



Anser Charter School

"We are crew, not passengers, strengthened by acts of consequential service to others." - Kurt Hahn



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LEARN. SERVE. LEAD.

Established September 1998

Anser Charter School serves K-8 students from around the Treasure Valley from its Garden City, Idaho location.

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Executive Summary

The Mission and Vision of Anser of Idaho have guided the work of Anser Charter School for 20 years where they have inspired the work of teachers, administrators, board members and parents to create a community that supports the learning of all students. Based on this strong foundation of a collective approach Anser will seek to expand this mission and vision with a larger community of families, learners and teachers to experience the rich opportunities that an EL Education (Expeditionary Learning) founded on growing the academic, social-emotional and character development of each child can provide, while incorporating the intrinsic learning opportunities that Anser has been piloting for the last two years.

Mission:

Anser of Idaho’s Mission is to *“Educate the whole child in a collaborative learning community where individuals are inspired to be self-motivated and to feel a sense of connection and responsibility to the world.”*

Vision:

Anser of Idaho’s Vision is to *“Foster learning that imagines a better world and works toward realizing it; set high academic standards; promote creativity, discovery, reflection and balance; embrace diversity; and use developmentally appropriate practices and real-world experiences to educate within a climate of collaboration, community, character, and compassion.”*

Executive Summary

What would a dream school look like? Over 20 years ago a group of visionary educators and dedicated parents came together, spending over three years researching, planning and dreaming to create Anser Charter School; the dream school they knew was possible. Now entering our 21st year as an EL Education (Expeditionary Learning) school, Anser is built upon a strong foundation of success. Anser was named the inaugural Governor’s Charter Star honoree, has been designated a Mentor School within the EL network, was among the first EL Credentialed schools, was recognized by Idaho Leads as a Studio District of Innovation and was named a Boyer Center School of Character. Building upon two decades of experience, we strive to build on the dreams of our founders through a large scale expansion to reach into underserved communities in the Treasure Valley.

Anser’s EL Education model and our unique combination of Expeditionary Learning, Community, and Service offers opportunities for students to learn outside of the four walls of the classroom in a way that no other school in the Treasure Valley has. Imagine a student who funds a library for a rural school in Africa or a student who develops, product tests and starts her own business selling lip balm. Imagine



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7th-8th graders making over 5,000 lunches in one year to feed the homeless in their community. This is not just the stuff of dreams. These are real world accomplishments of Anser students. As we grow and reach more deeply into underserved communities, we will bring together these rare and powerful learning opportunities with a larger, more richly varied community of families to empower our students to become life-long learners with a sense of connection and responsibility to their community and to their world.

Core Values:

Anser embraces EL Education Design Principles (Appendix F15) as its set of core values. These principles inherently require the presence of more routine values such as integrity, respect, responsibility, courage, discipline, and compassion which encompass a broader view of success in life and work. The EL Design Principles are as follows: The Primacy of Self Discovery, The Having of Wonderful Ideas, The Responsibility for Learning, Empathy and Caring, Success and Failure, Collaboration and Competition, Diversity and Inclusion, The Natural World, Solitude and Reflection and Service and Compassion. Anser is built on these ten design principles that reflect the educational values and beliefs of Kurt Hahn, founder of Outward Bound. These principles also reflect the design’s connection to other related thinking about teaching, learning and the culture of our school.

Section 1: Educational Program

“If you want your child to be surrounded by caring people, challenged to dig deeply in their learning and develop as a whole person, Anser is the place!”

Christina - Anser Parent

Educational Philosophy

At Anser, we embrace an educational approach that addresses the development and needs of the whole child - academically, socially, emotionally, and personally. Stimulated by an innovative and collaborative learning environment, students are self-motivated to discover their talents and to achieve more than they thought possible. Students and teachers become a community of learners committed to learning deeply about our world and our place in it. We believe in creating classrooms where learning is relevant, curiosity is nurtured, questions are encouraged, and dialogue is robust. Students hone skills of academic accomplishment - including critical reading, writing, mathematics - as well as skills that build personal character - discipline, courage, integrity, respect, responsibility and compassion. We believe that the deep and relevant understanding of our world builds and a sense of compelling responsibility to it is



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accomplished by focusing our EL Education model practices around three key areas - Expeditions, community service, and adventure.

Expeditions – Anser motivates and engages students by providing a real-world learning experience, both inside and outside the classroom. An Expedition is a framework for engaged teaching and learning, which challenges students to think creatively and take an active role in the classroom and beyond while meeting Idaho Core Standards. An Expedition is a year-long or semester long multi-disciplinary investigation into a single subject. Idaho State Standards are taught through the Expeditions in each grade level. Through depth, rather than breadth, students learn to think deeply, critically, and to make connections between their learning and their world. An Expedition has a Guiding Question that provides the inquiry point of entry into the subject.

An example of an Expedition is the Kindergarten Expedition, “What Makes a Bird a Bird?” Through inquiry students study the natural world around them to learn about the habitat, characteristics, behaviors and needs of a bird. Science, writing, research, data collection (math), fieldwork, art and service are woven into the study of birds. Students learn from conservationists, visit the Idaho Bird Observatory, and take bird counts at local parks, all to connect their learning to real world experts and real world experiences. As a culminating project, the students design bird note cards with the help of 6th grade buddies. These cards include a scientific drawing and explanation of the bird and its habitat. The notecards are sold and the students vote on a local bird conservation group to receive the funds.

Every Expedition ends with an exhibition of learning to an authentic audience. For kindergarteners this is an evening at school where they share their learning about their bird with their families, but also the many community experts who have supported their learning. This example, while for kindergarten, outlines the basic tenets of an Expedition at every grade level: an inquiry question, deep, intensive multi-disciplinary project based learning, fieldwork, community experts, art, service and adventure an exhibition of learning.

Community – Anser consistently encourages building connections with each other and our community. We support students by fostering a collaborative and cooperative learning environment. This is evident in our motto - “We are crew, not passengers.”

Service and Adventure– Anser teaches students to serve others at school, at home and in the community. Students discover empathy and compassion for others and a deeper sense of who they are by giving back, mentoring fellow students and assisting others. Service and Adventure opportunities are woven into learning and provide opportunities for students to develop their own



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unique identity, while understanding their connection and obligation to serve others and to overcome challenges and develop lifelong passions.

Student Academic Achievement Standards

Anser uses a three-dimensional vision of student achievement that includes mastery of knowledge and skills, character, and high-quality student work. We believe that academic success is built on strong character qualities of collaboration, perseverance, responsibility, and compassion, and that character is shaped through engaging and challenging academic work. Preparing students for state standards-based testing and monitoring student performance on these assessments is but one of many ways we measure and monitor student achievement. We understand that our students' performance on standardized states tests are an important measurement that can be used to inform our practices and is also part of the body of evidence supporting the efficacy of our model. Anser has consistently performed at or above the state and district averages for math and ELA and has set an academic goal to continue to outperform on those measures, as well as in comparison to other Boise School District schools with similar demographics. High academic standards are set for all students, including economically disadvantaged, ELL students, and students eligible for Special Education services. Anser sets the same academic goals, to outperform the subgroup district and state averages.

Anser has a school-wide system for monitoring student academic achievement. Starting at the Board level, the Continuous Improvement Committee is charged with monitoring the school's academic performance and with providing support for growth. This committee works in coordination with the Education Director (ED) to oversee the achievement monitoring plan. The plan is developed by the ED and implemented by the Literacy Specialist, classroom teachers and ECS staff, under the direction of the ED. The plan involves the collection of student achievement data throughout the year in a sequence that informs decision making at the school and the classroom level.

Annual performance goals are established in the Continuous Improvement Plan. Our goals put a focus on preparing students with strong literacy and mathematical skills, a desire for life-long learning, and a readiness for career or college. Annual academic performance targets are set for each grade level for math and literacy based on previous performance results. Starting in the 2020-2021 school year we will collect and analyze data school-wide on subpopulations of students from backgrounds traditionally considered educationally disadvantaged.

Monitoring and reporting of student performance happens throughout the year. The following table outlines the school wide assessment timeline and assessment tools. Anser uses mandatory assessments and a selection of industry-standard, research-based assessment tools. Data collection is a coordinated process involving the ED, the Literacy Specialist and classroom teachers.



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Assessment Timeline

	Kindergarten - 3rd grade	2nd - 8th grade
Fall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Idaho Reading Indicator (IRI) using I-Station computer adaptive test <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reading screener & diagnostic ● DMT Institute’s Primary Math Assessment (PMA) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Math screener and diagnostic (K-2 only) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Renaissance STAR - benchmark <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Math ○ Reading ● AIMSWeb Curriculum-Based Measurement (CBM) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reading fluency (4th - 6th) ● DMTI’s Benchmark Assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Math (3rd - 6th)
Winter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Idaho Reading Indicator (IRI) using I-Station computer adaptive test <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reading - progress monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Renaissance STAR - progress monitoring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Math ○ Reading ● ISAT interim - progress monitoring (3rd-8th) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Math ○ ELA/Literacy
On-going		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Renaissance STAR - progress monitoring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Math ○ Reading ● ISAT interim - progress monitoring (3rd-8th) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Math ○ ELA/Literacy
Spring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● DMT Institute’s Primary Math Assessment (PMA) ● Idaho Reading Indicator (IRI) End of Year <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Renaissance STAR - End of Year <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Math ○ Reading ● ISAT Summative - (3rd-8th) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Math ○ ELA/Literacy ○ Science (5th & 7th only)

Analysis of individual student data is done by the classroom teacher, with support from the Literacy Specialist. Teachers use the STAR math and reading benchmark results to plan interventions for individuals and groups of students, to develop groupings for differentiation of instruction, and to support student advancement. The results from the IRI allow teachers to create flexible student



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grouping for targeted, small group instruction. DMT Institute (Developing Mathematical Thinking Institute) staff support teachers in the analysis of the PMA and the Benchmark assessment results, including identifying specific math concepts that need targeting for individual students and for the class. Throughout the year, teachers use STAR to guide instruction and to monitor student progress. This tool allows teachers to identify students with urgent deficits, with intervention needs, students being progress monitored and students at or above the benchmark in math and reading. Individual results from standardized assessments are used by the Building Intervention Team (BIT) when recommending and planning interventions.

Grade level teams of teachers examine grade level cohort data to inform instructional practices and to inform school leaders of trends in performance. These grade-level teams mentor new teachers in understanding each assessment and in interpreting results. In addition, every teacher has access to staff trainings and training videos about each assessment - its implementation, its results and related data analysis tools. At a school-wide level, data is used for making decisions about resource allocation and staff professional development. Trends in student data have driven decisions about the scheduling of instructional time and the staffing of instructional blocks.

Each fall and spring, the entire teaching staff does a school-wide data investigation using a data analysis protocol. Based on this analysis, a staff-wide goal is set that becomes part of the benchmarking plan. For example, in 2019 the staff set a goal around math scores, setting goals for baseline, mid-year and year-end performance.

Key Educational Design Elements, Curricula, Tools, & Instructional Methods

Educational Model

For 20 years, Anser has been an active partner in the EL Education network. EL Education is a leading K-12 education model offering a comprehensive approach to school design and implementation. EL Education promotes *active* classrooms that are alive with discovery, problem-solving challenges, and collaboration. EL Education students have both the capacity and the passion to build a better, more just world. School structures and traditions such as crew, community meetings, exhibitions of student work, and service learning ensure that every student is known and cared for, that student leadership is nurtured, and that contributions to the school and world are celebrated. Anser has implemented the EL Education model at a consistently high level. Anser’s success in the EL Education network has led us to serve as a Mentor School for more than 10 years and as a credentialed school for the past five years.



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About EL Education

EL Education approaches are grounded in the philosophy of experiential education. Experiential education’s roots go back to philosopher and educational theorist John Dewey and his vision of education that puts the student, not the content, at the center of the educational process [1]. Dewey’s work influenced German educator Kurt Hahn, whose schools in Germany and Scotland gave rise to Outward Bound and subsequently to Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound (ELOB). ELOB eventually evolved into EL Education. Today’s EL Education practices and core beliefs are linked inextricably to Hahn’s life and work. Hahn, born in Berlin in 1886, formed his own vision of education in which the school would “harmonize the social and intellectual differences between its students by operating as a community of participation and active service. It would seek out the natural qualities of leadership, skill, and responsibility possessed by all in different ways when they see that they are truly needed.” [2]

Many of Hahn’s beliefs have been incorporated into the design of experiential schools, including the following [3]:

- An appreciation for a system that develops the complete person - intellectually, morally, aesthetically — and physically too
- An appreciation for the power of failure in building a road to perseverance and success.
- A commitment to active learning
- A belief that students take responsibility for their own learning and for self-assessment
- A belief that true learning requires challenge - including outdoor challenge
- A commitment to creating compassionate young people with a sense of service to others

These beliefs form the foundation for Anser’s educational model and provide direction in decision-making around instructional methods, classroom design, curriculum, behavioral expectations, and school-wide policies

Instructional Practices

Anser's instructional approaches are diverse, flexible and dovetail with our expeditionary approach to curriculum. Our model challenges students to think critically and take active roles in their classrooms and communities, resulting in higher achievement and greater engagement at school.

Teachers scaffold learning experience based on what students already know and in a way that supports and challenges a variety of learners. Teachers choose from a wide variety of lesson formats including direct instruction, the Workshop model, discovery-based lessons, protocol-based lessons, simulations, labs, video lessons and many more. Teachers explicitly share learning targets with students and consistently refer to them throughout the learning cycle. In many cases, students track their own progress towards the learning targets, one example of student-engaged assessment.



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Additionally, students engage in self-assessment through written reflections, goal-setting, peer critiques, portfolio review and student-led conferences.

Understanding the needs of each student begins with our classroom structure. Each classroom is led by a certified teacher, called a crew leader and this group of students forms a bond of community that we call crew. Each crew consists of 22 - 28 students, depending on the grade level. Students start each school day in a community circle called morning crew. This is just one structure of crew that allows for the students to make personal connections with each other and with the crew leader; it ensures that each student is well known and supported by peers and adults. Crew is also a structure for team-building and conflict resolution; it is a place of celebration and compassion as students share successes and failures.

Crew structure helps teachers understand and meet the needs of the “whole child” of each individual student. Teachers use daily written work, exit tickets, group work, checks for understanding, formative assessments and more to assess each learner’s progress. Anser teachers make a practice of debriefing lessons to help students articulate and reflect on their learning. These classroom based assessment practices, coupled with our system of progress monitoring using standardized tools give teachers data about student progress and achievement. This data informs teachers in adjusting lesson formats and sequence, in selecting appropriate text, in creating student groupings and in differentiating instruction.

Curriculum

Anser has a strong foundation in identifying and developing a rigorous curriculum that aligns with Idaho State Standards. With few exceptions, our school does not use published curriculum packages. Rather, Anser teachers use the framework provided by the EL Education Core Practices (Appendix F5) to design and create curricula that is developmentally appropriate, accessible to all levels of students and rich in local connections. Teachers work in grade level teams to map out Idaho State standards in the content areas and then create a sequence of instruction and learning around compelling topics through a unique learning Expedition.

Learning Expeditions are interdisciplinary units where learning comes alive around real-world issues with local connections. Learning Expeditions forge together powerful learning tools and experiences - compelling topics, guiding questions, case studies, projects, fieldwork, service learning, guest experts, anchor texts, inquiry lessons and more - to create dynamic learning for all students. An example, in addition to the Kindergarten Expedition outlined above, is the 2nd/3rd grade Expedition called “Pollination Expedition” during which students explore the connections between butterflies and flowers, focusing on a case study of the Painted Lady butterfly. Students grow and study these butterflies, read



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nonfiction texts, create scientific drawings and take multiple trips to the Boise Foothills to conduct field work. Students consider the questions, *“What happens when the city meets wilderness?”* and, *“What are the connections between the weather and human impact on the Boise Foothills?”* Working with local experts, students learn firsthand about trail repair and how to help lessen the damage caused by erosion. With help from Radio Boise, students create PSAs to advocate for responsible trail use to help sustain the trail system and natural environment. Throughout this Expedition, students are meeting standards in science, social studies, reading, writing, and speaking. Additionally, students are building skills in craftsmanship, collaboration and character throughout.

Learning and teaching through an Expeditionary approach allows teachers to adapt the curriculum to student needs, to pivot to new situations and to address changing local issues. Teachers regularly evaluate, adapt and update Expeditions based on our students, our community, and on vital issues.

Anser currently uses published curricula for math. In grade 6 - 8, we use Connected Math Project 3™ (CMP). CMP is a problem-centered curriculum that puts student conceptual understanding first rather than rote memorization. Additionally, CMP supports group problem-solving and dialogue around big ideas and is widely used across the country at the middle school level. Anser uses College Preparatory Math™ (CPM) course for students ready for high school mathematics content. Both Connected Math and CPM have close alignment to Common Core State Standards (CCSS). In grades K-5, Anser uses the Bridges in Mathematics™, which promotes students developing a deep understanding of concepts, working in groups, using visual models and solving novel problems. In a study of 4th and 5th grade students, children who received instruction using Bridges curriculum showed significantly greater improvement in mathematical skills than students who did not learn math using Bridges [4]. The Bridges curriculum received strong ratings from EdReports.org for its rigor, coherence and alignment to CCSS.

Discipline Philosophy

Anser Charter focuses on developing a caring, supportive school environment in which students participate fully in solving problems, including problems of behavior. We believe students’ growth toward kindness, respect and critical problem solving depends on becoming active members of a caring community. We further believe it is the experience with decision-making and problem-solving that enables students to handle conflicts that arise. When students become engaged in rigorous learning Expeditions, behavior disruptions decrease. When they are stimulated, challenged, and held to high expectations, students are less likely to engage in disciplinary issues. Our dual focus on character and academics and our use of the Responsive Classroom and Restorative Justice approaches to classroom management have prevented and addressed most discipline issues.



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Teaching and modeling positive behaviors are the primary approaches to discipline at Anser. As a result, children seldom engage in serious, negative behavior. One unique aspect of Anser is that the entire school has adopted and promoted a particular culture of values. In turn, this provides the foundation for individual classrooms to develop their own set of behavioral expectations. This self-governing model teaches the EL Education Design Principles and Anser Character Traits on a consistent basis through countless interactions between children, children and teachers, and other adults. Students are immersed in learning about, and expected to practice, strong character. The following traits are ones adults at Anser model in order to help students grow and interact with personal responsibility for their behavior and learning: Responsibility, Integrity, Courage, Compassion, Discipline and Respect.

Developing Positive Behavior in the Anser Community

Conflicts arise within any community. Conflict resolution is an area of the school environment that is crucial to the on-going positive nature of our program. We have spent considerable time and energy on synchronizing our values and methods for handling conflicts. As a general rule, children and adult members of our community attempt to use conflicts to teach new and/or better behaviors through a belief that restitution (making things right) is a way to help all students get to the next level of “doing the right thing.” Aggressive or disruptive behavior may happen for a variety of reasons and in a variety of school settings. In line with our educational philosophy, these behaviors are handled in a variety of ways that integrate the needs of the child or children and teach and model the desired outcome. Whenever possible, those involved are invited to actively participate in ways to make the situation right and learn from their actions. Our goals are to protect each person's rights, and to help each person learn to make wise choices, caring for themselves and others.

Proactive strategies used in classrooms and throughout the school to achieve these goals are as follows:

- 1) Crew Meetings are utilized as a forum for discussing and problem-solving specific issues. Here, both children and teachers teach, practice and model appropriate ways of resolving conflict.
- 2) Behavior is viewed within the context of the student's life at school, in a particular classroom's expectations, and Anser's collaborative, respectful methods. Throughout the year/s teachers and staff are called upon to get to know and understand the children at Anser. Personal knowledge about the child's, or family's, “story” can be respectfully useful in working with the children.



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3) Violent or hurtful behavior will be stopped immediately, intervening verbally if possible, physically if necessary. Physically intervening might include temporarily isolating children, restraining violent acts by placing one’s self between angry children.

4) We ensure any “injured” person’s rights and needs are addressed and reinforced as soon as possible. This not only informs the offending child that they have interfered with another child’s rights but also begins to make the environment safe again for the “injured” child.

5) Encourage students involved to resolve the conflict by including the following:

- i.) clearly state the problem
- ii) generate options for correcting the problem
- iii). select the solution
- iv). follow up to be sure that the solution is working

6) Enlist the support of the School Support Specialist or Education Director when a student’s behavior cannot be adequately addressed by the resources of just the teacher or parents involved.

7) Repeated, irresolvable conflict means something is wrong and it’s our job to find out what it is. It may be a mismatch of child to school or classroom or task; it may be family challenges or trauma; it may be physical or mental illness, etc. As a collaborative, respectful school, the staff and parents of Anser are responsible for seeking advice from one another and, in some cases, outside resources (e.g., nurse, counselor, etc.). This information is always gathered in a caring and confidential manner.

Policies and procedures for handling student discipline issues with all students are designed to achieve these goals.

When Discipline Crosses Boundaries and Becomes a Major Offense

All students have the right to learn in an atmosphere that is safe, conducive to learning, and free from disruptions. The school shall enforce provisions of the code of conduct and discipline so that students demonstrating major disciplinary behaviors and their parents understand that such behavior shall not be tolerated and shall be dealt with according to the code and requirements of law.



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Students are expected to and supported in conducting themselves in keeping with their level of maturity and development, with due regard for teachers and others acting in a supervisory role, the educational purposes underlying all school activities, the widely shared use of school property, and the rights and welfare of other students. Conduct which disrupts or threatens to disrupt the operation of the school, which interferes in any way with the public or private rights of other students or citizens, which threatens or endangers the health or safety of any person, or which damages property will not be tolerated and will result in immediate disciplinary action and consequences.

Students are entitled to the proper recognition and preservation of their constitutional rights, and allowance for such rights, including freedom of expression, personal appearance, and the right to petition, protection of personal property, due process, and involvement in school and community affairs. These rights are not unlimited, and must be balanced against the rights of others and the overarching purposes of the school. The “Anser Caring Community Discipline Plan” adopted and reviewed by the Anser Community Board defines 4 levels of infractions and guides the staff and the Education Director in their responses to incidents of behavior. This plan is shared in Anser’s handbook which is available to all families on the Anser website and given to new families upon enrollment to ensure all community members know Anser’s expectations of being a caring and respectful member of the Anser learning community for all students and adults.

Use of Technology

Anser teachers and students have widespread and consistent access to technology. Teachers have the flexibility and autonomy to determine the best application of technology for their students. Anser teachers are purposeful in these decisions, taking into consideration the developmental needs of students and the nature of the content when determining how technology fits into the learning cycle. Anser teachers view technology as a tool for learning, creating and collaborating. Students have created podcasts and websites; they have designed posters and scientific models. In STEM, students have learned to code using Scratch and Raspberry Pi. Currently, starting in 2nd grade, Anser students receive a school-based Google Drive account and access to the Google suite of applications. By junior high, students are proficient at using the word processing, spreadsheet and presentation tools. Teachers in the upper grades use Google Classroom and web-based platforms in their instruction including NEWSELA for differentiated texts, Scholastic ¿Que tal? for listening and literacy in Spanish, NCTM Interactives for math models, and Khan Academy for math practice and enrichment, to name a few.



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Research Evidence on the Impact of EL Education model

Network Results. EL Education network schools have documented substantial impact on student achievement. In its 2018 annual report, EL education documents that for EL credentialed schools, including Anser, students consistently outperform their peers from their district-run schools, and students from underserved groups often see the greatest gains (Figure 1).

Students at EL Education schools consistently outperform their peers in English Language Arts and mathematics. All students benefit—and students from historically underserved groups often gain the most.

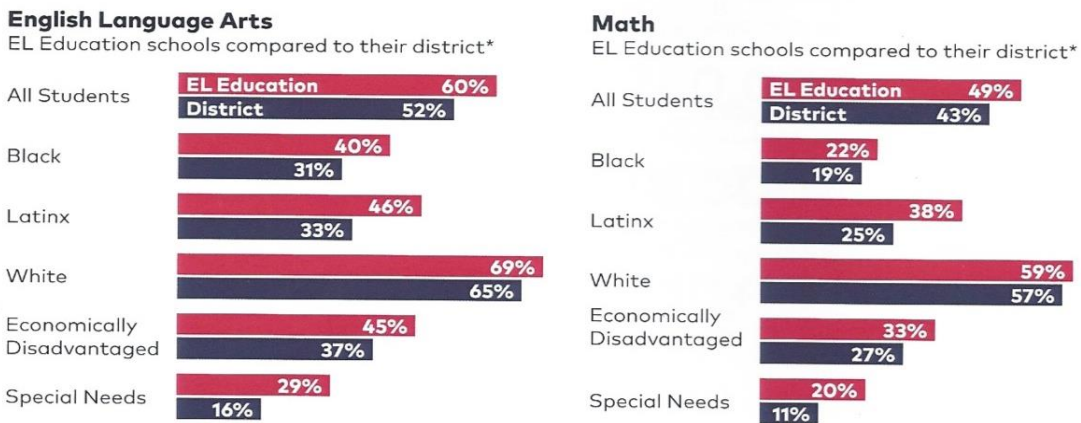


Figure 1. 2017-2018 Results for all EL Education Credentialed Schools, compared to districts in which they are located.

Additionally, in an independent study of five EL Education middle schools, Mathematica Policy Research found that EL students experienced the equivalent of seven additional months of learning growth in reading and an additional 10 months of learning growth in math after three years in an EL education school [5]. The students in these five schools were more likely to be Hispanic and more likely to be English Language Learners. These positive results confirm our commitment to the EL model and support our desire to bring this rigorous approach to a more diverse population.

Anser Results. According to records going back to 2014, the percentage of Anser students meeting proficiency on the ELA and Math ISAT exceed that of district-wide student data in the Boise School District (BSD) and the state of Idaho. The most recent ISAT results show our school continues to meet or exceed the BSD as a whole and the state in the percent of students performing with proficiency on ISATs in ELA, math and science. Three years of Student Achievement data is available in (Appendix F4).



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When looking at sub-groups of students in Anser’s school population, these positive results hold true for Anser’s Hispanic students. (Appendix F4).

Hispanic students benefit greatly from our educational model and show the greatest percentage of students at proficiency level. Across the nation and locally, the EL education model works for all types of learners and is especially beneficial to Hispanic and English Language Learners. Anser’s consistent and successful implementation of the EL model offers the opportunity for traditionally underserved groups to have access to high quality education and to achieve high academic success. (Appendix F4)

Strategies for Serving Special Populations

Our school culture is infused with a sense of community and a belief that all students are accepted and can achieve to their highest potential. Anser is a place where everyone belongs and can succeed. It is Anser Charter School’s intent to match the student body’s demographic with the same diversity represented in the Boise School District. There is a comprehensive and integrated strategy to identify student needs and support all learners and we offer a continuum of services and programs. Many of our services and programs address the needs of students from both educationally disadvantaged backgrounds and students with disabilities, beginning with the identification of these students and understanding their needs. Our screening and identification process begins with enrollment when families complete the home language survey and educational background about their child. These tools identify students who are English Language Learners (ELL) and students who may have been on a learning plan.

Before school starts, teachers meet with colleagues to discuss student needs and brainstorm strategies. Classroom teachers work to establish strong relationships with families and communicate consistently to learn about each student. For our youngest students, Kindergarten teachers conduct home visits for every incoming kindergartner. Other screenings we conduct include annual hearing tests in 1st and 6th grades and GATE eligibility screening beginning in 1st grade. Anser shall ensure that the same array of academic, nonacademic, and extracurricular activities and services are available to students with disabilities as is available to students without disabilities. IDEA states that, to the maximum extent appropriate, students with disabilities are to be educated with students who are not disabled. This includes considering that a continuum of alternative placements are available to meet the needs of children with disabilities and for special education and related services.

To every extent possible, all students complete the same standards and work towards the same learning targets. With all learners present in the general education classroom, meeting the needs of all students



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requires teachers to effectively differentiate instruction. Differentiation is a school wide approach whereby teachers plan instruction around student strengths and needs. Differentiation strategies include, but are not limited to, using flexible groupings of students, using high-quality differentiated texts, providing multiple pathways for meeting learning targets, providing supplemental materials, selecting diverse texts and tiering of problem sets. Teachers differentiate for students with disabilities, for advanced learners and for English language learners. Students on IEPs spend the majority of their learning in the general education classroom. The IEP team determines the services, accommodations and any needed curricular modifications based on the needs of each student.

Anser will follow the IDEA regulations in regards to Child Find to ensure that students who are suspected of having a disability are identified in kindergarten through the grades served. Classroom teachers in coordination with our Exceptional Child Services (ECS) team work diligently to identify student needs and monitor student progress. Our ECS team includes highly trained, specialized educators who work in coordination to offer a broad array of services including special education, Response to Intervention (RTI), GATE, and 504s. We will serve all students who meet state eligibility requirements for all fourteen eligibility categories as outlined under IDEA. Teachers use classroom observations and a slate of progress monitoring tools to track academic progress. These tools include the Idaho Reading Inventory (IRI), AIMSweb Curriculum Based Measurement (CBM), CORE Phonics Survey, STAR Reading, STAR Math, and Words Their Way Primary and Elementary Inventories.

When a student is at risk for not making academic progress or has concerning behavior, classroom teachers implement a focused intervention and then monitor the progress of the intervention. Should the student not respond to the intervention, the classroom teacher will engage the help of the Building Intervention Team (BIT). This team consists of 1 - 2 classroom teachers, special education teachers, the Education Director and Literacy Specialist and the Student Support Specialist as needed. The BIT team will review the student’s academic data, work samples, and classroom observations related to the area of concern and will determine if there is sufficient reason to suspect the student has a disability. The BIT team will also provide support to teachers when the area of concern is behavioral rather than academic.

If a disability is suspected Anser is responsible for following the IDEA guidelines for referral, as well as consent for assessment. The LEA (Local Education Agency) provides Procedural Safeguards Notice to parents that contain a full explanation of special education rights. Anser is responsible for determining eligibility under IDEA, which include: meets the Idaho state disability criteria as established in the Idaho Special Education Manual, disability adversely affects educational performance, and results in the need for specially designed instruction and related services. The LEA will also ensure that a free appropriate public education is available to students who attend Anser and are eligible for special education services.



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Anser Charter School is responsible for providing all special education and related services to meet the needs of Anser students. For students who need specialized support, including support for behavioral issues, staff develops a learning plan tailored to that student’s needs and supported by a variety of tools. ESC provides services including but not limited to the following:

- Small group instruction and academic/behavioral support for K-6 students who need special education services and supports
- Inclusion support (provided by special education teacher and paraprofessionals) in the classroom to support students with special needs
- Study Skills classes for 6th-8th grade students who need special education services
- Use of research based programs for academic instruction (Expressive Writing, Read Naturally, Language Arts, Core Knowledge Language Arts Program, Explode the Code, activities developed at the Florida Center for Reading, Connecting Math Concepts, Ascend Math, Bridges Math Intervention, Touch Math)
- Comparable services for incoming students with disabilities
- Positive Behavior Intervention Supports and Adaptive/Life-skills instruction
- OT, SLP, PT, VI, orientation and mobility, DHH, interpreter, specialized transportation, and school nursing services when required
- Supplementary aids including materials for sensory integration, equipment necessary for visually impaired, assistive technology devices, mobility devices, and hearing devices such as amplifiers, and receivers
- Extended School Year with transportation

ESC staff are highly trained, are certified in their specialized field and seek ongoing professional development. Special education staff have received training on a variety of topics through Special Education Support and Technical Assistance (SESTA) of Idaho. All ESC staff - both full time and paraprofessionals - have been trained in Right Response (de-escalation strategies, etc.) for working with students with behavioral needs. Every fall before school starts, our ESC staff meets to assess students in need and identify possible referrals. This team also presents to general education staff every fall in regards to intervention/referral processes.

Our school has been building our capacity to meet the needs of economically disadvantaged students beyond our academic and special education programs. We employ a Student Support Specialist, who is a full time school social worker, as well as a social work intern from Boise State’s MSW program. Together they assess and support the social, emotional, physical, and safety needs of students and their families. The Student Support Specialist actively seeks training opportunities to expand his/her skill set in the areas of diversity and ethics as well as trainings that will benefit the students and staff at the school. For example, recently our Student Support Specialist conducted staff training regarding the



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effects of trauma on students, how to recognize trauma and how to support the student through safe and predictable structures. This staff member oversees the implementation of Second Step™ to support student social/emotional growth. This curriculum helps students with problem solving, emotional awareness and empathy building.

The Student Support Specialist develops connections with community resources to provide community referrals and partnerships for basic needs- clothing, utilities/rent, food, including the following:

- Utilizes the Vineyard Church’s food bank to help food insecure families
- Assists families in accessing monies for rent/utilities through the Idaho Power Community Funds
- Secures winter clothing and school supplies through Assistance League of Boise’s Operation School Bell/Operation Teen Retail

The Student Support Specialist will establish additional community partnerships to support students and families as needs of the population increase. These might include having a weekend backpack food program, creating partnerships for community in school programs to assist families in having a centralized location at the school to access social service agencies, etc. Anser is close in proximity to the Boys and Girls Club and many students access their after school services for working families who need the extended child care at a low cost.

English Language Learners

It is Anser Public Charter School's goal to enroll English Language Learners (ELLs) on a level commensurate to the demographics of the surrounding community. To accomplish this goal, the Anser faculty will develop a Language Instruction Educational Program (LIEP) and plan. The plan will include steps for identification, assessment, program goals and procedures, progress monitoring, both for language development and content instruction. The LIEP plan will also identify areas of need for professional development as well as strategies for effective parent involvement in the plan development, outcomes, and school involvement.

The school uses the state approved home-language survey as part of every student’s enrollment. The eligibility criteria (listed below) will be used for the Home Language Survey in order to identify the primary home language other than English. Any student with a home language survey indicating a dominant language other than/in addition to English will be given the WAPT screener by a yearly-certified WAPT proctor.

English Language Learners will take the WAPT upon registering. For students needing assessment accommodations, staff will develop an Educational Learning Plan (ELP) include curriculum, teaching strategies, academic goals, and assessment accommodations. The ECS Director and Education Director will oversee the development, delivery, and follow up with all ELPs. A certified/endorsed ENL teacher



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may provide additional support for ELLs on-site through pull out programs, depending on the need of specific students.

The following is the ELL program eligibility criteria:

- Registration forms including home language surveys given to every student will include the SDE’s mandatory questions to identify possible ELL students.
- Any student with a home language survey indicating a dominant language other than/in addition to English will be given the WAPT screener by a yearly-certified WAPT proctor within 30 days of registration.
- If the student tests Limited English Proficient (LEP) on the WIDA ACCESS or WAPT test an annual parent notification letter will go home to the parents/guardians indicating that their child was identified as needing specific English language services support.
- If the parent requests to waive English language services for their child (which must be done yearly), the student will receive classroom support in acquiring English through high-quality language instruction with their classroom teacher. Possible support includes the following:
 - Formative assessments of phonological processing, letter knowledge, and word and text reading.
 - Focused, intensive small-group reading interventions for at-risk students that include phonological awareness, phonics, reading fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.
 - High-quality vocabulary instruction throughout the school day with essential content words taught in-depth.
- Regardless If the parent waives English language services, the English Learner is still required to take the state English Language ACCESS assessment.

The Language Instruction Educational Program will incorporate academic language development strategies within the general education classroom. The strategies will specifically support English acquisition. Teachers will receive on-going professional development in specific language development strategies, such as guided conversation frames and using Thinking Maps. Staff will learn processes for identifying and teaching Tier 2 academic vocabulary (words that are academic in nature but transferable in context), which helps all students acquire new vocabulary. Teachers will also learn how to use manipulatives (including iconic and symbolic representations) as a language support for math, reading, writing, and science. ELL programs, like the Guided Language Acquisition Design (GLAD) model and the Sheltered Instructional Observation Protocol (SIOP), will help inform staff development for lesson planning, delivery, and assessment.



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The ACCESS test (Annual Summative Assessment for English Language Proficiency) for all identified English Learners will take place during the spring of each school year. Based on the student’s English proficiency score in the spring ACCESS assessment, students will continue in the ELL program for the following year or be redesignated as exited.-Redesignation criteria for 2019-2020 is score of 4 in each domain with an overall score of 5. Starting in 2020-2021 school year the redesignation criteria will change to a score in every domain of 3.5 (except speaking score of 1) with an overall composite score of 4.2. Exited students will be monitored for 4 years.

Staffing and Professional Development Plan

Small class sizes, multi-age classrooms, inclusion model services, learning outside of the classroom and the integration of content areas are all part of the EL Education model. Classes are capped at 22-28 students and in 6th-8th grade class sizes vary as students move between content areas, but teachers’ crews have 28 or fewer students. At expansion, Anser will employ three full-time special education teachers, a reading interventionist and approximately 6 paraprofessionals to provide services in the classroom whenever possible. Learning outside of the classroom involves our Adventure Coordinator, Electives teachers and Community Based Curriculum Instructors, who work with parents and community partners to offer unique, community based opportunities to explore the arts, service, adventure and more. These instructors also serve as our specials teachers in Art, STEM, PE and Adventure.

Anser has a rigorous hiring process that has garnered excellent results. Positions are advertised nationally on the EL Education website, Idaho Schools and Anser websites, on social media and are posted at the local universities. Anser accepts applications to its hiring pool year round, and contacts all interested applicants when positions are available. Typically, Anser has approximately 20 applicants per opening. A screening committee of teachers and the ED reviews applications, and selects applicants to do an interview with the committee. Three to four applicants per opening move forward in the process.

Each is interviewed by a team that includes a parent, board member, student representatives, the ED and teachers. Applicants teach a lesson, interview directly with students and write a reflection after the lesson. During expansion, Anser will begin advertising in September 2020 and take additional steps to recruit by attending Teacher job fairs, advertising on LinkedIn and the Idaho Hispanic Chamber of Commerce job site.

Training in EL Education practices is critical to ensuring high quality implementation. Anser builds 14 days of professional development (PD) into its calendar to provide collaboration and learning among all



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teaching staff. Additionally, new staff attend a two day “EL 101” training and monthly Mentor classes during their first two years at Anser. Staff also have the opportunity to attend the EL Education National Conference and site seminars. During expansion, existing Anser teachers will be paid to document their Expedition curriculum and serve as mentor teachers. An Assistant Education Director (AED) will be hired in July 2020 to assist the ED with hiring and with developing intensive training for a larger volume of new staff. An Instructional Guide (IG) will be hired in July 2021 to assist with the organization of curriculum materials and training. Anser’s Professional Development work is founded on the same shared leadership model of the school. Teachers, in collaboration with the Education Director are, developing the topics and training, and more often than not teachers lead the training. This aligns with our value of Crew: that all staff have opportunities and are encouraged to develop their leadership skills, and to share their unique talents to strengthen the work of the group. See the 2019-2022 Anser Work Plan (Appendix F3)

Section II: Financial and Facilities Plans

Fiscal Philosophy and Spending Priorities

The Board intends to maintain the fiscally conservative approach that has supported the successful operation of Anser Charter School for twenty years. Setting spending priorities is essential to operating successfully within funding limitations. The Board understands that investing in passionate, highly trained, professional educators is key to the success of the organization and is also the single largest budget item for the school. As facility costs represent the largest long-term fixed cost for the school, the Board recognizes that managing this expenditure effectively is critical to the financial health of the organization. In addition to acquisition costs, the Board is committed to providing funding for adequate maintenance and planned improvements to ensure the facility remains safe and suitable for the school’s educational programs.

There are a number of items that are prioritized within the Anser budget in support of the unique characteristics of being an EL Education school:

- A contract with EL Education which provides rich, and EL specific teacher training, assessment of Anser’s implementation of the EL Education model and support and professional development for the administrative leaders of the school.
- Funds for adventure trips and equipment for students, in support of providing exemplary Adventure opportunities within our EL Framework.
- Teacher managed budgets for use in purchasing Expedition specific content or supplies, hiring community experts, and doing fieldwork related to the Expedition are critical to providing immersive, and engaging opportunities for students at every grade level.



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- Funds to support recruiting and serving a diverse student population including a Community Engagement Coordinator, adding transportation and an increased marketing budget.

One area where required funding may be lower for Anser is related to curriculum. Anser does purchase Math curriculum, but most of the remaining content areas are teacher developed to align to the Expedition. As such Anser does not budget a large amount for curriculum.

Finally, the creation and funding of strategic reserve accounts is a method that has been used successfully by the Board to create financial stability and provide funding for larger strategic expenditures. Funding reserve accounts will be a priority as Anser reaches maximum enrollment targets and begins generating excess funds.

Transportation

For Anser’s first 21 years, transportation was not offered as a part of the school program. But with plans for expansion, the Anser Board of Directors is dedicated to providing transportation options that will support more equitable access to the school and will begin providing transportation in the 2020-2021 school year for students residing within its primary attendance area. This is one area of improvement to our school model that is made possible through expansion. Based on a proposal developed by a local bus company, the initial launch of student busing program would include up to 5 routes serving the greater Boise School District, which is Anser’s primary attendance area. Buses would run morning and afternoon, with no mid-day Kindergarten service. Idaho State Dept. of Education reimburses 65% - 75% based on mileage and ridership. (See Appendix A- Budget)

5 Routes within Boise School District Boundaries	\$175,000
Reimbursement from Dept. of Education (65% or higher) based on mileage and ridership	<u>\$ 113,750</u>
Expense from Anser Operations Budget	\$ 61,250

In the beginning of the school year, a staff coordinator would spend an estimated 15 hours/week to promote ridership, communicate with parents and the transportation (bus) company, adjust routes, etc. As the program matures, an average of 5 hours of staff time per week should be anticipated.

The board of directors may approve additional transportation services, under its discretion, if fiscally viable under school budget, based on ridership data and finances. Each year the transportation plan will be evaluated for efficiency, based on the location of Anser’s currently enrolled families. Transportation for students with special needs will be provided in accordance with the requirements of state and



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federal law. The service may be contracted following the transportation bidding process as per Idaho Code. Dedicated bus parking and loading areas will be developed during 2020-2021 construction.

Food Service Plans

The Anser of Idaho Board and the school leaders of Anser Charter School have 10 years of experience of offering and managing a successful federally supported free and reduced lunch program. Anser’s Food Service Program has been through three successful review cycles, in which its nutrition standards were commended. The program has grown to operate with a small profit, which is invested back into the lunch program through offering additional fresh fruits and vegetables and vegetable tasting days where students can try new foods with which they may not be familiar. With the goal of ensuring that barriers to attending our school are eliminated, and that children are prepared to learn, Anser will offer a federally supported free and reduced breakfast in addition to the lunch program beginning in the 2021-2022. During the 2020-2021 Anser Charter School will update its annual NSLP renewal application to include offering breakfast, and will relocate and enlarge its kitchen to accommodate a larger student body and the service of both lunch and breakfast. Additional staffing is included in the budget to prepare breakfast, lunch and to serve more students. Building upon its record of successful food service and analysis of expected costs and reimbursements will ensure that Anser’s food service program will remain revenue neutral. The lunch program expenditures and revenues included in the budget are based directly on the current food service program at Anser.

Financial Management and Monitoring Plan

Anser Charter School has developed a comprehensive Financial Management and Monitoring system that involves the Fiscal Manager, Organization Director, Education Director, the Finance Committee of the Board and the Board of Directors itself in ensuring the proper use of public funds in accordance with law and public notice requirements and that ensures the financial health of the organization.

Anser employs a Fiscal Manager who reports to the Organization Director. The current Fiscal Manager, who holds a CPA, manages all financial aspects of the school. The Fiscal Manager’s job duties include:

FISCAL OVERSIGHT:

- Track day to day finances ensuring adherence to approved budget
- Monitor expenses of ongoing projects and grant expenditures
- Prepare grant reports per grantor requirements
- Ensure that the accounting procedures used by Anser meet all federal, state, and local requirements



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- Continue to look for and/or recommend ways to become more efficient and save the school money
- Provide financial oversight of the school food services program, including tracking expenditures, ensuring budgetary compliance, program projections, filing reimbursement claims, federal and state reports
- In collaboration with the Organization Director, maintain a risk management program including recommending and securing proper levels of insurance coverage and appraisal documents.
- Implement new accounting procedures promulgated by state and federal agencies.

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

- Keep committee apprised of unforeseen expenditures or budget overages.
- Work together to study feasibility of programs or requested resources.
- Work together to evaluate school’s service contracts.
- Present annual budget for input and development as part of the annual budget process.
- Attend monthly board meetings.

STATE REPORTS

- Prepare the budget in conjunction with the Organization Director and submit all budget reports to SDE, lenders
- Publish Budget Summary in newspaper.
- Submit Annual Report and audit to the SDE, lenders.
- Publish Annual Financial Report in newspaper.
- Submit Grant Reimbursement Requests (monthly and/or quarterly)
- Prepare IDEA Part B reports and reimbursement requests as requested by authorizer.
- Prepare Building Maintenance Report.
- Prepare selected ISEE reports.

PAYROLL/PERSONNEL:

- Oversee a payroll system meeting all federal, state, and local requirements.
- Keep all employee payroll files accurate and up to date.
- Enter employee/company information into the Payroll System including Employee status, pay, and withholdings.
- Enter payroll transactions into the Payroll System, PERSI transmittal system, and PERSI funding transfer system as required and in a timely manner for each payroll.
- Responsible for completing payroll by the 25th of each month.
- Responsible for all reviewing and assuring the accuracy and timely submission of the payroll reports and taxes payable (Quarterly, W-2’s, PERSI, Payroll Taxes etc.) by the payroll processor.
- Maintain payroll reports for audit



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- Manage employee time-cards ensuring adherence to staffing projections/budget.
- Post all employee leave and absences on a monthly basis.
- Review W-2's and make sure they are distributed in a timely manner.
- Maintain personnel files for classified employees.
- Initiate and maintain initial hiring records, i9s and fingerprinting records.
- Handle all matters and maintain all records related to insurance and PERSI.
- Process paperwork relating to Worker's Compensation.

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE/RECEIVABLE:

- Oversee the collection of all revenues, monitor the cash flow of all funds, and invest excess funds in accordance with Board policy and state statutes.
- Responsible for deposits and keeping accurate monthly bank reconciliations.
- Make sure that all budget accounts are in adherence with State requirements.
- Insure segregation of duties procedures are implemented.
- Complete all sales tax reporting.
- Handle accounts payable in a responsible and timely manner.
- Create payment and tax statements for AAYC.
- Write checks and pay bills as requested /needed, and on at least on a weekly basis.
- Keep proper documentation for bills that are paid.
- Keep up to date and accurate vendor files
- Make sure that w-9's are on file for all vendors.
- Prepare and review 1099s in a timely manner.

FUNDRAISING:

- Ensure timely collection of all pledges and donations by maintaining current account holder information.
- Create fundraising collection reports and projections for use by the Organization Director and the Anser Board.
- Create semi-annual statements for donors with on-going pledges.
- Prepare end of calendar year donation receipts for all donors.
- Assist with the financial processes related to the Anser Auction.

OTHER REPORTING:

- Develop all financial reporting, including but not limited to monthly Board financial reports, quarterly distribution of financial reports to administrators and teachers, and financial reports required by the State of Idaho.
- Complete Idaho Annual Report Form through the Idaho Secretary of State



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- Post monthly financial information to the Anser website.
- Work in collaboration with the Organization Director to produce monthly ISEE reports.

AUDIT:

- Assist during fiscal and programmatic audit as needed.
- Prepare records needed for annual audit and make audit adjustments prior to audit.

The Anser Board of Directors has authorized the Organization Director and Education Director along with the President, Vice President and Treasurer to sign checks. All expenditures require pre-approval from one of the Directors, through a formal requisition process. All checks are signed by two parties, and if the expense is over \$500 a board member must be one of those parties. Monthly bank reconciliation reports are provided to the Finance Committee for review and signature. Monthly Finance reports are developed for the Board of Directors.

The Anser Board of Directors guides the work of the Fiscal Manager and Organization Director by setting spending priorities based on the long term goals of the school. The Board has consistently prioritized maintaining adequate reserve fund balances to ensure the smooth operation of the school given any unforeseen events. The Board adopted a Fund Balance Policy consistent with GASB statement #54.

Description of Facility Needs and Plan

Anser purchased its current facility in 2009 and has over \$2 million of equity in the 36,000 square foot property. With expansion in sight, additional adjacent property was purchased with cash in 2018. Anser plans to remodel and expand its current facility to serve more students in a more flexible, learner focused environment. Renovations will be made to create flexible classrooms that open to each other, collaborative teacher planning spaces, well-equipped rooms for art, STEM, adventure, and audio/visual creation studios, smaller classroom spaces for special education and small group instruction.

Remodeling will begin in June 2020 and be completed by July 2021. Anser will be able to retain students on campus during the construction with the exception of Junior High students whose classrooms will be the first to be impacted. They will be served in modular classrooms or at a leased location during the 2020-2021 school year. The completed building will have approximately 58,000 square feet and will include Anser’s existing Gym and will provide additional play space and parking.

Work has begun to develop building plans and to complete the required RFQ process to select a company to design and build the newly remodeled facility. (See Appendix F10). Anser is in conversation with multiple possible lenders, and due to the school’s long and excellent credit history, anticipates that bond financing will provide favorable terms for financing the remodeling of the current facility and



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acquired property. Anser budgets conservatively and is ensuring that facilities costs do not exceed 12% of the annual budget. Working with Building Hope, (Appendix 9) we have determined reasonable construction estimates for our project based on similar projects. We are confident our project will be completed within the financial constraints we have set.

Section III: Board Capacity and Governance Structure

Governance Structure

The Anser Community Board refers to the Board of Directors of Anser of Idaho Incorporated, a non-profit organization formed under the Internal Revenue Code section 501(C)3 and acts in accordance with the Anser By-Laws, which can be viewed in Appendix B. The Anser Community Board is charged with the governance of the school, the oversight and evaluation of the school’s Co- Directors, and ensuring the Mission and Vision of the school are being realized. Board members bring important skills to the governance of the school. The key areas of expertise sought in members of the Anser Community Board include: Finance/Accounting, Capital/Fundraising, Governance, Organizational Leadership, Law, Construction/Facilities and Non-Profit/Service. The Anser of Idaho Board shall be comprised of no more than 15 voting members, with a goal of reaching 50% of members being outside community members with no students enrolled at the school. The Anser Community Board elect’s members to a three-year term. Members may be elected by the Anser Community Board for additional terms. The Anser Community Board includes:

- One (1) parent representative from the Family Council, elected by the Family Council.
- Two (2) at-large parents, elected by the parent body.
- The Immediate Past President of the Board.
- Other directors as elected by a majority vote of the Board at the annual meeting.

Non-voting Staff Advisers to the Board include:

- At least one teacher
- Administrative staff as designated by the Board

The Anser Community Board shall manage and oversee the fiscal and legal responsibilities of the school and charter obligations, considering but not limited to: Finance, Budget Development and Debt Obligation, Contracts and Salaries, Policy Development and Review, Employment, Strategic Planning, Authorizer Relations, Performance Certificate Requirements, and Statutory Requirements.



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CORPORATE OFFICERS

The officers of the Corporation shall be: President, Vice-President(s), and Treasurer. The immediate Past President shall serve as an ex officio member of the Executive Committee. An administrator of the school, who serves as an ex officio member of the Board, shall be designated by the Board as the Secretary of the Corporation.

Duties of the Corporate Officers:

President: The President shall preside at all meetings of the Board where he/she is present. He/she shall have the responsibility of oversight of the management of the business of the Corporation and shall see that all orders and resolutions of the Board are carried into effect. He/she may be one of the officers authorized to sign checks and drafts of the organization. The President shall, with the consent of two-thirds of the full Board, hire an administrator who shall act as administrator of the Corporation under the direction, management and control of the President, Executive Committee, and the Board. He/she will in general perform all duties as may be prescribed by the Board.

Vice-President. The duties of Vice-President will be to act in the capacity of the President in the event of the absence or inability of the President to exercise his/her office. He/she may be one of the officers authorized to sign checks and drafts of the organization.

Secretary: The Secretary of the Corporation shall attend all meetings of the Board, record all votes and the minutes of the meetings, and maintain the minutes in a book to be kept for that purpose. He/she shall give or cause to be given notice of all meetings of the Board and special meetings of the Board as required by law and shall perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the Board. The Secretary shall be the official custodian of all records of the Corporation.

Treasurer: The Treasurer shall oversee the work of the accounting staff to assure that full and accurate accounting is made of all funds belonging to the Corporation. He/she shall render to the President and members at the regular meetings of the Board, or whenever they may require it, an account of all transactions and of the financial condition of the Corporation. He/she may be one of the officers authorized to sign checks and drafts of the organization.

Immediate Past President: The Immediate Past President shall serve as an ex officio member of the executive committee providing guidance on policy and past practices of the Board. The term of the immediate past president will be one (1) year after completion of their term as president with the option of an additional year if approved by the executive committee and the Board. The immediate past president shall be a full member of the Anser Community Board.



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Anser Community Board Committees:

The Anser Community Board shall establish such standing committees as the Board deems important to the efficient, effective operation of the school and shall appoint Board representatives to such standing Committees.

Executive Committee: The Board may appoint an Executive Committee comprised of the officers elected from the Board. Except for the power to amend the Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws, the Executive Committee shall have authority to transact the business of the Board for all actions delegated to it by the Board.

Finance Committee: The Board may appoint a Finance Committee to ensure effective financial guidance and oversight of appropriate internal controls, responsible fiscal management and to implement budget processes and communication to the Board.

Governance Committee: The Board may appoint a Governance Committee to ensure that Anser complies with applicable regulations and that the Anser Board serves as a model of school governance with a clear communication structure, processes, protocols, and Board training.

Continuous Improvement Committee: The Board may appoint a Continuous Improvement Committee (formerly the Education Committee) to promote, support and evaluate the school’s academic and character goals and ensure Board understanding of the school’s performance.

Resource Development Committee: The Board may appoint a Resource Development Committee to construct the optimum working relationship between the Board, the school’s organizations and the Anser community through support of fundraising efforts and special initiatives identified by the Anser Community Board.

Family Council: The purpose of the Family Council shall be to provide parent input into school policies and procedures, provide an impartial voice to staff and the Board on concerns parents bring to them, conduct activities for parent education and school involvement for families, and link families to activities and volunteer opportunities within the Anser community. The Family Council shall be comprised of at least ten (10) members elected by and from the parent body each May. The Family Council also elects a Family Council member to serve as a Board member.



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Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee

The DEI Committee is an advisory sub-committee to the Community Board. It is comprised of volunteer members from the Boise community and provides guidance to the Anser Board in the following areas:

- To identify and implement recruiting strategies that are designed to reach underserved communities
- To develop family engagement practices that will ensure high levels of matriculation among underserved families who are offered enrollment
- To provide training to the Anser Community Board and staff on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion related topics.

Board Composition and Succession

The Anser Board consists of nine- to fifteen members. The 2019-2020 Anser Community Board consists of the following members. Please see Appendix C for the resumes of all current Board members. A staggered succession of board members and officers is in place as outlined in the table below.

Position	Name	Years of Anser Board Service	Current term end date
President	Nichoel Baird Spencer	7	June 2020
Vice President	Caitlyn Scales	2	June 2021
Treasurer	Maridee Lemieux	7	June 2022
Immediate Past President	Lora Breen	8	June 2021
	Leslie Brown	5	June 2020
	Amy York	1	June 2023
	Kristin Reed	0	June 2023
	Jeff Tonkin	1	June 2022
	Maggie Chase	6	June 2020
	Staci Shaw	4	June 2021
	AnnMarie Johnson	1	2022



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Parent at Large	John Townsend	0	2022
Organization Director/Board Clerk (Staff Adviser)	Heather Dennis	10	ongoing
Education Director (Staff Adviser)	Michelle Dunstan	6	ongoing
Family Council Representative	Amy York	2	June 2020
Teacher Liaison (Staff Advisor)	Nancy Tacke	2	June 2020

Board Member Recruitment and Training

Board Member recruitment and training is the responsibility of the Executive Committee and the Governance Committee of the Anser Community Board. The Governance Committee shall each year review the skill set of the current board members and work to recruit new board members to fill any existing gaps, or gaps created at the end of the member's term. Additional consideration will be made to recruit board members to ensure a balance of members that are community members and not Anser parents, and to represent stakeholders within the Treasure Valley community that may be under represented within the Anser Community Board.

New Board member training includes instruction on using the board portal, review of an archive of documents that includes but is not limited to the Charter Petition, By-Laws, the Articles of Incorporation, the Mission and Vision statements, financial policies and procedures, Idaho school finance and readings on the proper role and function of a charter school board.

Annually all board members receive training in order to be able to effectively review and evaluate all financial reports, student achievement data, and the goals of the Continuous Improvement plan. Through a Board Retreat process board members receive training on the difference between governance and management, the role of the board and the administrators, and additional training related to current efforts of the Board and or of the school.



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Section IV:

Student Demand and Primary Attendance Area

Primary Attendance Area

Anser’s Primary Attendance Area is the Boise School District. The boundaries of our primary attendance area will change in conjunction with the Boise School District if in the future they make changes to their district boundaries. Anser gives priority lottery preference to students who reside within the Boise School District.

As of 2018-2019 Anser’s student population, which includes students from all zip codes across the Boise area is distributed as shown in the chart below:

Zip Code	% Anser Student Population
83703	20.65%
83704	17.93%
83702	17.39%
83705	11.14%
83714	10.60%
Other Combined	22.28%

Anser’s intention during expansion is to stay in its current location in Garden City. Lottery applications received over the last three years show a pattern of interest consistent with current enrollment. In order to shift enrollment patterns to attract more underserved students, Anser will undertake steps outlined in the Student Demand Section to mirror Boise School District demographics within 10% for new kindergarten enrollment in the 2020-2021 school year and in each class and year added during the course of expansion.

Within this three-mile radius are many school district schools serving a high percentage of low income families including Koelsch, Whittier, Taft, Mountain View and Valley View and Morley Nelson. Anser is located outside the core area of downtown, but with proximity to the Connector, the Greenbelt, and



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easy access from both Chinden and State street. This makes the school easy for families who work in many areas of the city to drop off students on their way to work if they choose not to take advantage of bussing.

Student Demand

Demand for schools of choice in the Boise area continues to grow, and according to the ECONorthwest study (“Idaho Charter School Growth Opportunities” May 2019) (Appendix F8) there will be an opportunity to fill an additional 1000-2000 charter school seats in the Boise area by 2024 to meet demand, based on population growth in the city.

An additional ECONorthwest (Appendix F8) study shows that some of the highest levels of opportunity for charter growth in Boise are in the very areas that Anser would be focused on, within 3 miles of the current location. In particular, there is a high level of growth opportunity in the area around Mountain View school.

As can be seen in the zip code chart, the current geographic distribution of Anser families demonstrates that Anser has built a reputation of quality that drives high levels of lottery applications within the target areas that have some of the highest charter opportunity growth. While Anser’s primary attendance is the whole Boise School District, the focus area for targeting additional recruiting resources will be within that 3-mile radius.

Anser currently serves 374 students in K-8. Each year more than 400 students are entered into the Anser lottery for a typical 40 openings. This disappoints nearly 90% of the families seeking Anser’s model. It becomes difficult to shift the demographics of our school appreciably given the small chance that underserved families recruited by the school will be able to gain admission. Expansion allows Anser to address both issues. Expansion plans target growth at the lower grades where the waiting list is extensive, allowing us to grow from the ground up from the current 374 in 2020-2021 to 672 K-8 students in 2026-2027 as outlined in the Enrollment Capacity Section

This strategic expansion capitalizes on our current waiting list, but will also include extensive outreach to the broader community and underserved communities to ensure a more diverse and equitable student body. Anser has begun an intensive process to audit current practices that may create barriers for some families and also to improve upon current school and recruiting practices to be more effective in reaching more underserved students. The addition of breakfast to Anser’s Food Service program and provision of transportation between home and school will increase the viability of attendance at the school for low income and ELL students. Additionally, during the 2019-2020 school year a Community Relations and Engagement position was created. By investing in this position, Anser is dedicating



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significant funding and personnel to initiating new and more intensive recruiting efforts. Recruiting efforts will include hosting events at local libraries, reaching out through churches, synagogues and mosques and local preschools serving low income families to families with young children. We plan to attend the “Picnic in the Park” free lunch service at area parks and increase our media outreach through Spanish language radio, neighborhood associations and other groups with ties to local communities. Anser’s Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Advisory Committee will vet Anser’s recruitment plan to ensure the plans are equitable and will reach the underserved groups intended.

Anser Current and Expected Student Population and local District Demographics

Anser’s Community Relations and Engagement Coordinator position will work in conjunction with Anser’s Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) committee to identify and implement recruiting strategies to reach underserved communities and develop family engagement practices that will ensure high levels of matriculation among underserved families who are offered enrollment. This investment will help the school attain these demographic goals by the 5th year of expansion.

	WH%	AM %	AS %	BL %	H %	HO %	M %	Female %	Male %	Free/reduced lunch%	SPED %	ELL %
BOISE Ind.	74.68	0.52	4.00	4.17	12.68	0.54	3.41	48.74	52.45	50	12.50	10.00
Anser Projected	72.09	0.50	3.00	4.99	14.92	0.50	4.00	50.00	50.00	45.00	13.00	6.00
Anser Current	83.90	0.50	1.40	0.50	10.40	0.10	3.60	51.40	48.60	24.00	10.00	0.10

Intended student Population upon full expansion



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Enrollment Capacity

Anser has 20 years of experience with managing student enrollment, and understanding the impact student enrollment has on funding. The budget presented (See Appendixes A1-A4) is based on a conservative and moderate expansion. In 2009, Anser expanded from 190 students to 365 students. Our planned expansion, which is similar in proportion is based on our experience in how to bring new families into the culture of our school. In 2021-2022 Anser will add one class at K and 1. We will add two classes of our 2nd-3rd grade combined and 1 class of 4th-5th grade combined. In 2022-2023 we will add one more 2nd-3rd grade combined class and 2 more 4th-5th grade classes. This allows us to bring up the 4th graders from the classes below to fill some of the openings in 2022-2023, limiting the number of students we are recruiting at the upper grade levels. From that point forward, all growth is based on the larger number of students advancing to the next grade level. This growth is outlined in the chart below:

Maximum Enrollment						
	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026
K	38	38	67	67	67	67
1	38	38	75	75	75	75
2	52	52	81	81	81	81
3	52	52	81	81	81	81
4	54	54	81	81	81	81
5	54	54	81	81	81	81
6	54	54	70	81	81	81
7	60	60	62	70	81	81
8	58	58	60	62	70	81
Total	460	460	658	679	698	709

Class sizes in this Operational Model range from 22-28 students. 6th-8th grade classes are content based, so some periods may be higher or lower than 28 at full enrollment based on student choice of courses, and student needs.

Anser will enroll students using an equitable lottery process as outlined in Idaho Code 33-5206 and will include the preference categories listed therein, including: Founders/Staff, not to exceed 10% of the enrollment capacity of the school, siblings of students already selected by the lottery, and to those students who reside within the primary attendance area. The maximum number of students who may be enrolled in the school shall be 709 students. Annually, no less than two (2) months prior to the Anser of Idaho, Inc. lottery application deadline, the Board of Directors will establish, at its regularly scheduled



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meeting, by motion and vote, an ‘Annual Enrollment Capacity’ for each grade level (K-8), not to exceed the maximum enrollment number (709). Each year, the Administration will: (1) Recommend annual enrollment capacity numbers by grade to the Board. (2) Post the Annual Enrollment Capacity information on the school’s website within five (5) days of the Board vote; and (3) conduct the lottery and enrollment process in compliance with the limits established in the Board’s Annual Enrollment Capacity motion and vote.

Anser is planning to apply for the CSP (Charter Start Program) grant and is a Bluum Partner School and as such will be making a support request to the J.A. and Kathryn Albertson Family Foundation(JKAFF). Anser will be seeking additional grant funding. All of these sources of funding will support the expenses related to growth, including supplies, furniture, and hiring key staff (Assistant Education Director, Instructional Guide, additional administrative support. In the unlikely event that Anser did not receive funds from JKAFF, the early hiring of staff and front loaded purchase of supplies and furniture would be reduced to ensure a break even budget.

Community Partnerships and Local Support

Anser has local, community and political support for expansion and extensive connections within the refugee community including connections with local refugee business owners and agencies such as the Agency for New Americans. Through 20 years of student service in the community, Anser also has connections with Genesis Community Health, Lolly Wyatt Head Start, Giraffe Laugh, The Idaho Foodbank, Boys and Girls Club, the Garden City Library and Boise Bike Project, Idaho Humane Society, Boise Rock School, Corpus Christi House, Special Olympics and the Idaho Human Rights Education Network. Anser has letters of support for expansion from some of these groups and also from Mayor Evans of Garden City where the school is located (Appendix F12).

Anser has been including its current parents in expansion planning through newsletters, parent and student feedback committee, parent feedback nights, Coffee Talks with the school administrators and engaging its Family Council members in the annual Board Retreat process to ensure they are informed and have opportunities for input in planning the future of the school.

Enrolling Underserved Families

Planned recruitment moves include offering activities for students at local school fairs, at library branches and at the locations of the Idaho Foodbank “Picnic in the Park” free summer meal program. Anser has local, community and political support for expansion and extensive connections within the refugee community including connections with local refugee business owners and agencies such as the Agency for New Americans. Through 20 years of student service in the community, Anser also has



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connections with the many local community groups as listed above that will support our efforts to enroll underserved families. The Community Relations and Engagement Coordinator will leverage these community partners to build these connections to develop relationships with the families served by these programs to build trust in and excitement about the school.

Anser’s website explains the enrollment process in Spanish and includes a Spanish Language lottery application. Anser will add Spanish radio station marketing to its current radio marketing efforts in addition to grow its Latinx population. Historically underserved students accept offers of attendance at charter schools at lower rates than other students [6]. The Community Relations and Engagement Coordinator will work to address this by organizing parent meet-ups, scheduling translation services for completing enrollment processes, working with the social worker to connect families with community resources, and to ensure families understand transportation, meal options and important school events.

Section V: School Leadership and Management

Leadership Roles

Anser Charter School was founded with, and continues to operate under, a shared leadership model. (Appendix D) The Co-Directors of the school are the Education Director and the Organization Director, who serve under the direction of the Anser of Idaho Board of Directors. The Education Director fulfills the role of the Principal and is the educational leader of the school. The Education Director supervises all certified personnel and is responsible for managing all educational aspects of the school. The Education Director oversees the Special Education program, coordinates state assessments, and manages the contract and works with the staff of the EL Education network to implement the EL model within the school. The Education Director works collaboratively with the teaching staff to develop plans for professional development, areas of focus for continuous improvement of instructional practices, to evaluate, implement and create curriculum aligned to the EL Education model of the school, to train new staff, and to educate families about the mission of the school and their role in the success of the school.

The Organization Director is responsible for the oversight of all non-education related aspects of the school, such as: corporate administration, fiscal management, fundraising, human resource administration, state reporting, governance support, authorizer relations, enrollment, marketing and community relations, lunch program, transportation and paid program oversight, technology and IT contractors, E-Rate and facility management and development. The Job Descriptions for both positions are included in (Appendix F11).



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During Anser’s expansion we will create a number of positions that were not financially feasible at our smaller school size or without additional grant funding from J.A. and Kathryn Albertson Family Foundation upon expansion, but become financially sustainable in year three. They will be critical to Anser providing a rigorous, inclusive educational program that meets the needs of all students. With a larger student body, there will no doubt be a need for additional special services. A dedicated position to manage these services, a Special Education/Federal Programs Director, will be critical to meeting the needs of all learners. The creation of an Assistant Education Director position to assist with processing discipline issues with students, completing observations of teachers, training and supporting new staff members and assisting the Education Director with the development and implementation of the Professional Development Work Plan and Individualized Professional Development plans for staff within their first three years of teaching will ensure that our staff is well trained and well supported in order to provide a high quality experience to students.

Qualities Expected of the Co-Directors

The Anser of Idaho Board of Directors made a decision in 2004 to move from having one Administrator with responsibility for management of all aspects of the school to a Co- Director model. This is a model that has been adopted in various forms by many charter schools that have since been founded in Idaho. The Anser of Idaho Board of Directors recognized that the qualities and competencies of an education professional and a business professional are vastly different. With the move to a Co-Director model, the Education Director is able to focus all efforts on the education of children, while the Organization Director can ensure the sound management of all other areas of the school.

The Anser of Idaho Board of Directors expects the Education Director to possess teaching and leadership experience within the EL Education model and an understanding of and experience working in a shared leadership model. The Education Director must have strong communication skills, understand how to build effective and collaborative learning communities and have experience with evaluating, coaching and mentoring staff. The Education Director must have knowledge of effective instructional practices and the ability to coach and mentor educators to become highly effective practitioners. The Education Director must understand the importance of student and parent voice in creating a school community that values equity, partnership, and innovation and the ability to build the trust that is needed for all families to engage deeply in the life of the school. The Education Director should have a relentless focus on what is best for children and be a passionate advocate and communicator about the Anser mission.

The Anser of Idaho Board of Directors expects the Organization Director to be a self-starter and multi-tasker with the flexibility and willingness to align with the school’s philosophy and culture. A strategic thinker, this individual will be highly skilled in working collaboratively with staff and volunteers, be willing to assist wherever they are needed, possess a keen financial sense, have experience in managing



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staff, and engage in shared leadership with the Education Director, Anser of Idaho Board, Anser staff and parents to advance Anser’s Mission and Vision. The Organization Director should be dedicated to the continuous improvement of all aspects of the areas under their management, committed to the best use of public funds and all Anser resources, aware of and focused on compliance with all state and federal laws that pertain to education institutions.

The Roles of the Board of Directors and the Co-Directors

The Board of Directors and the school administrators work collaboratively to lead the school. The board provides governance, financial and policy oversight, and supervises and evaluates the Co-Directors. Through collaboration with the Co-Directors, families, and staff, the Board sets the long term vision for the school and assesses the staff’s success in implementing that vision. The Co-Directors hire, evaluate and manage all staff, ensure the effective implementation of board policy, and with input from families and staff, ensure the board vision for the school is realized.

Evaluating the Co-Directors

The Board of Directors shall oversee ongoing support of and annual evaluation of the Co-Directors. The Board shall authorize the Continuous Improvement Committee, which includes members who have received training on the Danielson framework to annually evaluate the Education Director using the state approved framework (currently the Idaho Principal Evaluation Framework) per Idaho code. The CIC also seeks input from teaching staff and uses a survey that is sent to all board members. The scores and comments are aggregated by sub group (i.e. board members or staff) and shared with the Education Director who also completes a self-reflection. The Education Director, the Board President and the Continuous Improvement Committee Chair meet with the ED to share results and work together to develop goals that will guide the ED’s work for the next year, and they schedule regular meetings to review progress on the goals.

The Governance Committee of the Board of Directors is responsible for implementing the evaluation of the Organization Director. The evaluation uses a survey that is sent to all board members, and all of the staff of the organization. The scores and comments are aggregated by sub group (i.e. board members or staff) and shared with the Organization Director who also completes a self-reflection. The Organization Director, the Board President and the Governance Committee Chair work together to develop goals that will guide the work of the Organization Director for the next two years, and they schedule regular meetings to review progress on the goals.

The ED, Michelle Dunstan, has been with Anser for 12 years as a teacher and Education Director. She supervises all certified personnel and is responsible for managing all educational aspects of the school. She supports students and families through discipline issues, oversees the Special Education program,



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coordinates state assessments, and is the liaison to the EL Education network. The ED works collaboratively with the teaching staff to develop PD plans, to identify areas for continuous improvement, to analyze data, and to evaluate curriculum. With staff support, the ED trains new staff, and educates families about the mission of the school and their role in the success of the school. The OD, Heather Dennis has also been on staff for 10 years and also served as a Board Member and Family Council member during her 14 years as a parent at the school. The OD is responsible for the oversight of all non-education related aspects of the school, such as: corporate administration, fiscal management, fundraising, human resource administration, compliance and legal matters, state reporting, governance support, authorizer relations, enrollment, marketing and community relations, lunch program, transportation and paid program oversight, technology and IT contractors, E-Rate and facility management and development. The resumes of both Directors can be found in (Appendix D1)

During expansion we anticipate certain operational challenges and have a plan to address them. As outlined above we will create a number of positions that were not financially feasible at our smaller school size or without additional grant funding from the JA and Kathryn Albertson Family Foundation; upon expansion they will become financially sustainable in year three. They will be critical to providing a rigorous, inclusive educational program that meets the needs of all students. With an increased student body, we anticipate increased needs for special services. A Special Education/Federal Programs Director will be critical to meeting the needs of all learners. We will create an Assistant Education Director position to support discipline issues with students, completing observations of teachers, training and supporting new staff and assisting the ED with professional development. This will help ensure that our staff is well trained and well supported to provide a high quality experience to students. An Instructional Guide will be added to assist teachers in implementing our model with fidelity, equity, and academic rigor, especially during initial expansion. Anser’s school leaders have many years of experience operating a highly effective school. In tandem with a high functioning board and a dedicated and well trained staff, they are committed and prepared to expand Anser’s nationally recognized, whole -child, EL Education model to many new learners ready to be served in an equitable, future-ready school community.



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