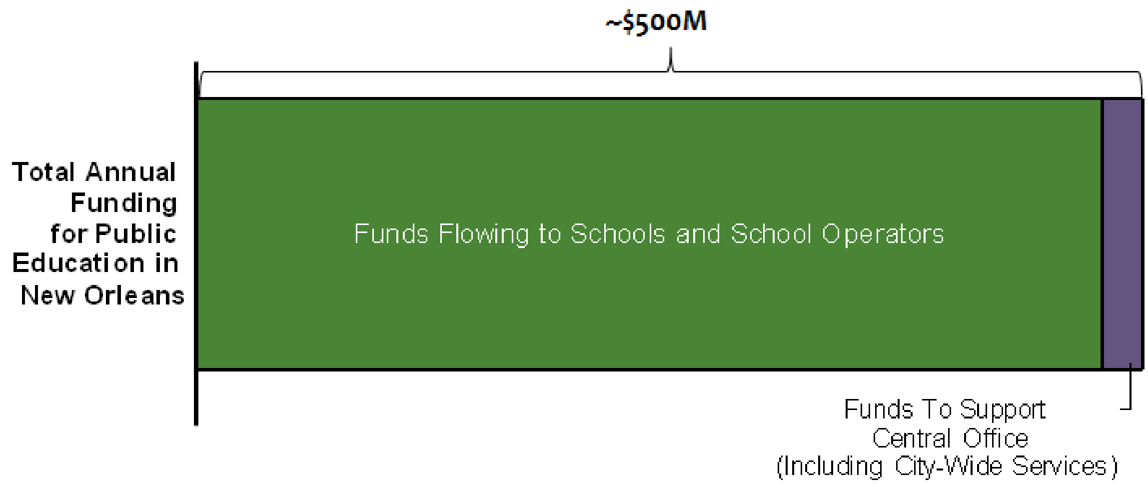
As an overall caveat to the figures presented in this section, actual budgets for FY17 and beyond are subject to review and Board approval. Furthermore, both costs and revenue in subsequent years could shift for a range of factors, including the state and local revenue environment, total student enrollment, and others. As a result, any financial information in this plan should be considered preliminary estimates that are subject to change.

A. Revenue Estimates to Support a Unified School District

Discussion of the budgetary implications of unification takes place within the broader context of funding for public education in the city, and ultimately addresses only a small share of those total funds. Indeed, consistent with the idea of a system of autonomous schools that empowers educators is that the system must put as many dollars as possible in the hands of educators to make decisions. OPSB is committed to continuing this emphasis – not just for charter schools but with its direct-run schools as well.

Annual funding for public schools in New Orleans is approximately $500 million. Far different from the norms of other districts across the country, only ~4% of those funds remain in the control of the district, while more than 95% flows directly to schools and school operators. It is this 4% for central office and citywide services that represents the pool available to OPSB to support the ongoing work of a unified school district.

Figure 5 – Total Annual Funding for Public Education in New Orleans



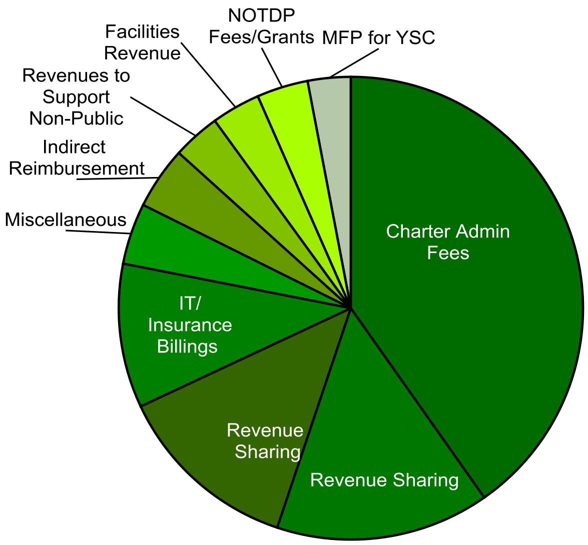
These figures translate to roughly $20M of annual revenue estimated to be available to support the central office and citywide services work of OPSB after unification. Figure 6 breaks down these revenues and itemizes each source of funding. Note that several sources of revenue are not included in the $20M:

- The MFP and other school-level funding that OPSB receives on behalf of its direct-run network schools, aside from a 2% hold-back that is equivalent to the admin fee charged to charter schools. The school-level funds as well as the supports that OPSB provides directly to its Network Schools should not be considered available to cover other central office costs, to ensure that OPSB's direct-run schools benefit from the same level of resources that flow to charter schools in the city.
- The majority of Federal Title and IDEA funds. Aside from a portion of these funds that is included in the OPSB general fund to cover administrative costs, these funds are either passed through directly to schools or used to support many of the specialists and diagnosticians that conduct special education evaluation for OPSB direct-run and LEA schools, as well as the majority of the district's parental engagement and homeless obligations
- The estimate also does not include the "carve-out" revenue from MFP dollars that is provided to cover OPSB legacy costs for litigation and obligations related to Hurricane Katrina and the school system from before the storm. This revenue is currently restricted to be used only to reimburse such legacy costs, and is capped at $3M.[11]

All other funding sources in the $20M estimate are based off of projected FY17 levels of revenue, and therefore assume that any millages contributing a portion of that revenue will be renewed.

[11] Louisiana Statute 17:1990 was revised in 2016 to cap reimbursements related to legacy costs from carveout revenues to $3 million from $6 million. Actual expenditures in excess of $3 million in any year will be carried forward for recapture in future years, if available.

Figure 6 – Estimated Annual Revenue to Support a Unified Central Office

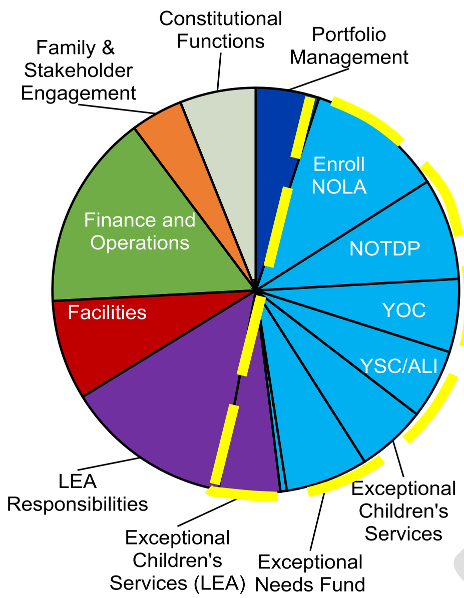


Sources of Revenue	%
Charter Admin Fee: Includes the 1.75% or 2% of per pupil funding collected from each student	40%
Revenue Sharing: Legislatively appropriated funds primarily directed to the CENF and youth in secure care	15%
Harrah's Community Support Grants Program: City council funds aimed to provide grant support projects that support well-being and development of the local community and are primarily directed to the NOTDP, YOC, and facilities	13%
IT/Insurance Billings: Direct billings for property insurance, flood insurance, and certain IT costs for some charter schools	10%
Miscellaneous: Donations, chargebacks from other funds, etc.	5%
Indirect Cost Reimbursement: Costs to process efforts related to federal funds/grants	4%
Revenue to support Non-Public: New funding to support non-public students through differentiated funding law	3%
Facilities Revenue: Act **543** implemented a facilities program that awards $15 per pupil directed towards facilities	3%
NOTDP Fees/Grants: Fees earned and grants related to the running of the Therapeutic Day Program	4%
MFP for YSC: Per pupil funds for the students in the Youth Study Center	3%

B. Costs Associated With a Unified School District

To prepare for the transition to unification, OPSB has developed a budget outline for a unified school district that addresses all key priorities and organizational capabilities and operates on approximately $20 million of costs, to align with the available revenues described above. It must be emphasized that this budget does not just support central office personnel; to the contrary, about half of the budget envisioned is dedicated to citywide services that promote equity. The remainder of the budget supports central office and administrative functions and will be a fiscally lean set of operations aligned directly to the key organizational capabilities that were described in the last section of this plan. A summary of costs can be found in Figure 7.

Figure 7 – Estimated 2018-2019 Budget for OPSB Central Office and Citywide Services



Sources of Costs	$M	%
(1) Portfolio Management: Costs related to personnel and services that support the authorization, planning, and oversight of schools both at the RSD and OPSB	1.0	5%
(2) CityWide Services & Enrollment: Includes EnrollNOLA, plus a range of other equity-related or mandatory services such as the Youth Study Center, Youth Opportunity Center, and the New Orleans Therapeutic Day Program	8.8	44%
(3) Facilities: Personnel that support facilities maintenance and oversight of the facilities preservation fund, and insurance costs of vacant properties	1.6	8%
(4) Family & Stakeholder Engagement: Includes cost of family and stakeholder engagement, strategic functions, and policy	.8	4%
(5) Finance & Operations: Includes finance, HR, IT, legal, and a variety of other costs	3.1	15%
(6) LEA Responsibilities: A variety of costs incurred in OPSB's capacity as an LEA, including SPED services, processing of federal grants, IT requirements, etc.	3.6	18%
Constitutional Functions: Includes costs related to the Superintendent's Office and Board, and other obligatory costs	1.2	6%

Roughly 50% of expenditures fund services that directly support students

Costs that the district expects to incur in 2018-19 are broken out in further detail below:

(1) **(5%) - Portfolio Management**: The organization's portfolio function will conduct monitoring of schools, have individuals that authorize schools and oversee performance, and a team that liaises with and manages school relationships. There are also data capabilities that are required to support the aggregation and analysis of student and school achievement data and the general planning function of the portfolio office.

(2) **(44%) - Citywide Services & Enrollment:** The role and transition plan for these various citywide services is detailed in the last section of this document, but many will be transitioning over from the RSD to the OPSB. As Citywide Services & Enrollment compose such a significant portion of costs, a brief recap of these services and detailed breakout of the resources supporting them are provided here:

Breakout of Costs in City-Wide Services	$M	%
EnrollNOLA	2	22
New Orleans Therapeutic Day Program (NOTDP)	1.6	18
Citywide Exceptional Needs Fund (CENF)	1.3	15
Youth Study Center and Alternative Learning Institute	1.4	16
Youth Opportunity Center	1.2	13
Exceptional Children's Services (Child Search + Child Find for 3-4 year olds, youth in secure care, and nonpublic students)	1.1	12
Other Miscellaneous	.25	3
Total CityWide Services Administered by Central Office	$8.9	

a. **EnrollNOLA** makes up roughly 25% of the Citywide Services budget. Today, the RSD runs the citywide common enrollment system, which enables all families to have choice in their child's schooling and to select a school in a common, transparent, and publically accountable system.

b. **The New Orleans Therapeutic Day Program (NOTDP)** makes up 18% of the Citywide Services budget. The NOTDP is a joint collaboration between the Recovery School District, Orleans Parish School Board, and Tulane Medical School's Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. The NOTDP offers a separate setting to serve RSD and OPSB students with the most severe diagnosed behavioral health disabilities in grades K-8.
c. **The Citywide Exceptional Needs Fund (CENF),** 15% of the Citywide Services budget, is a special purpose fund where schools can apply for grant funding to meet the needs of students with IEP's—especially those with intensive needs that are not fully funded through the state's special education funding allocation.[12]
d. **The Youth Study Center and the Alternative Learning Institute (YSC and ALI),** which total ~16% of the Citywide Services Budget, is run by the OPSB and educates youth who are court-involved.
e. **The Youth Opportunity Center (YOC)** makes up another 13% of the City-Wide Services budget. Another joint initiative between the RSD and the OPSB, the YOC acts as a bridge connects students and families who are truant or otherwise at risk of dropping out of school with community service providers.
f. **Exceptional Children's Services** is a function that offers services to special education (SPED) students and is an LEA requirement. Certain components of these services *must* be provided regardless of LEA status of schools by the OPSB. **Child Find** and SPED services for **non-public** students that reside in New Orleans make up another ~12% of the Citywide Services budget. The bulk of this spend is Child Find. For *all* children who reside in New Orleans, OPSB is required to provide identification and evaluation services with the intent of locating all children with disabilities ages 3-21 who are not receiving educational services.

A continuation of the remainder of the central office budget follows by organizational capability:

(3) **(8%) – Facilities:** The facilities budget includes the personnel and staff that will oversee the School Facilities Preservation Program and those who are generally involved in building maintenance and oversight. It does NOT include costs of the facilities team that manages ongoing FEMA-funded construction projects, which legally must continue to be overseen by the RSD until all projects are complete.

(4) **(4%) – Family & Stakeholder Engagement:** OPSB will engage in student and family engagement, external communications, general community engagement, and policymaking and liaising with other governmental entities.

(5) **(15%) – Finance and Operations:** The operations category of costs includes legal support, IT functions and personnel, insurance and rent, and a human resources function. Lastly, a team that oversees all financial matters—including the setting of the budget, determining differentiated funding distribution, payroll, audits, etc. make up a sizeable portion of costs.

[12] The state has a High Cost Services Allocation that it awards to students who have needs that are 4x their per-pupil funding. The CENF funds students with needs in the "medium range" beyond their per pupil allocation and was built specifically to bridge that gap (e.g., between 2-4x)

(6) **(18%) LEA Responsibilities:** OPSB as an LEA of schools is obligated to provide a targeted set of services to assist schools in IDEA compliance, including assigning special education teachers and staff, conducting evaluations, writing IEP's, etc. Other responsibilities include serving as the fiscal agent for federal programs and grants, and aggregating and submitting certain data and reporting to the state and other authorities consistent with reporting required by and active consent decrees.

(7) **(6%) – Constitutional Functions:** Finally, a small portion of the budget outline is projected to fund the superintendent's offices and the costs of supporting the School Board, along with other mandatory costs.

Path to Achieving Financial Sustainability

Based on the current estimate of revenues for a unified school district, the scenario above outlines how OPSB's budget could be organized in 2018-19. In the draft plan presented to the public in July, the analysis showed that the total cost of central office and citywide services in FY17 is ~$26M, when combining RSD and OPSB spending (excluding OPSB legacy costs), before making any attempt to combine the two organizations. It is important to emphasize that neither OPSB nor RSD are running a deficit today. Rather, both OPSB and RSD have benefitted from revenue sources that will not be available to support a unified school district on an ongoing basis. In prior years, OPSB was able to use deferred revenues and revenue intended for direct-run schools to support central office spending, and certain RSD functions have been supported by LDE staff. Going forward into unification, OPSB is committed to a budget model that is sustainable only with ongoing revenues, and that charges all schools in a consistent way for the services they receive.

In developing a financially sustainable budget outline, OPSB hewed to the following parameters:

- **Upholding all legal and contractual obligations:** There are legal and contractual obligations that OPSB bears in its capacity as the citywide LEA for public education and as a local School Board. The largest of these foremost among these is the federal Child Search obligation and other Exceptional Children's Services responsibilities to nonpublic students, 3-4 year olds, and those in secure care. Other costs include sick leave for former employees, costs to support the School Board, and obligations to homeless, delinquent, and nonpublic students. These costs amount to $1.7M, and the 2018-19 scenario makes no reductions in these expenditures.
- **Prioritizing programs and services that ensure equity for students and families:** In line with unification's guiding principles and strategic priorities outlined in previous sections of this plan, a unified OPSB will continue to address equity issues for all students. OPSB does not believe it can achieve this goal unless it maintains a robust citywide services offering. Therefore, costs that are borne by EnrollNOLA, the Citywide Exceptional Needs Fund (CENF), the Alternative Learning Institute and Youth Study Center, the Youth Opportunity Center, and the New Orleans Therapeutic Day program are all costs that OPSB is committed to preserving, even as it also seeks to improve the effectiveness and outcomes of these services over time. This set of costs

totals $7.6M, and based on the analysis to-date the 2018-19 scenario makes minimal reductions in these costs – subject to further analysis as planning continues.

- **Maximizing efficiencies for functions related to OPSB's LEA responsibilities**: To be financially sustainable for the long run, OPSB must achieve a cost structure that lives within the revenues available for the services it provides to schools in its LEA; these revenues include an indirect cost allocation of federal grants and a portion of the per pupil charter admin fee. In total, these funds for FY17 are estimated at ~$3.6M. Going forward, these costs may change depending on the preference that schools express to remain in or exit the OPSB LEA. OPSB will structure the district to be financially sustainable and effective with respect to its LEA responsibilities regardless of schools' decisions, and will work with schools to ensure an understanding of the financial implications if the number of schools in the LEA were to meaningfully decline.

Together, then, the costs of legal and contractual obligations, programs that serve students and families, and LEA responsibilities is estimated to be ~$12M based on FY17 figures. With only $20M of total funds estimated to be available, the implication is that efficiencies must be sought in other areas while maintaining the ability to deliver on key functions with a high level of quality. The approach to achieving this balance involved:

- **Eliminating costs that are duplicative between RSD and OPSB**: Analysis suggests that there are approximately $1.5M of costs that are strictly overlapping between the RSD and OPSB, costs such as two superintendent salaries, rent for two central offices, etc. These costs are projected to be eliminated in the 2018-19 estimate.
- **Projecting significant restructuring and consolidation of functions to achieve additional efficiencies:** To address the remaining gap between current expenditures and projected future revenues, OPSB has to focus time and energy on its mandated and most critical responsibilities, and prioritize accordingly in allocating resources. As a result, every part of the organization will be subject to scrutiny on how to deliver the highest quality services and supports in the most efficient way. The current budget outline for 2018-19 envisions savings both from consolidating and streamlining functions that exist in both the RSD and OPSB today, as well as reductions in many categories that may be beneficial but which are ultimately discretionary. Initial plans suggest that the savings from such restructuring could total roughly $4.5M, as compared to the combined spending of OPSB and RSD today. At the same time, no specific decisions about particular reductions have been made. Work on financial and organizational restructuring will be ongoing throughout the coming year, and the district will work with the OPSB Board to outline and determine any final decisions that have an impact on district budget.

Figure 8 – Summary of Path to Achieving Financial Sustainability

1	Upholding legal and contractual obligations (out of general fund)	Estimated Cost: $1.7M
2	Prioritizing programs and services that ensure equity for students and families	Estimated Cost: $7.6M
3	Maximizing efficiencies for functions related to OPSB's LEA responsibilities	Estimated Cost: $3.6M
4	Eliminating overlapping costs between RSD and OPSB	Estimated Savings: ($1.5M)
5	Projecting significant restructuring and consolidation of functions to achieve additional efficiencies	Estimated Savings: ($4.5M)

Implications

Over the transition to unification, OPSB's primary focus is to demonstrate to all its stakeholders that the district can deliver on the key priorities outlined in this plan effectively and efficiently. The proposed scenario that is presented here represents a financially sustainable organization that fulfills the core organizational capabilities outlined in earlier sections, and as required by Act 91. It does not rely upon the district's fund balance reserve or other one-time revenues to support recurring functions and expenses. It is also a scenario that meets the strategic priority of being financially efficient and operationally lean, in order to maximize the delivery of dollars and resources to schools, classrooms, and those closest to students. Indeed, OPSB has already begun the restructuring of its central office in the past year – for example, through the work that it has done with moving both more resources and more responsibility to its direct-run schools. Throughout the coming transition period, OPSB will be continuing the restructuring effort across the organization.

At the same time, the budget outlined for 2018-19 involves tradeoffs that would entail some risks. For example, there would need to be significant reductions in core departments – such as facilities, which could reduce capacity to oversee and monitor properties. This financial plan will require the district to lean heavily on the non-profit sector to support key citywide services on an ongoing basis. OPSB would have little in the way of contingency within its operating budget to absorb unexpected ongoing costs – meaning increased exposure to school operators and service providers in the event of continued state-level budgetary challenges or other circumstances.

Community engagement efforts have also reinforced what OPSB leadership already knows: that Orleans Parish students have many needs that are not being fully and effectively met by the services available to them today. There is a need and demand for more and higher-quality early childhood programs, stronger mental health services, high-quality career and technical education, and increased outreach and support to students and families with limited English skills, to name just a few. These needs are evident, and the resources outlined in this plan are not sufficient to support a meaningful expansion in these areas.

Therefore, even as OPSB restructures and reimagines around current priorities and current resources, there is an equally important need to work with the community and look to the future to ensure the district is preparing to meet a longer-term set of needs for all students. The Citywide Vision and Strategic Goals Task Force that OPSB will convene will be a critical forum for such conversations, for helping to prioritize the unmet needs in the city today that require greater focus, and for articulating the role that OPSB should play in addressing those priorities. Ultimately, this process of outlining a future vision for OPSB cannot be separated from the question of the level of resources available to support that vision. We expect that there will be ongoing dialogue with all OPSB and community stakeholders about whether the current projected resources are sufficient to support both OPSB's current work and the long-term vision it will need to deliver.

Even modest increases in the total funds available could allow OPSB to meaningfully offset some of the risks and tradeoffs described above, while other areas may be more resource-intensive. There are several potential avenues that could be explored over time, though some would require legislative action and school board approval. These include, at a minimum: (1) Exploring whether the existing carve-out revenues could also be applied to ongoing citywide services rather than just legacy costs; (2) Allowing OPSB to access the portion of the charter admin fee currently directed to the state; (3) Considering modest increases in the charter admin fee itself and/or (4) Leveraging authority provided in Act 91 to seek additional or repurposed taxes levied for parish-wide functions or programs specifically approved by voters. In any such exploration, the financial impact to schools and school operators must be carefully considered so that the needs of schools are balanced appropriately with the role that a citywide function can play.

These conversations will happen over time. In the interim, OPSB has already begun restructuring its organization to prioritize the most critical work, and to ensure that the maximum number of dollars go directly to schools and school operators. These remain the district's overarching commitments, and OPSB's responsibility to deliver. Any ongoing discussion of budgetary implications, during the transition to unification and beyond, will be one that involves all stakeholders, including Board members, elected officials, school leaders, and the community at large.

V. Policy and Operational Decisions

In order to ensure a smooth and successful transition to unification, it is imperative that OPSB make many key decisions around its policies and operations. The following section outlines the policy and operational decisions that must be made throughout the unification process, and has been organized to align with the organizational capabilities that are central to OPSB's future structure: Portfolio Management, Enrollment and Citywide Services, Facilities, Finance and Operations, and LEA Responsibilities.

Each section has a list of the policies and decisions themselves, followed by additional detail on each one – including a timeline for when each decision or deliverable will be resolved, the formal/legal instrument that will be used to finalize and approve the decision, and the individual who will take the lead on developing a proposal.

Overview of Policy and Operational Decisions

Portfolio Management

1. Develop a modified School Performance Framework and associated Board policies regarding accountability, authorization, and intervention
2. Develop a streamlined, common Charter Operating Agreement and ensure that all contract provisions are authorized and aligned with federal, state, and OPSB policies and laws
3. Develop a comprehensive portfolio management process that is fully integrated into all relevant OPSB policies and functions, including charter accountability, facilities, enrollment, etc.
4. Consider development of formal mechanism for engaging school leaders as a part of portfolio management and district policy-making

Citywide Services and Enrollment

5. Clarify policies and procedures that describe OPSB's role in providing, supporting, or coordinating citywide services to ensure continuation and improvement of these services
6. Determine OPSB's role and responsibilities in helping schools to address the needs of students with special needs, including ELL students and students with disabilities

Facilities

7. Develop modified charter school maintenance and repair policy
8. Establish policies and processes for the School Facilities Preservation Program
9. Refine existing policy around the sale and access to surplus or vacant buildings and ensure alignment with the portfolio management process
10. Modify and improve the OPSB Facilities lease to clearly detail the role and responsibilities of OPSB and charter operators
11. Develop policies and processes that will enable charter schools to secure property insurance that meet minimum insuring standards for adequate coverage

12. Develop a plan for the transfer of all facilities from RSD to OPSB including which buildings will remain with RSD due to construction

Finance and Operations

13. Clarify Human Resources policies to allow for smooth transition of employees from RSD to OPSB, as appropriate
14. Develop a plan and mechanisms to ensure financial viability for both OPSB and RSD during the transition period leading to unification
15. Establish a policy for the ongoing management of differentiated funding, including the process for adjusting the formula in the future as necessary
16. Ensure access to data necessary to monitor and oversee charter schools and provide centralized functions

LEA Responsibilities

17. Provide clear information to current OPSB schools about roles and responsibilities of LEA status, including the implications of becoming their own LEA on school finances, operations, and reporting as defined by BESE and Act 91
18. Provide updated information to schools on chargebacks for LEA services and supports, based on outcome of school requests and any OPSB Board approvals of charters to become their own LEA

Many of these decisions have important sub-components, which are described in detail in the remainder of this section.

Ultimately, each of these decisions will be captured by one of the following formal instruments that determine the implications for enforcement and implementation:

- **School Performance Framework:** OPSB policy that details the expectations and evaluation and monitoring process for charter school accountability; is based on federal and state laws and regulations and OPSB Policy.
- **OPSB Policy:** Comprehensive written regulations that detail requirements for nearly all aspects of OPSB operation in the "Orleans Parish School Board Policy Manual" online; all new or revised policy must be approved by the School Board at a public meeting.
- **Process Document:** Provides more detailed and specific expectations and procedures for carrying out OPSB Policy or other requirements; may take the form of a "handbook" or "manual" and does not require board approval; will often need to be updated on an annual or bi-annual basis.
- **Operating Agreement:** Legal document that formalizes OPSB's agreement to authorize a charter school and allow it to operate for a set term of years, subject to terms of revocation. Board approval is required to enter into an Operating Agreement for the first time (authorization), subsequent renewals, revocation, or material amendments to the contract.
- **Facilities Lease:** Legal document that formalizes OPSB's agreement to permit a charter school to operate in an OPSB-owned facility; currently the facilities lease is included as an appendix of to the Operating Agreement, however, consideration should be given to making the lease a separate document

Portfolio Management

The policy work to be done in the area of portfolio management is of particular importance to schools and has significant impact on the OPSB's ability to function as a strong and effective authorizer. For that reason, the plan below outlines the individual decisions that must be made in significant detail. For the purposes of clarity, OPSB envisions the following sequence of decisions as it relates to portfolio management policy:

- By December 2016 / January 2017, OPSB seeks to present a plan to schools for changes to its School Performance Framework, associated OPSB policies, and the Operating Agreement to provide opportunity for additional engagement and feedback with all schools and to provide critical information for schools beginning renewal or considering an early return in 2017-18.
- By February 2017 (with a first reading in January 2017), OPSB seeks the approval of Board policies that would underlie the School Performance Framework and charter operating agreements.
- Based on these Board policies, OPSB will produce a new charter operating agreement by March 2017 that sets common, streamlined terms for all charter schools.
- By September 2017, OPSB will finalize a new School Performance Framework that reflects Board policies, incorporates pending state policy changes through ESSA, and reflects engagement with school leaders and the community.

I. <u>Develop a modified School Performance Framework and associated Board policies regarding accountability, authorization, and intervention</u>

Updating and improving the performance framework requires local input as well as more information from the state regarding the development of their growth formula. OPSB's goal is to roll out the new system at the end of the 2016-2017 school year. The new letter grade accountability system will incorporate growth measures and an alteration of the current grading formula to more equitably judge schools.

The process to improve the existing framework will require extensive engagement of the local community and school leaders in fall 2016 to ensure creation of robust requirements that ensure high standards and equity for all students and schools. Additionally, OPSB must consolidate all of the district's data collection and analysis systems while building a clear structure for the implementation of the performance framework. The performance framework should include considerations of equity and other measures in addition to academic performance. Per Act 91, the school performance framework should also incorporate test monitoring compliance as an organizational performance measure. The performance framework should also include details around the school intervention and corrective action process as well as considerations for differentiated systems for alternative schools and single-site charters. Language in the School Performance Framework should be comprehensive, including information on all requirements, measures and processes for evaluation, intervention, renewal and revocation. The updated school performance framework should be more user-friendly and accessible for operators and the public. This information is vital for all community members to understand so that communities, and not just OPSB, can hold schools accountable.

To help prepare OPSB for its role as a portfolio school manager, OPSB policy must be put in place that addresses the long-term OPSB approach to managing excess capacity, defining enrollment targets and caps, and promoting ongoing diversity and innovation in the school portfolio. Clear OPSB Policy should be developed around academic performance, student enrollment targeting, and accountability. The accountability process needs to be robust using data driven analysis and qualitative information to guide the decision making process.

OPSB Policy should also address school performance throughout the transition period, including a transition plan for low performing schools so that the schools and OPSB can begin working together to improve academic outcomes before July 1, 2018. Other considerations for the interim period include how to treat schools that transfer in the year prior to a renewal. It will be vital that OPSB and RSD establish a structure for easily sharing information regarding these schools.

OPSB must also define the circumstances when it will enter into intervention with schools and develop a clear step-by-step process that includes expectations of OPSB and the school during these periods of corrective action. These updates should be incorporated into the modified school performance framework. The performance framework must outline the scenarios where corrective action is mandated and when it may be permissive. Examples may include: financial mismanagement, failure to provide federally mandated services to high-need populations, failure to provide quality academic programs, or repeated or intentional violations of enrollment or expulsion procedural requirements. The initial steps taken by OPSB to help schools identify potential areas of concern should be clearly outlined and the process for corrective action must be clear and include the steps schools should take to remedy deficiencies. OPSB needs to ensure that this is a multi-step process and that schools are given the opportunity to improve and develop before intervention occurs.

OPSB aims to have a proposed plan for the work around intervention, the school performance framework, and other policies pertinent to charter authorization, charter renewals, and schools moving to OPSB completed by December 2016 / January 2017, to provide opportunity for additional feedback and engagement with schools prior to finalizing OPSB Policy for board approval.

Instrument: School Performance Framework, OPSB Policy
OPSB Responsible Party: ED of School Performance, Chief Portfolio Officer, with support from Chief Strategy Officer
Timeline: September 2017

a. Determine what (if any) modifications or differentiated support/review systems are required for alternative schools.

OPSB will engage with charter leaders including alternative school leaders to determine the needs and challenges of these schools. OPSB will determine if there need to be any revisions to OPSB Policy, authorization standards, the performance framework, and accountability processes to ensure that the student populations at these schools are being treated equitably and schools are being judged fairly. Consideration should be given to incorporating growth measures instead of absolute performance as an accountability measure. Additionally, OPSB will work with schools to identify supports and resources that will aid in helping alternative schools reach high expectations. By engaging with the leaders of these schools, OPSB can identify needs and begin to find the best way to support the needs of students. OPSB and RSD will collaborate on a process for high-stakes evaluations and authorizations for these schools during the transition period to ensure alignment in these decisions to ensure streamlined transitions for schools from RSD to OPSB while ensuring schools are continuing to be held to high standards and expectations.

Instrument: School Performance Framework, Potential revisions to OPSB Policy
OPSB Responsible Party: ED of School Performance, Chief Portfolio Officer
Timeline: June 2017

b. Incorporate data review and program monitoring of equity and access issues (i.e. Special Education Services) into the charter accountability process.

Challenges have been incurred aggregating district wide special education, ELL, and student demographic data due to privacy laws and inadequate systems to collect and aggregate data. Since OPSB will take on a monitoring and oversight role, access to student data is required in order to ensure that all students are being served appropriately. OPSB needs to work with LEAs and the state to create a process for accessing data that would not violate privacy laws but provides access to the necessary data. OPSB has already begun to explore this issue by meeting with the RSD and beginning to determine which data access is required to fulfill OPSB's obligations as mandated by federal consent decrees.

Instrument: School Performance Framework, Potential revisions to OPSB Policy, Process Document
OPSB Responsible Party: ED of School Performance, Chief Portfolio Officer, support from Chief Strategy Officer
Timeline: December 2016

c. Incorporate test monitoring policy into the accountability process.

Act 91 requires third-party test monitoring starting July 1, 2017 for schools in the year before they are up for renewal. OPSB needs to define its role in coordinating and approving third-party test monitoring for not only its network schools but for charter schools as well. OPSB must set expectations and accountability measures for third-party monitors that are transparent to both the partner organizations and schools employing these monitors, and they must determine the test monitoring requirements and expectations of each LEA to ensure a fair testing process and accurate school performance data. Specific decisions need to be made such as who the third party monitors are and whether OPSB will assign these monitors or schools will be responsible for finding their own monitors. OPSB will need to engage and work with school leaders to make these decisions and develop the best system for test monitoring.

Instrument: School Performance Framework, Potential Revisions to OPSB Policy, Process Document
OPSB Responsible Party: ED of School Performance, Chief Portfolio Officer

Timeline: March 2017

d. Create a streamlined version of the School Performance Framework for use by charter operators and other stakeholders.

OPSB should update its framework to make it more user friendly. The framework should be formatted in a way that clearly communicates what is required and expected of them in the areas of academic, financial, and organizational performance. The document should also serve as a reference document to include other various requirements imposed by federal, state, and local laws and regulations. The framework will also include important process information, such as when and how the intervention process will be implemented for schools that fail to meet important requirements or standards. Clearly articulating this information in the performance framework will ensure that it can serve as a single, comprehensive guide for school leaders to reference in order to meet and exceed the standards set for them.

Instrument: School Performance Framework
OPSB Responsible Party: ED of School Performance, Chief Portfolio Officer
Timeline: March 2017

e. Update the school performance framework to incorporate the state's adjustment to the ESSA, and determine if any other changes are needed to ensure appropriate high standards for all schools and students.

OPSB is obligated to align its school performance framework to the ESSA and any adjustments that the state deems necessary to the law. OPSB will ensure that its school performance framework is updated and will simultaneously make any other necessary changes to ensure that OPSB policy is in line with the guiding principle of setting high standards for all schools and students. This work will need to come after the state has appropriately considered the ESSA and released BESE policy and guidance on the issue.

Instrument: Potential Revisions to OPSB Policy, School Performance Framework
OPSB Responsible Party: ED of School Performance, Chief Portfolio Officer, support from Chief Strategy Officer
Timeline: September 2017, pending the passage of state policy

f. Ensure that existing or potential future OPSB charter policies regarding student equity, emergency management, enrollment, and school authorization as outlined by Act 91 are integrated into the School Performance Framework, charter accountability process, and other relevant process documents.

Act 91 either mandates or gives OPSB the option to develop policies that consider student equity, enrollment, emergency management, and a number of other areas. There are existing and future policies that aren't currently implicated in OPSB's charter accountability process and therefore should also be considered for specific inclusion into the School Performance Framework. These policies and decisions outlined in Act 91 are laid out in the appendix of this document.

Instrument: School Performance Framework, Process Documents, Revisions to OPSB Policy
OPSB Responsible Party: ED of School Performance, Chief Portfolio Officer, Chief Strategy Officer
Timeline: December 2017

II. Develop a streamlined, common Charter Operating Agreement and ensure that all contract provisions are authorized and aligned with federal, state, and OPSB policies and laws

Charter Operating Agreements allow schools to operate for a set number of years subject to terms of revocation, and as required in Act 91, the district needs to develop a common language and structure for charter operating agreements going forward. This is a high priority as many schools in both districts are up for renewals over the next two years, and it is vital that the language of these renewals is common across all schools to allow for the smooth transition of RSD schools to OPSB. This common language needs to include all aspects required by Act 91 and other state statutes including enrollment caps on CMOs, required participation in enrollment and expulsion processes, “good standing” exemptions for minimum at-risk enrollment percentages for Type 1, 3, and 4 charter schools, and authorized differentiation of terms between individual operating agreements. The development of the operating agreement should also examine policy around enrollment capacity as it is a key aspect of the portfolio management role that OPSB is taking on.

The language of the agreement needs to be clear on which aspects are applicable to schools in OPSB’s LEA compared to schools that are not in OPSB’s LEA. OPSB should also determine include differing terms between individual operating agreements when differentiation is authorized specifically by law or OPSB policy. Each section of the agreement should reference the instrument that includes the actual specific requirement that the charter is being held to (federal law, state law, BESE policy, OPSB policy or Performance Framework). By clarifying the instrument, the operating agreement will serve to align better with OPSB Policy and the School Performance Framework to provide clear expectations for charter operators.

By December 2016 / January 2017, OPSB seeks to present a plan to schools for changes to its School Performance Framework, associated OPSB policies, and the Operating Agreement to provide opportunity for additional engagement and feedback with schools.

Instrument: Charter Operating Agreements, Potential revisions to OPSB policy
OPSB Responsible Party: Chief Strategy Officer, Chief Portfolio Officer, with support from Legal
Timeline: March 2017

III. Develop a comprehensive portfolio management process that is fully integrated into all relevant OPSB policies and functions, including charter accountability, facilities, enrollment, etc.

a. Align the roles of the Superintendent and School Board as they relate to authorization, accountability, school monitoring, intervention, and portfolio planning.

Information regarding authorization, accountability, and portfolio planning should be transparent and accessible to parents, school leaders and every member of the community, and a clear process for authorization needs to be maintained by the OPSB to ensure that the process is unbiased and consistent. This process should include clear expectations and benchmarking for schools and school leaders. In the longer term, the administrative policies need to address authorization and accountability standards that will be developed through the unification process. Act 91 has outlined that the Superintendent can present recommendations to the School Board regarding schools openings, renewals, and closures with the Board possessing the authority to overturn the decision with a two-thirds vote at the Board meeting following the superintendent's decision. The process leading up to the Superintendent's recommendation should be transparent and provide the community with a clear understanding of why the school was closed, what efforts were made to support the school before it closed, and what are the next steps for students and families.

In order to fulfill its portfolio management role, OPSB needs to develop a long-term approach and process for making authorization, renewal and closure decisions that are fair and transparent. It is important to define this approach to ensure the long-term health of OPSB and clear, consistent communication with schools, students, and families regarding these decisions. It should address the relationship between school performance data, enrollment trends and systemwide needs. Robust data analysis needs to drive these decisions and play a key role in portfolio planning. It should also define a cycle for determining enrollment capacity, creating enrollment targets, defining expectations of building utilization, and considering practices to address new or expanded portfolio needs to serve more students in the neighborhoods in which they live.

To ensure that the portfolio management process incorporates stakeholder input and concerns, the district will consider developing a formal mechanism for feedback from school leaders and other stakeholders that will exist beyond unification. This group will be able to identify areas of concerns for school leaders and instances where the School Performance Framework may need to change to meet the changing needs of students.

Instrument: OPSB Policy, School Performance Framework, Process Document
OPSB Responsible Party: Chief Strategy Officer, Chief Portfolio Officer
Timeline: December 2016

b. Align on a variety of authorization standards between RSD and OPSB for charter schools, including performance standards and benchmarking.

OPSB and RSD are currently engaged in an effort to align authorization standards between the two organizations in order to ensure continuity and consistency throughout the unification process. Given that each district currently has differing standards and that all schools will be authorized under OPSB beginning in July 2018, it is imperative that the two organizations have aligned standards in the interim. Per Act 91, schools transferring from RSD to OPSB will retain their active charter through its remaining term. Schools entering OPSB should have similar expectations for authorization under OPSB as they do under RSD.

OPSB will finalize standards to ensure that charter authorization is a transparent process for new charter operators. Authorization standards are vital tools for ensuring equity for all students and for guaranteeing continual improvement throughout the city. Examples of these standards include: term length, academic requirements, support structures, transition process from approval to opening day, and accountability benchmarking. Specific decisions will need to be made and included in new operating agreements and the School Performance Framework. OPSB should also provide a clear process and expectations that will allow for improved planning, a smoother transition, and higher expectations for new schools. Consideration should also be given to demographics of the city and enrollment needs, such as whether initial opening of schools may be delayed based on enrollment concerns. Developing clear authorization standards will help support the portfolio planning process for OPSB in the long-term by ensuring a clear development path for new, innovative schools that will serve New Orleans' students.

Instrument: School Performance Framework, OPSB Policy, Process Document
OPSB Responsible Party: Chief Portfolio Officer, ED of School Performance, support from Chief Strategy Officer
Timeline: March 2017

c. Ensure that facility and enrollment policies and processes (e.g. building utilization, enrollment target-setting) are aligned with the portfolio management process in order to increase access to high-quality public school options for New Orleans families.

OPSB should develop a strategy around building utilization to maximize enrollment capacity. This process should include enrollment targeting, long-term planning, and coordinating between Portfolio, Strategy, Facilities and Enrollment teams at the OPSB. OPSB should also consider use of private facilities by charter schools, neighborhood demographic data and needs, and sale or lease of vacant facilities. Enrollment and Facilities staff should be included in conversations regarding authorization, revocation and renewal of charter agreements. Portfolio planning needs to include a process for setting OneApp/EnrollNOLA targets and capacity within all schools.

Instrument: OPSB Policy, Process Document, Potential revision to School Performance Framework
OPSB Responsible Party: ED of School Performance, Chief Portfolio Officer, Deputy Chief of Facilities, Chief Strategy Officer, Enrollment
Timeline: June 2017

d. Develop a policy to establish the maximum percentage of seats that any single school operator (including OPSB, for its direct run schools) may occupy.

Per Act 91, OPSB is authorized to set capacity limits for school operators, including OPSB as an operator of OPSB Network schools. This process will involve analyzing current schools and school operators to determine the ideal "mix" of schools throughout the city. Further, OPSB will engage school leaders and other stakeholders in order to ensure that all perspectives are considered. Consideration should be made for high-performing charter operators and how increasing seat capacity in a network will impact the overall landscape of schools in New Orleans.

Instrument: OPSB Policy, Process Document
OPSB Responsible Party: Chief Portfolio Officer, ED of School Performance, Chief Strategy Officer
Timeline: June 2017

IV. <u>Consider development of formal mechanism for school leader engagement</u>

OPSB will consider the development of formal mechanism to ensure engagement with school leaders throughout the process. The School Leader Advisory Council could be engaged throughout the process to help contribute to the development of policies that directly impact school leaders and their responsibilities.

Instrument: Process Document
OPSB Responsible Party: Chief Strategy Officer, Chief Portfolio Officer
Timeline: December 2016

Citywide Services and Enrollment

I. <u>Clarify policies and procedures that describe OPSB's role in providing, supporting, or coordinating citywide services to ensure continuation and improvement of these services</u>

a. Identify which citywide services and resources will be funded within the expected revenues for the unified school district.

OPSB has made an effort to define what services the 2% admin fee will include through revenue and cost analysis. Further analysis should consider any changes in the resources needed to provide these services under a unified district and the impact of these changes. OPSB needs to clarify which services and resources are outside of the admin fee but part of separate funding streams and will continue to function. Examples of these programs include: Harrah's funding for the Youth Opportunity Center and state revenue sharing that supports the Youth Study Center. OPSB should highlight the desired outcomes for the most at-risk students in the system that may benefit from additional services/support. OPSB's portfolio office will oversee these services post-unification and will monitor programs to ensure that they are providing high quality and equitable services to students.

Instrument: OPSB Policy, Process Document
OPSB Responsible Party: Chief Portfolio Officer
Timeline: December 2017

b. Clarify specific and more detailed transition plan for all aspects of EnrollNOLA.
Recognizing the substantial importance of EnrollNOLA to schools and families across the city, OPSB and RSD will take time to develop a more detailed transition plan specifically for all EnrollNOLA functions by December 2016. This plan will be informed by several key parameters. Starting immediately in the 2016-17 school year, OPSB leadership and EnrollNOLA leadership will deepen coordination with regular management check-ins. Sometime during the 2017-18 school year, the EnrollNOLA team will co-locate within OPSB offices to bring the operations closer together and ensure that all EnrollNOLA functions are coordinating effectively with related citywide teams in advance of unification. Finally, the formal administrative transition from RSD to OPSB will occur in the spring or early summer of 2018 (not later than July 1), taking into account the workflow of the EnrollNOLA team as they manage the student enrollment process for the 2018-19 school year. In addition to these operational considerations, the December 2016 transition plan will address how to align EnrollNOLA procedures and OPSB Policy related to enrollment.

The Student Hearing Office serves as the comprehensive expulsion program for New Orleans. The Student Hearing office ensures that all students throughout the city receive fair and equitable treatment upon being recommended for expulsion by their schools. Per Act 91, OPSB will work with the Student Hearing Office both before and after its official transition to OPSB oversight to ensure that this program continues to fulfill its role within the city. OPSB will also ensure coordination between EnrollNOLA and the Youth Opportunity Center for students reentering schools after expulsion.

Instrument: OPSB Policy, Process Document
OPSB Responsible Party: Superintendent, with support from Chief Portfolio Officer
Timeline: December 2016

c. Develop a plan for transition of Youth Opportunity Center.
RSD will continue to manage the Youth Opportunity Center (YOC) through the 2017 fiscal year and will work with the program manager and city officials to refine the roles and responsibilities of the YOC within the city's ecosystem of services for students and families. By the end of 2016-17, RSD and OPSB will agree on the timeline and process for transitioning management of the YOC.

Per Act 91, OPSB needs to ensure that the process for students reentering schools after expulsion is robust and effective. YOC currently serves provides this service and OPSB will work their case management team to ensure that the process continues to develop and improve both before and after the YOC officially transfers to OPSB oversight.

Instrument: OPSB Policy, Process Document
OPSB Responsible Party: Chief Portfolio Officer
Timeline: June 2017

d. Ensure the continued success of the Therapeutic Day Program by clarifying future status within the New Orleans community.
OPSB should determine the long-term legal structure for the New Orleans Therapeutic Day Program (NOTDP) and OPSB's relationship to the program, including oversight and coordination. NOTDP has the opportunity to convert to a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. OPSB should work with the RSD and NOTDP leadership to determine whether converting to non-profit status will serve to improve the quality and efficiency of services for students and what, if any impact this change in status will have to the program's relationship with schools and families.

Instrument: Potential Revisions to OPSB Policy, process document
OPSB Responsible Party: Chief Portfolio Officer
Timeline: September 2017

e. Determine the role of OPSB as a partner to non-profits that play critical roles in supporting citywide services, such as the New Orleans Early Education Network (Early Childhood), YouthForce NOLA (Career and Technical Education), and New Schools for New Orleans (Talent and Portfolio Planning), including guidelines for any new potential partnerships.
OPSB should identify partner organizations that can provide high-quality services to schools and whether OPSB will develop a structure for coordination of these services. Identifying these partner organizations will help schools and partners connect more easily and will support OPSB's role in identifying emerging issues for students and families in New Orleans and working to provide solutions. This may require the creation of a policy or procedure for monitoring partners to ensure high quality and effective partnerships to guarantee that schools are partnering with organizations

that help them achieve their desired goals. Considerations for high quality programs include cost, consistency of services, long-term sustainability of the programs, and quality of actual services. This policy or procedure should ensure equitable access to partners for all schools throughout the district.

Instrument: OPSB Policy, Process Document
OPSB Responsible Party: Chief Portfolio Officer
Timeline: December 2017

II. Determine OPSB's role and responsibilities in helping schools to address the needs of students with special needs, including ELL students and students with disabilities

Currently, each Type 5 charter school is its own LEA and is held responsible for providing required services for any student who is assigned to their school. OPSB should determine who is responsible for oversight going forward and should ensure that the process is fair and equitable for all school types (single charter, CMO, network schools). As the district for these schools, OPSB will be responsible for overseeing these programs and ensure they are meeting the federally mandated program requirements laid out in IDEA. In order to comply with these laws and federal consent decrees, and serve students well, it is vital that all special education students are receiving the services they need. This policy should consider reporting requirements developed in Act 91 and should clarify the monitoring process of special education/ELL programs and their connection to authorization and accountability. Each Type 5 Charter school returning to OPSB shall remain subject to any active federal consent judgments or settlement agreements as a Type 3B charter school under the jurisdiction of OPSB.

Instrument: School Performance Framework, Potential Revisions to OPSB Policy, Process Document
OPSB Responsible Party: Chief Portfolio Officer, Chief Strategy Officer, Executive Director of ECS
Timeline: June 2017

Facilities

I. <u>Develop modified charter school maintenance and repair policy</u>

a. Establish clear maintenance and repair standards and accountability processes for all facilities within OPSB oversight.

OBSB should revise the Charter Facility Preventative Maintenance Policy to clearly outline all maintenance and repair standards in order to provide school operators with a clearer picture of expectations and ensure preservation of public school facilities for generations to come. As part of the development of these standards, a working group of school leaders and operators from across OPSB and RSD schools will work together to align the maintenance and repair standards. Operators and the facility departments of each district will work together to determine the level of oversight needed to ensure that schools create positive learning environments while allowing schools to maintain autonomy and remain operationally lean. These standards should address various areas of maintenance and repair including cleaning, building system maintenance, termite treatment, pest control, fire/life safety and city building codes. Decisions need to be made regarding service providers and whether OPSB will dictate which providers schools use and what service agreements with these providers look like. Consideration should also be given to the coordination of shared services between schools and if schools can negotiate better rates through partnerships with other schools.

It is vital that schools are prepared for any and all inspections and that preventive maintenance is occurring in all buildings within the district. A set of strong maintenance standards that establishes clear service requirements, expectations of facility upkeep, processes for repair, and preventive maintenance will help schools avoid more expensive issues down the road. OPSB will need to ensure that the Facilities team is working closely with the charter accountability and portfolio management teams.

Instrument: OPSB Policy, Facilities Lease, School Performance Framework, Process Document
OPSB Responsible Party: Chief Operations Officer, Deputy Chief of Facilities
Timeline: June 2017

b. Determine the level of oversight that OPSB will have over OPSB-owned and private facilities, including which aspects of facility maintenance and repair standards will be centrally inspected.

As part of the development of maintenance standards, school operators and facility teams from OPSB and RSD will determine which aspects of facilities will be subject to inspection and the policy around enforcement of these standards. Practices for holding schools accountable to the standards need to be defined and clearly communicated to schools. These accountability measures need to be transparent to school leaders and operators so that any issues that arise during inspections can be addressed quickly and easily. The severity of consequences for failing inspections needs to be outlined, and the process for schools to meet these requirements post-inspection needs to be clarified. The role of the OPSB facilities department in the follow-up regarding failures needs to be defined. Lastly, the policies need to define the point at which non-compliance, such as continually failing inspections and not taking corrective actions would be considered a violation of the Facilities Lease and would impact the charter school's charter accountability. In addition, the facilities team and the charter accountability team will need to coordinate to ensure that charter schools operating in privately-owned facilities are being monitored to ensure that children are being served in a safe, healthy environment that is up to date and in compliance with city and state building codes.

Instrument: OPSB Policy, Facilities Lease, Process Document
OPSB Responsible Party: Chief Operations Officer, Deputy Chief of Facilities
Timeline: March 2017

II. <u>Establish policies and processes for the School Facilities Preservation Program</u>

a. Plan for an assessment and life-cycle analysis of all school facilities to inform School Facility Preservation Program Planning for emergency and planned capital repairs.
The assessment of all schools has general support from district leaders but is a large undertaking financially and operationally. A life-cycle assessment is an opportunity to start developing the long-term facility master plan as it will allow for identification of future capital repair projects and potential maintenance issues in each building. The assessment will require resources and time to ensure that it is completed properly. As part of the assessment process, OPSB will ensure that the capacity to oversee this process is built into the facilities department.

Instrument: Facilities Lease, Process Document
OPSB Responsible Party: Chief Operations Officer, Deputy Chief of Facilities
Timeline: December 2016

b. Develop and implement standards and policies for capital repairs and replacements funded through the School Facility Preservation Program.

Standards must be developed for how funds in the Facilities Preservation Program can be accessed and the design standards for repairs and construction for using these funds in order to ensure consistency, quality, and safety across the district.

To lead the development of the Facilities Preservation Program and the policy that governs its use, OPSB will ensure that appropriate capacity is built into the facilities department. The facilities department will oversee capital repairs that use these funds and will work to establish clear policies around how OPSB performs emergency and capital repairs prior to the implementation of the school facility revolving loan fund and individual school facility accounts upon retirement of OPSB's bond debt (estimated in 2020).
This policy will establish a structure for the types of repairs that qualify to be performed under the School Facility Preservation Program, how schools request repairs, how OPSB will evaluate requests and determine which repairs should receive priority over others, and the process for OPSB to work with the school to complete the repairs in a timely fashion. The policy will protect the long-term

fund balance while ensuring long-term health of school facilities. Policy HD 15 currently includes many of these provisions but does not clarify access to the Facilities Preservation Program.

Instrument: Facilities Preservation Fund Policy, Facilities Lease, Process Document
OPSB Responsible Party: Chief Operations Officer, Deputy Chief of Facilities
Timeline: June 2017

c. Plan for the development of the revolving facility loan fund and individual school facility accounts.

Through the School Facilities Preservation Program and the repurposing of OPSB's General Obligation Bond in 2014, it is anticipated that adequate funding from sales and property tax will be provided for capital repairs and replacements through 2024. Once OPSB retires its debt service, the majority of funds dedicated to the School Facilities Preservation Program will fund a new revolving facility loan fund and individual school facility accounts. Charter schools will be responsible for using these two sources to fund planned and emergency capital repairs and replacements, and it is vital that schools are prepared for this responsibility. OPSB must develop policy around 1) the operation of the revolving facility loan fund, 2) the oversight of the individual school facilities accounts, and 3) standards for how schools can access and use these funds. These policies are critical to ensuring that funds are used equitably throughout the city. The policy developed over the interim period should establish how responsibility for capital repairs and replacements will shift following the retirement of the debt service from the OPSB facility office to charter schools. Clear guidelines and proactive communication are required to ensure that schools are using these funds appropriately.

Instrument: OPSB Policy, Facilities Lease, Process Document
OPSB Responsible Party: Chief Operations Officer, Deputy Chief of Facilities
Timeline: December 2017

III. <u>Refine existing policy around the sale and access to surplus or vacant buildings and ensure alignment with the portfolio management process</u>

OPSB should clarify the decision-making process on vacant buildings and which buildings will be sold and which buildings will be repurposed. This policy should include who will drive this process – facility, operations, finance, the Superintendent, or the School Board. The School Board will have final approval over any decisions but it is important that the process leading up to that final decision is outlined and decisions are made with the best interest of current and future students in mind. The OPSB must also examine the high cost of maintaining vacant buildings and whether these costs are sustainable when considering future needs of schools within OPSB district. The process should include considerations for independent schools who are interested in purchasing an OPSB owned building and a process for prioritizing which schools would have access to the sale of a building.

Instrument: OPSB Policy, Process Document
OPSB Responsible Party: Chief Operations Officer, Deputy Chief of Facilities
Timeline: June 2017

IV. Modify and improve the OPSB Facilities lease to clearly detail the role and responsibilities of OPSB and charter operators

OPSB should develop standard lease language that outlines the roles and responsibilities of the school tenants of OPSB buildings and incorporates the maintenance and repair standards and accountability measures outlined by the maintenance policy. OPSB recently changed the policy regarding expectations and requirements of tenants and should incorporate the adjustments into the updated lease language. This is a key step as buildings transition to the OPSB. This information should be transparent to all school leaders as they prepare to transition to the OPSB. Expectations around their responsibilities as tenants need to be clarified, and there should be multiple engagements to explain any changes in their current lease agreements.

Instrument: Operating Agreements, OPSB Policy, Facilities Lease, Process Document
OPSB Responsible Party: Chief Operations Officer, Deputy Chief of Facilities
Timeline: June 2017

a. Ensure facilities lease contracts are in place for schools renewing charters for the 2017-2018 school year and those transferring over from RSD

OPSB should have updated lease contracts in place to accommodate schools seeking contract renewals in the Spring of 2017. While OPSB is planning a full overhaul of these contracts (see above), contracts should be in place for any schools renewing leases (or receiving new contracts) in the interim.

Instrument: Modified Facilities Lease
OPSB Responsible Party: Chief Operations Officer, Deputy Chief of Facilities
Timeline: December 2016

V. Develop policies and processes to secure property insurance that meet insuring standards for adequate coverage

OPSB will provide information to RSD schools entering OPSB on property insurance rates and options for insuring leased properties. Insurance has been recognized as a main concern of RSD school leaders as their property insurance costs will rise. In order to engage with these leaders and alleviate their concerns, OPSB will examine the insurance process currently used as well as alternative options. Once these options have been studied, OPSB will engage with school leaders to determine the best policy going forward. OPSB should include the insurance billing model as part of any policy decision since there are multiple options available for the district/schools. OPSB should determine a process for letting properties out for bid in order to minimize expenses while maximizing coverage. Policy needs to establish minimum insurance requirements for schools keeping in mind that some schools own their own building. These standards should ensure that schools can provide the best environment possible for students while allowing schools and the district to remain finically stable. OPSB should determine the interim policy for schools transitioning to the OPSB next year.

Per Act 91, OPSB needs to ensure sufficient insurance coverage and by establishing minimum insurance standards, OPSB will be able to guarantee that each school has the appropriate level of insurance.

Instrument: OPSB Facility Policy, Facilities Lease
OPSB Responsible Party: Chief Operations Officer, Deputy Chief of Facilities
Timeline: December 2017

VI. <u>Develop a plan for the transfer of all facilities from RSD to OPSB including which buildings will remain with RSD due to construction</u>

OPSB will take control of all RSD facilities on July 1, 2018 or whenever a school occupying a facility moves from the RSD to OPSB (other than properties currently under construction as referenced in this section). In order to ensure a smooth transition OPSB, in conjunction with the RSD, will develop a plan that considers all aspects of facilities transfer including the control facilities and property, lease agreements, and other relevant considerations. This process will involve considerable work and therefore a process should be laid out in detail.

Instrument: Potential OPSB Policy, Potential Facilities Lease, process document
OPSB Responsible Party: Chief Operations Officer, Deputy Chief of Facilities
Timeline: March 2018

Finance and Operations

<u>Finance and Operations</u>

I. <u>Clarify Human Resources policies to allow for smooth transition of employees from RSD to OPSB, as appropriate</u>

OPSB will begin to examine current salary, benefits and responsibilities of RSD employees who may transition to OPSB. An ongoing process will include the financial analysis required to determine if any changes can or need to be made to current compensation packages to fit into the budget. OPSB should examine timing of transfers for each employee and should consider an option to divide an employee's time between the RSD and OPSB during the transition period in order to avoid overlapping functions or duplicate efforts. OPSB should identify transition leaders to work to onboard and recruit RSD personnel. OPSB will work with the School Board and state to ensure that RSD employees will be treated as "internal" candidates allowing for timely transition of employees with no lost productivity within the district.

Instrument: OPSB Policy, Process Document
OPSB Responsible Party: Deputy Chief of HR, Chief Operations Officer, Administration
Timeline: December 2016

II. <u>Develop a plan and mechanisms to ensure financial viability for both OPSB and RSD during the transition period leading to unification</u>

In order to maintain financial solvency through unification, OPSB needs to create a mechanism to cover costs associated with unification. A $1.5 million Unification Fund has been allocated from the Fund Balance. These funds have been earmarked for special positions related to unification and to cover any costs associated with the transition of functions and schools to OPSB. As a plan for the transition of RSD functions to OPSB is finalized, additional consideration should be given to the impact the transition will have on finances. This fund and the restructuring outlined in the budget section of the plan should ensure financial stability of OPSB going forward as outlined by Act 91.

Instrument: OPSB Policy, Process Document
OPSB Responsible Party: Superintendent, Cabinet, Executive Director of Finance
Timeline: March 2017

III. <u>Establish policy and process for the ongoing management of differentiated funding and distribution of deferred revenues, including the process for adjusting the formula in the future as necessary</u>

Per Act 91, OPSB is required to formally adopt a policy for a distributing a district level allocation to schools based upon student characteristics as determined by the local school board. In addition, OPSB is required to distribute deferred local revenues to charter schools under the School Board's jurisdiction. As part of this policy, OPSB should define a process for how future changes will be made to the formula and how those revisions are determined and approved.

Instrument: OPSB Policy, MFP Allocation Policy
OPSB Responsible Party: Chief Operating Officer, Chief Portfolio Officer
Timeline: March 2017

IV. <u>Ensure access to data necessary to monitor and oversee charter schools and provide centralized functions</u>

OPSB and RSD have begun the initial discussions around ensuring OPSB has access to data needed to oversee and monitor all schools within OPSB. OPSB needs to finalize what type of data is needed and who currently controls access to that data. Examples of data needed include: Student demographics, high need populations and services, enrollment data, student transfer and tracking data. OPSB should continue working with the state and the RSD to receive access to that data and determine which level of access is needed going forward to maintain evaluation and analysis capabilities in the long-term. This process should include the level of access to data for schools in OPSB's LEA, direct-run schools, and CMOs. As part of the preparation for unification and to build the data capacity necessary to serve all schools, OPSB will increase data capacity to focus on school performance and portfolio planning.

Instrument: OPSB Policy
OPSB Responsible Party: Chief Strategy Officer
Timeline: March 2017

LEA Responsibilities

I. Provide clear information to current OPSB schools about roles and responsibilities of LEA status, including the implications of becoming their own LEA on school finances, operations, and reporting as defined by BESE and Act 91

The Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education will be making a number of policy decisions regarding LEA status in the fall of 2016. Following these decisions, OPSB will need to adopt local policies and processes aligned to these state-level regulations. LDE must also determine the percentage of the admin fee that will be withheld by the LDE going forward. As schools prepare to request to become their own LEA or remain under the OPSB LEA, it is vital that schools leaders have a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of an LEA including the requirements for being permitted to become an independent LEA initially, and the circumstances under which LEA status can be relinquished or revoked. Schools also need to understand the roles and responsibilities related to data, reporting, special education compliance, financial accountability and grants management for an independent LEA. OPSB is committed to providing this information to school leaders, including a clear explanation of the current benefits and obligations that schools in the OPSB LEA should expect to encounter based on their decision to either remain in or seek to exit the LEA.. In order to ensure that all stakeholders, including community members and school leaders, are receiving full information about the impact of LEA status, OPSB will work with BESE and LDE to ensure this information is communicated clearly and effectively to all stakeholders.

Instrument: BESE Policy, OPSB Policy and contract provisions, Charter Operating Agreements
OPSB Responsible Party: Chief Strategy Officer, Chief Network/LEA Officer
Timeline: December 2016

II. Provide updated information to schools on chargebacks for LEA services and supports, based on outcome of school requests and any OPSB Board approvals of charters to become their own LEA

Services provided to schools in OPSB's LEA that are not included in the 2% administration fee will be charged back to those schools. As schools make the decision on whether or not to leave OPSB's LEA, the amount of the chargeback amount will change. As OPSB continues to analyze these costs, the district will provide relevant information to schools regarding the amount of the chargeback. This will be an on-going process and will vary based on the number of schools in OPSB's LEA.

Instrument: Process Document
OPSB Responsible Party: Chief Operating Officer, Executive Director of Finance
Timeline: March 2017

VI. Timeline and Responsibilities

Per Act 91, OPSB is responsible for submitting quarterly benchmark reports to be released to a broad audience of policymakers and the community. This timeline outlines the policy and operational decisions and interim steps in the transition of functions that will be addressed in each of those quarterly reports. The reports will also address any overarching concerns from the community, any changes to the timeline and updates on previous policy decisions being implemented.

The main team project managing the entire transition process will be the Chief Strategy Officer and the Strategic Initiatives Team, who will coordinate closely with the RSD throughout the transition, and work with the OPSB responsible party for each policy decision to ensure that decisions are made on time and are made in the best interests of all students in New Orleans. This team will also work closely with the Superintendent to release the quarterly benchmark reports and engage with the community to ensure that all questions and concerns are being addressed.

December 2016			
Functional Area	**Milestone**	**Instrument(s)**	**Personnel Lead**
Portfolio Management	Incorporate data review and program monitoring of equity and access issues (i.e. Special Education Services) into the charter accountability process	School Performance Framework, Potential revisions to OPSB Policy, Process Document	ED of School Performance, Chief Portfolio Officer, support from Chief Strategy Officer
Portfolio Management	Align the roles of the Superintendent and School Board as they relate to authorization, accountability, school monitoring, intervention, and portfolio planning	OPSB Policy, School Performance Framework, Process Document	Chief Strategy Officer, Chief Portfolio Officer
Portfolio Management	Consider development of formal mechanism for school leader engagement	Process Document	Chief Strategy Officer, Chief Portfolio Officer
Citywide Services and Enrollment	Clarify specific and more detailed transition plan for all aspects of EnrollNOLA	OPSB Policy, Process Document	Superintendent, with support from Chief Portfolio Officer

Facilities	Plan for an assessment and life-cycle analysis of all school facilities to inform School Facility Preservation Program Planning for emergency and planned capital repairs	Facilities Lease, Process Document	Chief Operations Officer, Deputy Chief of Facilities
Facilities	Ensure facilities lease contracts are in place for schools renewing charters for the 2017-2018 school year and those transferring over from RSD	Modified Facilities Lease	Chief Operations Officer, Deputy Chief of Facilities
Finance and Operations	Clarify Human Resources policies to allow for smooth transition of employees from RSD to OPSB, as appropriate	OPSB Policy, Process Document	Deputy Chief of HR, Administration, Chief Operations Officer
LEA Responsibilities	Provide clear information to current OPSB schools about roles and responsibilities of LEA status, including the implications of becoming their own LEA on school finances, operations, and reporting as defined by BESE and Act 91	BESE Policy, OPSB Policy and contract provisions, Charter Operating Agreements	Chief Strategy Officer, Chief Network/LEA Officer
Other	Convene the Citywide Vision and Strategic Goals Task Force	Process Document	Chief Strategy Officer

March 2017			
Functional Area	**Milestone**	**Instrument**	**Personnel Lead**
Portfolio Management	Incorporate test monitoring policy into the accountability process	School Performance Framework, Potential Revisions to OPSB Policy, Process Document	ED of School Performance, Chief Portfolio Officer
Portfolio Management	Create a streamlined version of the School Performance Framework for use by charter operators and other stakeholders	School Performance Framework	ED of School Performance, Chief Portfolio Officer
Portfolio Management	Develop a streamlined, common Charter Operating Agreement and ensure that all contract provisions are authorized and aligned with federal, state, and OPSB policies and laws	Charter Operating Agreements, Potential revisions to OPSB policy	Chief Strategy Officer, Chief Portfolio Officer, with support from Legal

Portfolio Management	Align on a variety of authorization standards between RSD and OPSB for charter schools, including performance standards and benchmarking	School Performance Framework, OPSB Policy, Process Document	Chief Strategy Officer, Chief Portfolio Officer
Finance and Operations	Develop a plan and mechanisms to ensure financial viability for both OPSB and RSD during the transition period leading to unification	OPSB Policy, Process Document	Superintendent, Cabinet, Executive Director of Finance
Finance and Operations	Establish policy and process for the ongoing management of differentiated funding and distribution of deferred revenues, including the process for adjusting the formula in the future as necessary	OPSB Policy, MFP Allocation Policy	Chief Operating Officer, Chief Portfolio Officer
Finance and Operations	Ensure access to data necessary to monitor and oversee charter schools and provide centralized functions	OPSB Policy	Chief Strategy Officer
LEA Responsibilities	Provide updated information to schools on chargebacks for LEA services and supports, based on outcome of school requests and any OPSB Board approvals of charters to become their own LEA	Process Document	Chief Operating Officer, Executive Director of Finance

June 2017			
Functional Area	**Milestone**	**Instrument**	**Personnel Lead**
Portfolio Management	Determine what (if any) modifications or differentiated support/review systems are required for alternative schools	School Performance Framework, Potential revisions to OPSB Policy	ED of School Performance, Chief Portfolio Officer

Portfolio Management	Ensure that facility and enrollment policies and processes (e.g. building utilization, enrollment target-setting) are aligned with the portfolio management process in order to increase access to high-quality public school options for New Orleans families	OPSB Policy, Process Document, Potential revision to School Performance Framework	ED of School Performance, Chief Portfolio Officer, Deputy Chief of Facilities, Enrollment
Portfolio Management	Develop a policy to establish the maximum percentage of seats that any single school operator (including OPSB, for its direct run schools) may occupy	OPSB Policy, Process Document	Chief Strategy Officer, Chief Portfolio Officer
Citywide Services and Enrollment	Develop a plan for transition of Youth Opportunity Center	OPSB Policy, Process Document	Chief Portfolio Officer
Citywide Services and Enrollment	Determine OPSB's role and responsibilities in helping schools to address the needs of students with special needs, including ELL students and students with disabilities	School Performance Framework, Potential Revisions to OPSB Policy, Process Document	Chief Portfolio Officer, Chief Strategy Officer, Executive Director of ECS
Facilities	Establish clear maintenance and repair standards and accountability processes for all facilities within OPSB oversight	OPSB Policy, Facilities Lease, Process Document	Chief Operations Officer, Deputy Chief of Facilities
Facilities	Develop and implement standards and policies for capital repairs and replacements funded through the School Facility Preservation Program	Facilities Preservation Fund Policy, Facilities Lease, Process Document	Chief Operations Officer, Deputy Chief of Facilities
Facilities	Refine existing policy around the sale and access to surplus or vacant buildings and ensure alignment with the portfolio management process	OPSB Policy, Process Document	Chief Operations Officer, Deputy Chief of Facilities
Facilities	Modify and improve the OPSB Facilities lease to clearly detail the role and responsibilities of OPSB and charter operators	OPSB Policy, Operating Agreements, Modified Facilities Lease, Process Documents	Chief Operations Officer, Deputy Chief of Facilities

September 2017			
Functional Area	**Milestone**	**Instrument**	**Personnel Lead**
Portfolio Management	Develop a modified School Performance Framework and associated policies	School Performance Framework, OPSB Policy	ED of School Performance, Chief Portfolio Officer, with support from Chief Strategy Officer
Portfolio Management	Update the school performance framework to incorporate the state's adjustment to the ESSA, and determine if any other changes are needed to ensure appropriate high standards for all schools and students.	Potential Revisions to OPSB Policy, School Performance Framework	ED of School Performance, Chief Portfolio Officer, support from Chief Strategy Officer
Citywide Services and Enrollment	Ensure the continued success of the Therapeutic Day Program by clarifying future status within the New Orleans community	Potential Revisions to OPSB Policy, process document	Chief Portfolio Officer

December 2017			
Functional Area	**Milestone**	**Instrument**	**Personnel Lead**
Portfolio Management	Ensure that existing or potential future OPSB charter policies regarding student equity, emergency management, enrollment, and school authorization as outlined by Act 91 are integrated into the School Performance Framework, charter accountability process, and other relevant process documents	School Performance Framework, process documents, Revisions to OPSB Policy	ED of School Performance, Chief Portfolio Officer, Chief Strategy Officer
Citywide Services and Enrollment	Identify which citywide services and resources will be funded within the expected revenues for the unified school district	OPSB Policy, Process Document	Chief Portfolio Officer

Citywide Services and Enrollment	Determine the role of OPSB as a partner to non-profits that play critical roles in supporting citywide services, such as the New Orleans Early Education Network (Early Childhood), YouthForce NOLA (Career and Technical Education), and New Schools for New Orleans (Talent and Portfolio Planning), including guidelines for any new potential partnerships	OPSB Policy, Process Document	Chief Portfolio Officer
Facilities	Develop policies and processes to secure property insurance that meet insuring standards for adequate coverage	OPSB Facility Policy, Facilities Leases	Chief Operations Officer, Deputy Chief of Facilities
Facilities	Plan for the development of the revolving facility loan fund and individual school facility accounts	OPSB Policy, Facilities Lease, Process Document	Chief Operations Officer, Deputy Chief of Facilities

March 2018			
Functional Area	**Milestone**	**Instrument**	**Personnel Lead**
Facilities	Develop a plan for the transfer of all facilities from RSD to OPSB including which buildings will remain with RSD due to construction	Potential OPSB Policy, Potential Facilities Lease, process document	Chief Operations Officer, Deputy Chief of Facilities

January – July 2018:

While all policy and operational decisions will be made prior to 2018, additional services, facilities, personnel, and schools will be transferred to OPSB during 2018 leading up to the final transition of schools and facilities on July 1, 2018. Some of these decisions on exact timing of the transition have yet to be made as additional planning (as reflected in this plan) is necessary to execute a successful transition. For example, a plan for the transition of EnrollNOLA will be developed by December 2016. This plan will lay out the appropriate timeline for EnrollNOLA's move to OPSB. Reports to the UAC during quarterly meetings in March and June 2018 will largely relate to the transition of functions and other items pertinent to the July 1, 2018 milestone.

Appendix

Key Terms

At-Risk Students: As defined by Louisiana law, an at-risk pupil is any student who participates in the free or reduced price lunch program, has been identified as an exceptional child (not including gifted and/or talented), is the mother or father of a child, or has exhibited any of a variety of academic risk factors including: withdrawing from school, failing of exams required for graduation, or is significantly below grade level in reading.

CENF: Citywide Exceptional Needs Fund for Students with Disabilities; a special purpose fund created through a partnership between the Recovery School District (RSD) and Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB) to help all public schools in New Orleans meet the needs of their students with IEPs

CMO: Charter Management Organizations are nonprofit entities that manage two or more charter schools; many of the charter schools in New Orleans are part of a CMO

ELL: English Language Learner; an individual who is in the process of actively acquiring the English language

EnrollNOLA: Common Enrollment System that facilitates school choice for families by managing the application process and admission of students to over 90% of the schools in New Orleans; it also manages readmissions and transfers of students

ESSA: Every Student Succeeds Act; Federal law passed in 2015

IDEA: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; Federal law that ensures children with disabilities have the opportunity to receive a free and appropriate public education

IEP: Individualized Education Program; a written statement of an education program designed to meet a child's individual needs; often used in Special Education

Jump Start: Louisiana's career and technical education (CTE) program for high schools

LEA: Local Educational Agency; a public board of education or other public authority legally constituted within a State for administrative control or direction of a school or schools

MFP: Minimum Foundation Program; Louisiana's formula to equitably allocate funding for education to school districts

NOTDP: New Orleans Therapeutic Day Program; joint collaboration between the Recovery School District, Orleans Parish School Board, and Tulane Medical School's Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. NOTDP is a separate setting serving RSD and OPSB students with the most severe diagnosed behavioral health disabilities in grades K-8

OPSB: The Orleans Parish School Board; this refers to the district's central office

RSD: The Recovery School District

School Board: This refers specifically to the locally elected members who serve as the constitutional governing authority of Orleans Parish

YOC: Youth Opportunity Center; a joint initiative of the Orleans Parish School Board and the Recovery School District. The YOC serves as the citywide safety net for students at-risk of disengaging from and dropping out of school

YSC: Youth Study Center; the juvenile detention center for Orleans Parish administered by the city of New Orleans with education services administered by OPSB

Charter School Types: This document references 4 different types of Charter Schools in New Orleans:

Type 1	New-start charter schools approved by a local school board
Type 3	Conversions of existing public schools, approved by a local school board
Type 3B	Former Type 5 charter schools that are transferred back to the local school board
Type 5	Recovery School District charter schools

<u>Triggers for a delay of unification until July 1, 2019</u>

<u>Louisiana Revised Statute 17:10.7.1(I)</u>: "The final transfer of schools from the Recovery School District to the local school board as provided in this Section may be postponed until July 1, 2019 only by a majority vote of the full membership of the local school board or the full membership of the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, and at least one of the following must apply":

	Explanation of Reason of Delay	**How does the plan address this?**	**Where is this Addressed in the Plan?**
The local school board is not financially stable.	OPSB needs to ensure that the new unified school district structure is financially sustainable by building a balanced budget and ensuring that funds exist to support the school district during the transition when schools and functions transition at different rates.	The unification process has created extra costs for OPSB and a $1.5 million interim fund has been created to help support the transition period. The funds cover expenses that relate to engagement of the community including the costs of facilitators for community meetings. These funds also are available to create capacity where necessary to support unification. OPSB has presented a budget that is balanced within the means of the projected revenues available.	Budget; Policy and Operation Decisions; Overall Operations

The local school board lacks a comprehensive expulsion and reentry program for students	Unification will be delayed if OPSB has not developed a plan for the transition of the current expulsion and reentry problems housed as part of EnrollNOLA and the YOC. The OPSB will guarantee this provision by setting up a process to see these programs shifted to the OPSB by July 1, 2018.	As part of ensuring equity for all students, OPSB needs to maintain a comprehensive expulsion and reentry program for students. Currently, the Student Hearing Office, Youth Opportunity Center and Youth Study Center all support the expulsion and reentry process and all of these programs will continue going forward. The Student Hearing Office, which operates out of the EnrollNOLA office, will continue to serve as the citywide expulsion office, helping maintain a system that treats all students equitably. The Youth Study Center and the Youth Opportunity Center both serve as points of reentry for students. The YSC is currently managed by the OPSB and the YOC is tentatively scheduled for transfer at the start of the 2017-2018 school year. The YOC is continuing to expand its program and will be the main reentry program for students in New Orleans. They offer a comprehensive program of re-entry that provides families with links to support services, advocacy and one on one case management. As these programs continue to grow and evolve, OPSB will work with each program to ensure that they evolve to meet the needs of the students in New Orleans.	Organizational Capabilities, Citywide Services
The local school board cannot assure the stability of employee retirement benefits.	OPSB needs to ensure that employees continue to enroll and participate in TSRL or another alternative retirement system (employees who transfer from RSD may choose to stay in LASERS). As they don't operate the TSRL retirement benefits,	As the number of employees working for OPSB increases through the unification process, OPSB will assure stability of retirement benefits to the extent that this is possible. To prepare for the transition of these employees and the hiring of new employees to support unification, OPSB will examine salary, retirement and	Policy and Operational Decisions: Overall Operations

	enrollment is the only aspect of the benefits that OPSB has direct control over and therefore will guarantee this aspect of retirement.	other fringe benefits as part of the HR transition process. By examining the impact that these hires will have on the overall finances of the organization, OPSB will be able to prepare for increased costs associated with unification. Another important aspect of the transition of RSD employees to OPSB is the possibility of transition of their retirement benefits from LASERS to TSRL. This process should be seamless and should not cause issues for these employees as they will only need to prepare a form that OPSB will help provide should the employee choose to switch their benefits.	
The local school board cannot ensure or provide sufficient insurance coverage.	OPSB needs to insure that all buildings within the district have adequate (defined as being a broadly acceptable level of coverage) insurance coverage in multiple areas including property damage, flood, liability and other types of insurance as necessary. OPSB may either provide the coverage or enact policy that guarantees that all schools will have the necessary insurance.	Insurance coverage has been a topic broached at multiple school leader and community meetings. As RSD schools leave the state and rejoin the OPSB, there is concern that their insurance costs will increase. This issue will be examined throughout the unification process, and OPSB has outlined a few steps to help ensure that all schools have sufficient insurance coverage. One step will be the establishment of minimum insurance coverage standards that all school must meet. This will guarantee that all schools have sufficient coverage going forward. Secondly, OPSB is developing a new process for insurance bidding. As more schools join the OPSB, there is an opportunity to leverage the increased number of buildings to decrease overall costs for schools and the district. This process also will include examining the billing model for schools in OPSB – will schools pay the rate for their building or will they be charged a	Policy and Operational Decisions: Facilities

		per-pupil rate? These decisions will be made during the unification process and will ensure that all buildings have sufficient insurance coverage at affordable rates.	

<u>Schools Scheduled for Renewal During Transition Period</u>

School Name	District	Year Opened	Renewal Year
ENCORE Academy	OPSB	2012-13	2016 - 1st Renewal
Warren Easton Senior High School	OPSB	2006-07	2016 - 2nd Renewal
Edward Hynes Charter School	OPSB	2006-07	2016 - 2nd Renewal
Robert Russa Moton Charter School	OPSB	2006-07	2016 - 2nd Renewal
Audubon Charter School	OPSB	2005-06	2016 - 2nd Renewal
Einstein Charter School	OPSB	2005-06	2016 - 2nd Renewal
New Orleans Charter Science and Mathematics HS	OPSB	2005-06	2016 - 2nd Renewal
Homer A. Plessy Community School	OPSB	2013-14	2017 - 1st Renewal
Bricolage Academy	OPSB	2013-14	2017 - 1st Renewal
Alice M. Harte Elementary Charter School	OPSB	2005-06	2017 - 1st Renewal
Edna Karr High School	OPSB	2005-06	2017 - 1st Renewal
The NET Charter High School	RSD	2012-13	2016 - 1st Renewal
Joseph A. Craig Charter School	RSD	2012-13	2016 - 1st Renewal
Cohen College Prep	RSD	2012-13	2016 - 1st Renewal
Langston Hughes Charter Academy	RSD	2007-08	2016 - 1st Renewal
G. W. Carver Collegiate Academy	RSD	2012-13	2016 - 1st Renewal
McDonogh 42 Charter School	RSD	2012-13	2016 - 1st Renewal
Crescent Leadership Academy	RSD	2012-13	2016 - 1st Renewal
James M. Singleton Charter School	RSD	2006-07	2016 - 3rd Renewal
Paul B. Habans Elementary School	RSD	2013-14	2016 - Extension
Crocker Arts and Technology School	RSD	2013-14	2016 - Extension
H.C. Schaumburg Elementary School	RSD	2013-14	2016 - Extension
Mildred Osborne (formerly Pride)	RSD	2013-14	2016 - Extension
ReNEW Cultural Arts Academy at Live Oak Elementary	RSD	2010-11	2017 - 2nd Renewal
Gentilly Terrace Elementary School	RSD	2010-11	2017 - 2nd Renewal
Akili Academy of New Orleans	RSD	2008-09	2017 - 2nd Renewal
KIPP New Orleans Leadership Academy	RSD	2010-11	2017 - 2nd Renewal
Algiers Technology Academy	RSD	2007-08	2017 - 3rd Renewal
Sylvanie Williams College Prep	RSD	2007-08	2017 - 3rd Renewal
Dwight D. Eisenhower Elementary School	RSD	2005-06	2017 - 3rd Renewal
KIPP East Community	RSD	2014-15	2017 - Extension

Act 91: Summary and Important Provisions

Section	Topic	Policy Implications
10.7.1.C.2b	Charter Terms – AAP	The initial term for the Type 3B charter shall be equal to the number of years remaining on Type 5 Charter
10.7.1.C.2c	Settlements – AAP	Any Type 3B charter will still be subject to active federal judgments or settlements
10.7.1.D	Facilities	All buildings, facilities and property owned by the RSD will be transferred to the OPSB when the school is transferred over. However, any property belonging to the charter school will remain property of the school
10.7.1.D.2a	Transition of School Buildings – Construction	Any facility under construction or scheduled to be under construction as part of a federal plan (FEMA) shall remain with the RSD until substantially complete
10.7.1.D.2b	Grants – Citywide Services	RSD and DoE shall continue to operate as federal grant applicant for projects completed by RSD and shall retain responsibility for execution, and administration of those grants
10.7.1.D.2c.i	Building Finance – Facilities	RSD will return all buildings free of any encumbrances, including liens and judgments other than those that OPSB is a party to
10.7.1.D.2c.ii	Return of building – Facilities	OPSB has no obligation to reimburse for any maintenance, alterations and other repairs made to school buildings before return to OPSB
10.7.1.D.2.d/e	Board Liability – AAP	The board will no civil liability for any damage occurred during the time a school was under the RSD. Also free from liability from any claim of obligation to federal agency.
10.7.1.E.1	District Funding – Budget	SHALL adopt a process to determine district level funding by July 1, 2017 and revise as needed to distribute MFP.
10.7.1.E.2	Other Funding - Budget	MAY use local revenues from new or repurposed taxes voted on post 9/2016 for parish-wide functions or programs approved by voters

10.7.1.E.3	Authorization - AAP	SHALL approve charter operating agreements for all charter schools under board's jurisdiction that are limited to provisions which are common to all such charter contracts
10.7.1.E.4	Enrollments - AAP	SHALL require all charter schools to participate in parish wide enrollment and expulsion process
10.7.1.E.5	Enrollment (exemptions) - AAP	MAY adopt a policy for charters who are in good standing in terms of enrollment/ expulsion compliance to be exempt from minimum enrollment percentages
10.7.1.E.6	Enrollment (Geo. Pref.) - AAP	MAY provide a lottery preference for enrollment at elementary and middle schools for students residing within defined geographic zones as one of the factors to determine student assignment. Shall not be applied to more than 50% of seats.
10.7.1.E.7	Enrollment (projection) - AAP	MAY adopt a policy for cooperatively and annually establishing enrollment projections and targets and requiring enrollment of additional or fewer students during the school year.
10.7.1.E.8	Enrollment (cap) - AAP	SHALL adopt a policy establishing a process which allows superintendent to limit the percentage of system enrollment any single operator may serve
10.7.1.E.9	Deferred Revenue - Budget	SHALL provide for distribution of deferred local revenues to charter schools. Board may carry forward loss to following year to be recovered from future deferred revenues.
10.7.1.F.1a-c	Authorization – AAP	Superintendent presents recommendation to the board regarding approval, extension, renewal, or revocation of the charter. Unless 2/3 of the vote rejects the recommendation, the recommendation will go forward. Veto must occur at first meeting after the recommendation
10.7.1.F.2	Authorization – AAP	Superintendent to monitor and require corrective actions by charter schools to comply with policy/ law.

10.7.1.F.3	Emergencies	Superintendent is authorized to temporarily close one or more charters due terror threats or state of emergency
10.7.1.G.1	Autonomy – AAP	Unless otherwise agreed, the local school board shall not impede the operational autonomy of a charter outside of capital repairs and facility construction; other areas of autonomy laid out in Act 91 should be observed
10.7.1.G.2	Autonomy (LEA) - AAP	Each charter school may act as its own LEA for one of more funding purposes – choice for schools with approval from OPSB
10.7.1.G.3	Testing - AAP	Starting 7/1/17 each charter school shall provide for independent test monitoring from a third party entity approved by the board for the testing period immediately preceding the board's consideration of renewal
10.7.1.H.1a-4	Unification Plan	Superintendent develops a plan with advisory committee due 9/1/16 that includes: a. consideration of equitable funding for government functions deemed appropriate for efficient operation of a system of autonomous schools b. implementation timeline with detailed list of tasks and benchmarks that is appropriately sequenced to allow transfer of functions and funds
10.7.1.H.5-6	Unification Plan	Advisory committee must convene on a quarterly basis, written progress reports every three months
10.7.1.I	Transition Delay Mechanism	Final transfer of schools only postponed by a majority vote of OPSB or BESE due to: a. Financially instability b. Lack of clear expulsion/ re-entry plan c. Cannot assure stability of retirement benefits (added) d. Insufficient insurance coverage e. Written certification it is not feasible to meet the timeline f. Vote of the advisory committee

10.7.1.K	LEA Status - AAP	BESE will promulgate rules regarding schools acting as their own LEA including: a. Delineate the financial and programmatic obligations of the charter schools as related to the receipt of public funds b. Authorize state Superintendent to rescind a school's authority to act as its own LEA if the school fails to meet obligations