



# INVICTUS

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ACADEMY OF RICHMOND

**Presented to the West Contra Costa Unified School District  
May 5, 2017**

**Requested Charter Term: July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2023**

**Lead Petitioner Contact Information:**

**Email: [gthapar@buildingexcellentschools.org](mailto:gthapar@buildingexcellentschools.org)**

**Phone: 510-606-8158**

**Respectfully submitted by the Invictus Academy Founding Team:**

**Jessica Covarrubias**

Senior Marketing Associate, YouTube Kids

**Jesse Madway**

Former Dean of Students, Leadership Public Schools-Richmond

**Tana Monteiro**

Parent Engagement Coordinator, Richmond College Preparatory

**Karen Norwood**

Facilities Director, Kaiser Permanente

**Charles Oshinuga**

Attorney, Bay Area Legal Aid

**Mitzi Perez**

Communications Specialist, Students For Education Reform

**Gautam Thapar**

Lead Petitioner, Building Excellent Schools Fellow, proposed Executive Director

**Ashwin Ravi**

Software Developer, Hack Reactor

**Julia Wasserman**

Solutions Team, Google for Education

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## Assurances

As the lead petitioner, I, Gautam Thapar, hereby certify that the information submitted in this petition for a California public charter school named Invictus Academy of Richmond (“Invictus Academy”), and to be located within the boundaries of the West Contra Costa Unified School District (“WCCUSD” or the “District”), is true to the best of my knowledge and belief; I also certify that this petition does not constitute the conversion of a private school to the status of a public charter school; and further, I understand that if awarded a charter, the Charter School will follow any and all federal, state, and local laws and regulations that apply to the Charter School, including , but not limited to:

1. The Charter School shall be non-sectarian in its programs, admissions policies, employment practices, and all other operations. [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(d)(1)]
2. The Charter School shall not charge tuition, or fees, for educational activities. [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(d)(1)]
3. The Charter School shall not discriminate on the basis of the characteristics listed in Education Code Section 220 (actual or perceived disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic that is contained in the definition of hate crimes set forth in Section 422.55 of the Penal Code or association with an individual who has any of the aforementioned characteristics). [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(d)(1)]
4. The Charter School will meet all statewide standards and conduct the student assessments required, pursuant to Education Code Section 60605, and any other statewide standards authorized in statute, or student assessments applicable to students in non-charter public schools. [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(c)(1)]
5. The Charter School will be deemed the exclusive public school employer of the employees of the Charter School for purposes of the Educational Employment Relations Act. [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(O)]
6. The Charter School will meet all requirements for employment set forth in applicable provisions of law, including, but not limited to credentials, as necessary. [Ref. Title 5 California Code of Regulations Section 11967.5.1(f)(5)(C)]
7. The Charter School will admit all students who wish to attend the Charter School, and who submit a timely application; unless the Charter School receives a greater number of applications than there are spaces for students, in which case each application will be given equal chance of admission through a public random drawing process. Except as required by Education Code Section 47605(d)(2), admission to the Charter School shall not be determined according to the place of residence of the student or his or her parents within the State. Preference in the public random drawing shall be given as required by Education Code Section 47605(d)(2)(B). In the event of a drawing, the chartering authority shall make

reasonable efforts to accommodate the growth of the Charter School in accordance with Education Code Section 47605(d)(2)(C). [ref. Education Code Section 47605(d)(A)-(C)]

8. The Charter School will adhere to all provisions of federal law related to students with disabilities including, but not limited to, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (IDEIA) and the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Improvement Act of 2004.
9. The Charter School will ensure that teachers in the Charter School hold a Commission on Teacher Credentialing certificate, permit, or other document equivalent to that which a teacher in other public schools are required to hold. As allowed by statute, flexibility will be given to noncore, non-college preparatory teachers. [Ref. California Education Code Section 47605(I)]
10. The Charter School will at all times maintain all necessary and appropriate insurance coverage.
11. The Charter School shall comply with the Ralph M. Brown Act.
12. The Charter School shall comply with the Political Reform Act.
13. The Charter School shall comply with all applicable portions of the elementary and Secondary Education Act.
14. The Charter School shall comply with the Public Records Act.
15. The Charter School shall comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.
16. The Charter School shall, for each fiscal year, offer at a minimum, the number of minutes of instruction per grade level as required by Education Code Section 47612.5(a)(1)(A)-(D).
17. If a pupil is expelled or leaves the Charter School without graduating or completing the school year for any reason, the Charter School shall notify the superintendent of the school district of the pupil's last known address within 30 days, and shall, upon request, provide that school district with a copy of the cumulative record of the pupil, including a transcript of grades or report card and health information. [Ref. California Education Code Section 47605(d)(3)]
18. The Charter School shall maintain accurate and contemporaneous written records that document all pupil attendance and make these records available for audit and inspection. [Ref. California Education Code Section 47612.5(a)]
19. The Charter School shall, on a regular basis, consult with its parents and teachers regarding the Charter School's educational programs. [Ref. California Education Code Section 47605(c)]

20. The Charter School shall comply with any jurisdictional limitations to locations of its facilities. [Ref. California Education Code Section 47605-47605.1]
21. The Charter School shall comply with all laws establishing the minimum and maximum age for public school enrollment. [Ref. California Education Code Section 47612(b), 47610]
22. The Charter School shall meet or exceed the legally required minimum of school days. [Ref. Title 5 California Code of Regulations Section 11960]
23. The Charter School embraces Section 47601 of the Education Code which establishes the intent of the Legislature to establish and maintain charter schools as a method to accomplish all of the following:
  - Increase learning opportunities for all pupils, with special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for pupils who are identified as academically low achieving.
  - Improve pupil learning.
  - Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods.
  - Create new professional opportunities for teachers, including the opportunity to be responsible for the learning program at the school site.
  - Provide parents and pupils with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public school system.
  - Hold charter schools accountable for meeting measurable pupil outcomes, and provide schools with a method to change from rule-based to performance based accountability systems.
  - Provide vigorous competition within the public school system to stimulate continual improvements in all public schools.

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Lead Petitioner Signature

Date

## Overview

Invictus Academy of Richmond (“Invictus Academy”) hereby respectfully submits this new charter petition to the West Contra Costa Unified School District (“the District”). The term of the charter will be a five-year period, from July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018 and ending on June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

Invictus Academy will be a middle and high school serving students in grades 7-12 in Richmond, CA. Our mission is to prepare 100% of our students to thrive in the colleges of their choice, solve relevant problems, and communicate with confidence. We are committed to working with the District to ensure that every child within its boundaries receives an excellent education.

Our school model is the product of intense study of both the needs of Richmond and the methods of some of the strongest schools in the nation. Our founding team has had nearly 200 conversations with key stakeholders in Richmond, including parents, alumni of Richmond schools, teachers, education leaders, District officials, community organizations and leaders, and pastors. In addition, through the Building Excellent Schools Fellowship, our Lead Founder and proposed Executive Director Gautam Thapar has visited and studied nearly 40 high-performing urban schools around the country. Mr. Thapar, a Richmond resident and former teacher in Richmond, has also made visits to numerous traditional district and charter schools in Richmond.

Through our conversations in the community, study of high-performing schools, and research, we have arrived at a model that we believe is responsive to the needs of students in Richmond and incorporates best-practices from top schools across the country. Our model matches high expectations with high levels of student support, and the following elements anchor our design:

- Extended school day and school year
- Robust speech and debate program
- Focus on math and literacy in the middle grades
- Use of blended learning
- Discipline system rooted in Restorative Justice
- Strategically designed professional development for teachers
- Use of trauma-informed practices
- Daily tutoring
- Daily mentoring in Advisory periods
- Weekly community meeting to celebrate students and staff
- Time dedicated to develop non-academic skills
- Regular and frequent communication with parents
- Systems for incorporating student and parent voice

Our school design includes several innovative features to create a unique, new option for parents and families in Richmond. One feature which stands out as especially distinctive is our focus on oral communication. It is our mission that every student graduates from Invictus Academy able to communicate with confidence to diverse audiences and for diverse purposes. Our program supports students to achieve this element of the school’s mission over time through a required Speech and Debate course in both 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades, investment in a Speech and Debate Team in high school, regular class presentations, Socratic Seminars, historical debates, and peer instruction.

Through this focus on oral communication, and particularly public speaking, we envision that our students will be equipped with the essential knowledge and skills to be lifelong leaders in their communities.

Our team is committed to working in collaboration with the District to ensure an excellent education for every child within the District’s boundaries. We agree with the West Contra Costa Unified *Strategic Plan Report* for 2014-2019, which states that “[t]he District should consider partnering with local charter schools to develop a set of guidelines for District-charter collaboration and shared learning. Both District schools and charters can learn from one another and should develop a healthy working relationship.”<sup>1</sup> The areas in which we envision a collaborative relationship include, but are not limited to, expanding speech and debate opportunities in the District, strengthening professional development for teachers, and serving high-needs populations. We look forward to working with the District in the service of all students.

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<sup>1</sup> *West Contra Costa Strategic Plan Report, 2014-2019*. Publication. N.p.: Third Plateau Social Impact Strategies and Capitol Impact, n.d. Print.

## Founding Team

The founding team of Invictus Academy of Richmond (“Invictus Academy”) is deeply committed to our mission to educate all students in grades 7-12 to thrive in the college of their choice, solve relevant problems, and communicate with confidence. The group embodies diversity with respect to both skill-set as well as background, and a majority of the team has strong ties to Richmond through work, residency, or both. With a founding team deeply connected to the community of Richmond, Invictus Academy will be responsive and accountable to the needs of children and families in the community we plan to serve.

Our team encompasses educational, financial, community engagement, facilities, governance, legal, marketing, and technology expertise. For specific skills of individual team members, please see **Figure 1** below. Three of our nine members have direct classroom experience, and the entire team has relevant professional expertise in education. Our group comes to this work with humility, and has been deliberate in reaching out to key community stakeholders to shape the vision of Invictus Academy.

**Figure 1. Founding Team Expertise**

Director Name	Finance	Law	Marketing and Outreach	Facilities	Board Governance	Technology	Education
Jessica Covarrubias	X		X				X
Jesse Madway				X			X
Tana Monteiro			X				
Karen Norwood				X	X		
Charles Oshinuga		X			X		
Mitzi Perez			X				
Ashwin Ravi	X				X	X	
Gautam Thapar	X						X
Julia Wasserman	X				X	X	

## Founding Team Biographies

As of May of 2017, the Founding Team includes the proposed Executive Director and eight proposed Board of Directors:

**Gautam Thapar, proposed Executive Director** and Richmond resident, is currently a Fellow with Building Excellent Schools, through which he has studied nearly 40 high-performing charter schools across the country to learn best practices. Mr. Thapar joined Teach For America in 2010 and taught for four years, most recently as a U.S. History and Advanced Placement U.S. History teacher at Leadership Public Schools-Richmond. At LPS-Richmond, Mr. Thapar’s 11<sup>th</sup> grade U.S. History students had the highest proficiency rates of any open-enrollment school in the district. He

graduated with honors from Stanford University with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Political Science and earned a Master's in Business Administration from the University of Michigan.

**Jessica Covarrubias, a proposed Board member,** leads strategy and marketing for YouTube Kids, a Google platform designed for young people to discover and learn from video content. Prior to Google, she worked in marketing and strategy roles for PepsiCo on its Gatorade and Quaker brands. A native of the south side of Chicago and an alumna of Chicago Public Schools, Ms. Covarrubias is passionate about providing an equitable education and resources for all students to ensure that they live up to their full potential. She has served on the board for Chicago Run, a nonprofit organization that promotes the health and wellness of Chicago children through innovative, engaging, and sustainable youth running programs. Ms. Covarrubias also served as a fellow for the Revive the Dream Institute, a nonprofit organization that grows emerging community leaders by developing them into enthusiasts for education reform to improve the life prospects of underserved children. Additionally, she has dedicated time to do pro-bono work for public schools in Chicago and Detroit. Ms. Covarrubias graduated from Stanford University with both a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and Communication and holds a Master of Business Administration and a Master of Arts in Education Leadership & Policy from the University of Michigan.

**Jesse Madway, a proposed Board member,** is in his 25th year working in urban public schools. He is currently the Head of Operations and Facilities, as well as the Testing Coordinator at Leadership Public Schools-Richmond, in Richmond California. From 2007-2016, Mr. Madway was the Dean of Students at LPS-Richmond, and prior to that he was an English teacher at the school. LPS-Richmond is one of the highest performing schools in the nation, having been ranked in the top 1% of all public schools for the past three years in a row according to *US News and World Report*. Mr. Madway has worked extensively in several middle schools and high schools as both a teacher and an administrator. Mr. Madway grew up in the Bay Area and attended the University of California, Santa Cruz where he earned his Bachelor of Arts in American Studies.

**Tana Monteiro, a proposed Board member,** is a Richmond resident, and is currently the Parent Engagement Coordinator at Richmond College Preparatory School, where she builds and maintains connections with parents and families, involving them in the broader school community. Ms. Monteiro loves working with families and strives to make their voices heard as they work together to make a safer, healthier, and happier community. Ms. Monteiro has lived in Richmond and nearby San Pablo for the past 19 years and is raising four sons, all of whom have attended public schools. Previously, Ms. Monteiro served as the Community Wellness Coordinator at YES Families from 2013 to 2016 after serving as a parent organizer and community liaison at Richmond College Preparatory School for seven years. Ms. Monteiro led YES's Wellness Program and coordinated 15-20 adult Wellness Navigators annually to advocate for health and wellness in their communities. Ms. Monteiro received professional certifications in Healthcare Administration and Culinary Arts from Chabot College and Contra Costa Community College, respectively. As evidenced by her extensive professional experience, Ms. Monteiro is committed to working with families and strives to make their voices heard as they work together to make a stronger community.

**Karen Norwood, a proposed Board member,** currently serves as the Facilities Services Manager for Kaiser Permanente School of Allied Health Sciences in Richmond, CA. She is responsible for providing daily leadership in facility operations for the school. Ms. Norwood has always had a passion for working in healthcare to eliminate health disparities in California, and has been active in the community to create positive change. She serves on the Board of Directors for Rubicon Programs, Inc. and the Hercules Academic Athletic Board. Ms. Norwood is also a member of the Kaiser Permanente African American Professional Association, and is a Kaiser Permanente Care Volunteer. She graduated from the University of Central Arkansas with a Bachelor of Science degree in Health Education and earned a Master's in Business Administration from Aspen University.

**Charles Oshinuga, a proposed Board member,** is a Richmond resident, and was born in Louisiana to Nigerian immigrant parents and raised primarily in the Mojave Desert. After graduating from UC Berkeley with a double major in Molecular Cell Biology and Legal Studies, he worked with youth, including teaching for a year at a charter school in Southern California. Mr. Oshinuga then went on to the UC Davis King Hall Law School where he focused on public interest law. After graduation, Mr. Oshinuga applied his skills at the Mendocino Public Defender's Office where he realized that many clients were in the system due to unstable housing situations. As a result, Mr. Oshinuga decided to work on housing issues, joining the Eviction Defense Collaborative and later Bay Area Legal Aid. Both jobs have allowed him to keep finger on the pulse of pertinent housing issues and to advocate for low-income, disabled tenants, as well as tenants in Public Housing, and to educate the general public about landlord/tenant issues.

**Mitzi Perez, a proposed Board member,** is a Richmond resident and alumnus of West Contra Costa Unified public schools. She is currently the communications specialist for Students For Education Reform (SFER). In 2015, Ms. Perez co-founded the SFER chapter at the University of California, Berkeley campus. As part of SFER, Ms. Perez has engaged in community organizing in advocacy of reforms that would benefit students in the District. In addition to her role with SFER, Ms. Perez is a reporter and photographer for the *Richmond Pulse*. She is deeply invested in ensuring that students in Richmond and the community at large thrive. Ms. Perez graduated from UC Berkeley with a Bachelor of Arts in Media Studies.

**Ashwin Ravi, a proposed Board member,** is an experienced technology leader and financial analyst, with a commitment to improving educational opportunity and outcomes at a community level. A Detroit native, Mr. Ravi managed growth at Lumosity, the leading online program to train core cognitive abilities, helping reach over 75 million users. He previously worked as an investor at Norwest Venture Partners with a focus on supporting high-potential education services companies. Mr. Ravi has held several roles on the leadership team of Minds Matter of San Francisco, a volunteer-run mentorship organization helping low-income, high-achieving students in the Bay Area reach college success. Mr. Ravi graduated from the Honors College at the University of Michigan with a Bachelor of Arts in Economics.

**Julia Wasserman, a proposed Board member,** is a Berkeley native and works with the Google for Education Solutions Team, driven by a commitment to improving educational outcomes for students everywhere. In the two years before Ms. Wasserman joined Google for Education, she worked to shift her focus from a career in finance where she was a Senior Portfolio Management

Analyst at a fund of hedge funds towards a career in education due to her deeply held belief that a great education is a most fundamental human right. During that time, she worked as a Summer Associate and Education Pioneers Summer Fellow for AltSchool in San Francisco, helping them develop their micro-schools model. She has held volunteer positions with Junior Achievement and spent a semester helping loveLife, a South African youth organization develop online, skills-based, certificate-granting programs for young people across South Africa. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics from the University of Virginia and a Master's in Business Administration from Berkeley-Haas Business School.

## **External Partners**

Invictus Academy will seek to draw upon the experience and expertise of external partners to ensure the fulfillment of our mission. The following represent formal partners from whom we will receive support and/or resources. Each of the following partners has authored a letter of support outlining the nature of our partnership, which can be found in **Appendix 3: Letters of Support**.

## **Building Excellent Schools (BES)**

Building Excellent Schools is a national non-profit that trains high capacity leaders to take on the demanding and urgent work of leading high-performing charter schools. Invictus Academy's lead founder, Gautam Thapar, is currently a BES Fellow. By the end of the Fellowship, he will have visited and studied nearly 40 high-performing charter-schools across the country, undergone intensive leadership coaching and development, and completed two leadership residencies at high performing charter schools. Following authorization, BES provides Follow-On Support during the school's planning year and first two years of operation in the form of dedicated leadership and governance coaches. BES coaches make a minimum of three visits to the school each year, have weekly check-ins with the Executive Director, and provide direct training in governance to the school's Board of Directors.

## **EdTec**

EdTec is an established back office support provider for more than 325 charter schools and charter developers, supporting over 90,000 students across 60 districts in over 40 counties and seven states. It is widely used throughout California and has been recommended to our founding team by multiple charter school operators in West Contra Costa Unified School District, and Richmond, specifically. EdTec lends its expertise in a variety of ways, including supporting the development of this charter petition, school launch and operations, board governance, strategic planning, student/school performance, and charter renewal.

## **Silicon Schools Fund**

Silicon Schools Fund's mission is to "fund the creation of new schools throughout the Bay Area that foster innovation and personalization to discover the next generation of schools in America."<sup>2</sup> The organization has invested in over 15 schools throughout the Bay Area, including charter, district, and independent schools that serve a diverse mix of student demographics. Silicon Schools

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.siliconschools.com/>

Fund has invested in three charter operators in WCCUSD: Aspire Public Schools, Summit Public Schools, and Caliber Beta Academy.

### **Mindful Life Project**

The Mindful Life Project’s mission is to “empower underserved children through mindfulness and other transformative skills to gain self-awareness, confidence, self-regulation and resilience, leading to lifelong success.”<sup>3</sup> Founded in Richmond, the Mindful Life Project has served over 25,000 students across schools throughout the East Bay. It has a strong track record of effectiveness with both District and charter schools in Richmond, as well as positive testimonials from numerous parents with whom our founding team has connected.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.mindfullifeproject.org/mission-and-vision.html>

## **Element 1: Educational Program**

**“The educational program of the charter school, designed, among other things, to identify those whom the charter school is attempting to educate, what it means to be an “educated person” in the 21st century, and how learning best occurs. The goals identified in that program shall include the objective of enabling pupils to become self-motivated, competent, and lifelong learners.” (Ed. Code § 47605(b)(5)(A)(i).)**

**“The annual goals for the charter school for all pupils and for each subgroup of pupils identified pursuant to Section 52052, to be achieved in the state priorities, as described in subdivision (d) of Section 52060, that apply for the grade levels served, or the nature of the program operated, by the charter school, and specific annual actions to achieve those goals. A charter petition may identify additional school priorities, the goals for the school priorities, and the specific annual actions to achieve those goals.” (Ed. Code § 47605(b)(5)(A)(ii).)**

**“If the proposed charter school will serve high school pupils, a description of the manner in which the charter school will inform parents about the transferability of courses to other public high schools and the eligibility of courses to meet college entrance requirements. Courses offered by the charter school that are accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges may be considered transferable and courses approved by the University of California or the California State University as creditable under the “A” to “G” admissions criteria may be considered to meet college entrance requirements.” (Ed. Code § 47605(b)(5)(A)(iii).)**

## **Mission**

Invictus Academy of Richmond prepares 100% of students in grades 7-12 to thrive in the colleges of their choice, solve relevant problems, and communicate with confidence.

## **Education Philosophy**

Invictus Academy of Richmond (“Invictus Academy”) is anchored by a set of seven core beliefs that compel our team to relentlessly pursue our mission and vision, and are the foundation of our education philosophy. These beliefs are guiding principles that must be shared by all staff to ensure a positive school culture focused on student achievement and build upon best practices from a deep study and analysis of nearly 40 high-performing schools both locally and nationally, including Cornerstone Academy Preparatory School in San Jose, CA and Excel Academy in Boston, MA.<sup>4</sup> These foundations are consistent with the vision and objectives set forth by the West Contra Costa Unified School District in its *Strategic Plan and Report*. When successfully executed upon, these beliefs ensure the mission and vision of the school— students thriving in the colleges of their choice, solving relevant problems, and communicating with confidence.

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<sup>4</sup> At Cornerstone Academy, 62% of students met or exceeded standards on the SBAC Exam in Math and 66% met or exceeded standards in ELA in the 2015-2016 school year, significantly exceeding the school’s surrounding district as well as California state averages. Excel Academy East Boston and Excel Academy Chelsea were ranked as two of the top 15 schools in Massachusetts, according to their student achievement results on the PARCC Exam.

## 1. Excellent teaching is the bedrock of student achievement.

“Teachers should have the support and training needed to become great teachers.” –*WCCUSD Strategic Plan Report, 2014-2019*<sup>5</sup>

In agreement with West Contra Costa Unified School District (“WCCUSD”), Invictus Academy is committed to hiring and developing an outstanding teaching staff. As stated by Stanford Professor Eric Hanushek, “The quality of teachers in our schools is paramount: no other measured aspect of schools is nearly as important in determining student achievement.”<sup>6</sup> Thus, our top priority is recruiting, hiring, developing, and retaining outstanding teachers.

We have identified multiple teacher education programs from which we will recruit a qualified, mission-driven staff, including the Stanford Teacher Education Program, the UC Berkeley Developmental Teacher Education Program, and Teach For America. We have budgeted to pay our teachers a competitive salary, but we also recognize that compensation alone will not assure us the faculty we envision.<sup>7</sup>

In a survey of 40,000 teachers conducted by the Gates Foundation, 96% of teachers said supportive leadership is a major factor in their decision to stay at a school site. Another 89% expressed the importance of having time to collaborate with peers, and 85% expressed the same regarding quality professional development (PD).<sup>8</sup> As a result, we will invest heavily in supporting and developing our teachers to ensure that we have the highest quality teachers in every classroom.

To grow and develop our staff, each teacher will be observed and receive feedback weekly from an experienced instructional leader. There is strong evidence that this professional development cycle has a significant, positive, and lasting impact on teacher effectiveness. In a study launched in Cincinnati, OH, teachers were given specific feedback on their instructional practices, ranging from the level of classroom discourse to the quality of the questions they asked. The study found that students’ performance improved in the years after teachers received this program of focused feedback.<sup>9</sup> This structured feedback cycle is consistent with best practices used both nationally as well as in California, and it is the key component of our professional development plan.<sup>10</sup>

In addition to individual teacher coaching and observations, Invictus Academy teachers will also partake in both summer professional development (15 days) and targeted weekly professional development (66 total hours), including structured peer collaboration, as well as nine full-day professional development days dedicated to data analysis and instructional planning.

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<sup>5</sup> *West Contra Costa Strategic Plan Report, 2014-2019*. Publication. p. 2.: Third Plateau Social Impact Strategies and Capitol Impact, n.d. Print.

<sup>6</sup> Hanushek, Eric. “Valuing Teachers.” *Education Next* (Summer: 2011).

<sup>7</sup> See complete budget in **Appendix 7: Budget Base Case—School of the District**.

<sup>8</sup> Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. College-Ready Education. *40,000 Teachers Give Their Views on Education Reform in "Primary Sources: America's Teachers on America's Schools"* GatesFoundation.org. 2013. Web.

<sup>9</sup> Green, Elizabeth. *Building a Better Teacher: How Teaching Works (and How to Teach It to Everyone)*. New York; London: Norton Et, 2015. Print. p. 300.

<sup>10</sup> <https://learningforward.org/docs/pdf/nsdcstudy2009.pdf> and <http://www.cnn.com/2016/12/06/world/pisa-global-education-rankings/>.

We know that the quality of our school cannot exceed the quality of our teachers, and this belief will drive our approach to teacher development.

## **2. A rigorous, engaging, and relevant college preparatory curriculum supports student growth.**

“Objective 4: Put every student on the path to graduate high school with opportunity for post-secondary education.” *WCCUSD Strategic Plan Report, 2014-2019*<sup>11</sup>

Students must have exposure to college preparatory work to enter college ready to excel. To that end, we will align our end-of-year and quarterly benchmark assessments to match the depth and breadth of the California Common Core State Standards (CCSS). In accordance with the CCSS, students will regularly read complex fiction and non-fiction texts, form arguments using textual evidence, solve multi-step word problems, and test hypotheses using scientific research and data.

To ensure all students, especially those from traditionally underserved groups, have access to college preparatory work, we will have an extended school day and school year. This extra time will be devoted to increased English and Mathematics instruction in middle school and a daily tutorial and Advisory period in all grades to offer individualized support to all students. As a result, students will receive nearly 300 hours of additional instruction annually in middle school and high school, each, relative to the California minimum requirements. Over six years at Invictus Academy, students receive nearly two full additional instructional years through this extended day model. By the time our students are in 12<sup>th</sup> grade, they will be doing college-level work and be poised to thrive when they arrive in college.

## **3. Students must be challenged to think critically and problem solve creatively.**

In *Most Likely to Succeed*, Tony Wagner explains, “Now, adults need to be able to ask great questions, critically analyze information, form independent opinions, collaborate, and communicate effectively. These are the skills essential for both career and citizenship.”<sup>12</sup> As technology reduces the importance of factual recall and increases that of analytical skills, schools must increasingly focus on teaching students *how* to think. Therefore, to fully prepare students for college and career success, we must challenge students with complex, relevant, multi-day assignments without finite solutions in addition to ensuring fluency in foundational content. This includes defending a position in a research paper, engaging in an evidence-based debate in a history class, or applying mathematical concepts to solve a problem without a single right answer. Indeed, “a study of more than 2,000 students in 23 restructured schools found much higher levels of achievement on complex performance tasks for students who experienced instruction focused on active learning in real-world contexts calling for higher-order thinking, consideration of

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<sup>11</sup> *West Contra Costa Strategic Plan Report, 2014-2019*. Publication. p.19.: Third Plateau Social Impact Strategies and Capitol Impact, n.d. Print.

<sup>12</sup> Wagner, Tony, and Ted Dintersmith. *Most Likely to Succeed: A New Vision for Education to Prepare Our Kids for Today's Innovation Economy*. New York, NY: Scribner, 2015. Print.

alternatives, extended writing, and an audience for student work.”<sup>13</sup> We will support our teachers in building students’ knowledge and skills to the point where they can find success with this level of rigor. This support includes, but is not limited to, calibration exercises in evaluating student work samples, close study of model lessons, and best practices workshops.<sup>14</sup>

#### **4. Individual student support is crucial, and can be strengthened through intentional use of technology.**

“Objective 32: Strategically integrate technology into the classroom, school-site, and District.”—*WCCUSD Strategic Plan Report, 2014-2019, p. 58*<sup>15</sup>

Through strategic use of blended learning and student achievement data, we will close student knowledge and skill gaps with precision across subgroups. Though we do not view technology as a panacea, we recognize the potential for it to empower teachers to meaningfully enhance their instruction and target individual student needs. For this reason, we have budgeted to have a laptop for every student in every class.<sup>16</sup> Our station-rotation approach is research-based and has shown to increase academic achievement. A seven-state, 18,000 student study of a diverse population by the RAND corporation and the Department of Education found that “the rotation blended-learning model boosted the average high school student’s performance by eight percentile points by year two, which equates to roughly doubling math learning in a year for those students.”<sup>17</sup>

Invictus Academy has identified software programs with track records of success in content delivery, facilitation of student practice, and management of student achievement data to offer students extra practice, instant feedback, and an efficient use of data. Our blended learning model also creates space for more small group and one-on-one instruction. Across classes, teachers will receive training in using instant response systems, instructional video-creation software, and assessment and learning management systems so they can provide students with opportunities to work at their own pace, where appropriate, allowing teachers to work with small groups or individual students. The software programs Invictus Academy plans to utilize can be found in **Appendix 11: Technology Platforms Chart**. With the unique supports provided by technology, students will graduate as self-driven, independent learners capable of assessing their own progress and taking ownership of their learning.

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<sup>13</sup> Darling-Hammond, Linda. *The Flat World and Education: How America's Commitment to Equity Will Determine Our Future*. New York, NY: Teachers College, 2010. Print. p. 69

<sup>14</sup> Lewis, Catherine C., et al. "Improving Teaching Does Improve Teachers." *Journal of Teacher Education* 63.5 (2012): 368-75. Web.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> See line item “Computers” in **Appendix 7: Budget Base Case—School of the District**.

<sup>17</sup> Horn, Michael B., Heather Staker, and Clayton M. Christensen. *Blended: Using Disruptive Innovation to Improve Schools*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2015. p. 80.

## 5. Academic and personal habits are crucial to students' success.

“Student success is not limited to classroom performance; social and emotional development are necessary complements to academic achievement.”—*WCCUSD Strategic Plan Report, 2014-2019*<sup>18</sup>

We have made careful study of the recent, growing body of research that shows that students' academic and personal habits play a pivotal role in students' success in college. Indeed, measures of self-discipline have been shown to be more predictive of college persistence than I.Q. scores.<sup>19</sup>

We firmly believe that academic skills and personal habits, taken together, will allow students to thrive in college and lead lives of opportunity. As a result, this research, as well as conversations with Richmond stakeholders, informs our ten core values, which can be found in **Figure 2**.

During our academic classes and Advisories, students and staff will engage in curricula, discussions, and reflections around core values. This element of our program aligns closely with the District's vision of robust social and emotional learning opportunities for students.

**Figure 2. Invictus Academy Core Values**

Core Value	Meaning
Purpose	We are resolute in our focus on achieving our mission; the most important question at our school is “why?”
Perseverance	We continue to put forth our best effort in pursuit of goals despite obstacles or setbacks.
Productivity	We utilize our time, energy, and attention to accomplish as much as possible each day.
Growth Mindset	We believe our knowledge, skills, and abilities grow with dedication, effort, and practice.
Integrity	We do what is right even when no one is watching.
Leadership	We recognize that our words and actions impact those around us, and seek to maximize our positive impact.
Joy	We find pleasure and happiness in our work and our community.
Gratitude	We make time to recognize and affirm goodness in the world. <sup>20</sup>
Mindfulness	We are conscious of our thoughts, emotions, and behaviors, and use this awareness to be our best selves.
Kindness	We are friendly, generous, and considerate of others.

<sup>18</sup> *West Contra Costa Strategic Plan Report, 2014-2019*. Publication. p.2: Third Plateau Social Impact Strategies and Capitol Impact, n.d. Print. p. 2.

<sup>19</sup> Duckworth, Angela, and Martin Seligman. “Self-Discipline Outdoes IQ in Predicting Academic Performance of Adolescents.” *Psychological Science* 16.12 (2005): 939-44. Web.

<sup>20</sup> Emmons, Robert A. *Thanks!: How Practicing Gratitude Can Make You Happier*. NY: Houghton Mifflin, 2008. Print.

## 6. Students thrive in a culture of joy.

“WCCUSD believes all stakeholders—students, teachers, employees, partners and community members—a are fundamental to creating and maintaining safe and effective learning environments.”—*WCCUSD Strategic Plan Report, 2014-2019*<sup>21</sup>

We believe that joy is an indispensable element of any strong school culture. In accordance with this belief, we will foster a culture that celebrates students’ success and builds partnerships between students, staff, and families.

Within the school building, we will foster a sense of joy in a safe and structured environment. Teachers will be trained to give praise to students in relation to core values and formally track each instance as “recognitions” using an online platform, such as Kickboard. We will closely monitor the ratio of recognitions as compared to behavioral corrections, and work towards a 4:1 praise-to-correction ratio, which has been demonstrated through research to be desirable for the creation of a positive culture.<sup>22</sup> This data will also be monitored for individual students, and for students with a negative balance (more behavioral corrections than recognitions), the school leadership team, in conjunction with teachers, will devise and implement an intervention plan.

Each Friday, the whole school will gather for a community meeting that celebrates a **Student of the Week** in each grade as well as a **Staff Member of the Week** for the whole school, and engage students in community building activities. These can include student speeches, musical performances, and game-based competitions between grades. When appropriate, the programming at community meeting will be relevant to current events.

Invictus Academy engages families as partners in this work. To reach our mission of 100% of students thriving in college, family involvement is critical. Family involvement in school has been correlated with higher student grade point averages, better performance on standardized exams, enrollment in more rigorous coursework, higher attendance rates, and better behavior in school.<sup>23</sup>

To begin building relationships with students and families, staff members of Invictus Academy, spearheaded by the leadership team (Executive Director, Dean of Students, and Director of Operations in Year 1), will visit the home of every incoming student before the first day of school. The goal of this **Home Visit** is to foster the important school and family relationship by having a clear and shared sense of our mission and vision, to hear about families’ hopes for their child, to better understand our students’ home environments, and to share clear expectations of Invictus Academy. Prior to and during the first week of school, we hold two **Parent University** days to offer parents concrete strategies to support their children towards success in school, regardless of their own educational background. During the academic year, we communicate with parents weekly, hold two family events each month, and have parent conferences each semester. Through these strategies, we aim to engage families as partners and respect the importance of their voice.

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<sup>21</sup> *West Contra Costa Strategic Plan Report, 2014-2019*. Publication. p.8: Third Plateau Social Impact Strategies and Capitol Impact, n.d. Print.

<sup>22</sup> Beck, Kylie. "Behavior-Specific Praise in the Classroom." p. 1 *Tennessee Behavior Supports Project*. Vanderbilt University. Web. 8 Feb. 2017.

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.sedl.org/connections/resources/evidence.pdf> p. 24.

## 7. Communication is crucial to students' future opportunities.

“The District would benefit immensely from a culture of innovation and experimentation, one in which the District does not shy away from difficult issues or settle for the status quo.”—*WCCUSD Strategic Plan Report, 2014-2019*<sup>24</sup>

Strong communication skills, especially public speaking ability, are essential to accessing leadership opportunities in college and beyond. However, it is widely known that Americans are fearful of public speaking. In a poll conducted by Chapman University in 2014, public speaking was found to be the most common fear amongst American adults, outranking other phobias like heights, snakes, and drowning.<sup>25</sup> Those who embrace and develop skill in public speaking often have a lifelong advantage, starting with admittance to college. Strong performance in competitive speech and debate in high school is correlated with higher acceptance rates to top tier colleges, and colleges look upon speech and debate favorably relative to other extracurricular activities.<sup>26</sup>

Because of the strong evidence of the impact of public speaking ability on future opportunities, every student will take a speech and debate course in both their 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade years at Invictus Academy. During these years, students are exposed to a variety of speech and debate formats, including Story-Telling, Original Oratory, Oratorical Interpretation, and Congressional-style debate. Our planned Speech and Debate course trajectory can be found in **Appendix 10: Speech and Debate Course Map**. Beginning in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, all students are encouraged to join our **Speech and Debate Team**, which will compete regionally and nationally with top schools in the state and country. For students who choose not to join the Speech and Debate Team, public speaking will be integrated into core content courses, with students regularly engaging in debates, presentations, and class discussions. By the time our inaugural class of students graduate in 2024, every student who walks the graduation stage will be a capable, confident public speaker.

### How Learning Best Occurs

At Invictus Academy, we believe every child has a right to an excellent education. Utilizing best practices from high-performing charter schools in California and around the nation<sup>27</sup>, we will create a focused, achievement-oriented, and warm school culture through which students gain and develop the knowledge, skills, and habits to thrive in the college of their choice and have lifelong access to opportunity.

Based on our study of high performing schools across the country, including those in California and in Richmond, there are seven core practices that we believe will be successful in placing historically underserved students firmly on the path to college.

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<sup>24</sup> *West Contra Costa Strategic Plan Report, 2014-2019*. Publication. p.11: Third Plateau Social Impact Strategies and Capitol Impact, n.d. Print.

<sup>25</sup> Ingraham, Christopher. "America's Top Fears: Public Speaking, Heights and Bugs." *The Washington Post*. WP Company, 30 Oct. 2014. Web.

<sup>26</sup> Minh A. Luong, Yale Professor. "Forensics and College Admissions." PBS.org.

<sup>27</sup> Lake, Robin. "Identifying and Replicating the "DNA" of Successful Charter Schools." *Center on Reinventing Public Education* (May: 2007): Web.

## 1. Great teaching drives student learning.

We know that the quality of Invictus Academy cannot exceed the quality of its teachers. The importance of teacher quality to student learning is indisputable, and carries with it a host of impacts. Stanford Professor Eric Hanushek has estimated that an even slightly better than average teacher (one in the 60<sup>th</sup> percentile instead of the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile, as measured by year-over-year gains in student test scores) raises the lifetime income of each student in his or her class by \$5,300.<sup>28</sup> Across multiple teachers over multiple years, this effect becomes sizeable for students. Thus, we will work tirelessly to recruit, train, and retain strong teachers.

- **Recruitment:** To create a pipeline of talent, Invictus Academy of Richmond will establish ties with the Stanford Teacher Education Program (STEP), Education Pioneers, Reach Academy, the Bay Area Teacher Training Institute, and Teach For America, amongst others. We will manage our budget such that we can pay a competitive salary and benefits, ensuring that we can hire top talent. Our complete budget can be found in **Appendix 7: Budget Base Case—School of the District.**

Our hiring process will include both a rigorous interview and a demonstration lesson so that we are able to find teachers who are in alignment with our mission and vision as well as those who demonstrate a growth mindset. We are a practice-based organization,<sup>29</sup> and in being consistent with this identity we will ask prospective teachers to participate in role plays of various, challenging scenarios that can arise in a school environment. These scenarios can include disagreeing with a colleague, speaking with a concerned parent, or having a restorative conversation with a student who has been disruptive.

We will be aggressive in finding teachers to interview but selective in hiring, ensuring we onboard only those who are aligned with the mission, vision, and core beliefs of the school.

**Training:** At Invictus Academy, we believe that through developing our teachers we will both increase student achievement as well as teacher satisfaction. Strong teacher development depends on supportive leadership, collaboration with peers, and high quality professional development opportunities.<sup>30</sup> Invictus Academy will work to ensure teachers are supported by school leadership, have sufficient time to collaborate with peers, and partake in meaningful professional development opportunities. Teachers in both the middle and high school will each have two planning periods each day to ensure there is time within the school day for teachers to tend to grading, lesson planning, coaching meetings, and other critical work needed to ensure excellent instruction. These, along with other attributes of a healthy school staff culture, will be measured on an anonymous quarterly staff survey.

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<sup>28</sup> Hanushek, Eric. "Valuing Teachers." *Education Next* (Summer: 2011). Web.

<sup>29</sup> Lemov, Doug, Erica Woolway, and Katie Yezzi. *Practice Perfect: 42 Rules for Getting Better at Getting Better*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2012. Print.

<sup>30</sup> Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. College-Ready Education. *40,000 Teachers Give Their Views on Education Reform in "Primary Sources: America's Teachers on America's Schools"* *GatesFoundation.org*. 2013. Web.

We provide robust opportunities for teachers to hone and develop their craft, both as individuals as well as a collective group. Invictus Academy will have three weeks of rigorous, practice-based PD at the start of the school year to ensure we open each school year strong. During the school year, staff will participate in weekly PD, which includes a both instructional PD and collaboration time for our teachers. In addition, following quarterly interim assessments, we have calendared “Data Days” to allot time for teachers and coaches to reflect on benchmark exams. Finally, we ensure teachers are observed and given feedback weekly, at a minimum, by an instructional coach. Teachers meet with their coaches each week to debrief observations, discuss formative assessment data, and receive lesson planning support. A more robust description of our PD plan can be found in **Appendix 17: Professional Development Plan.**

- **Retention:** The most predictive factor of teacher quality is having three years of experience.<sup>31</sup> Therefore, retaining teachers must be a priority at Invictus Academy. In order to retain teachers, we will utilize a number of strategies, including the creation of performance-based tiers, which enable teachers to earn salary-increases and additional leadership opportunities at Invictus Academy. There are five performance tiers: Beginning Proficiency, Proficiency, Advanced Proficiency, Master Teacher Track, and Master Teacher. Based on a combination of student achievement data, rubric-based evaluation, and a Portfolio of Practice prepared by teachers, teachers can advance through the five tiers, which are tied to pay increases and opportunities for additional leadership responsibilities within the school.<sup>32</sup> Master Teachers will have the opportunity to serve as peer coaches as well as join the Instructional Leadership Team or the School Culture Leadership Team.

In addition to pay increases and leadership opportunities, we will create a culture in which every teacher is valued, respected, and supported. We will celebrate staff members during our PD check-ins as well as during community meetings, hold staff culture-building events to build and strengthen adult culture, and have an open-door policy so teachers can bring ideas, feedback, and concerns directly to the leadership team. In addition, starting in our second year, we will have an Instructional Leadership Team and a School Culture Leadership Team, both composed of school leadership, department heads, and/or Master Teachers, which gives teachers a voice in the direction of the school. These teams are responsible for collecting and responding to school-wide data on instruction and school culture, respectively, and support the planning of PD to address gaps that are exposed in the data.<sup>33</sup>

## **2. Students learn and grow most through a rigorous, data-driven curriculum.**

For 100% of students to graduate from high school prepared to thrive in college and beyond, we will closely and regularly analyze student data so that we can better target our instruction, ensuring

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<sup>31</sup> "Bill Gates: "How Do You Make a Teacher Great?" Part 1." *TED-Ed*. Web. 07 Mar. 2017.

<sup>32</sup> This model is based on the one that has proven effective at recruiting highly qualified staff at Leadership Public Schools-Richmond.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

we are able to meet the learning needs of all students across all subgroups.<sup>34</sup> Invictus Academy teachers will administer daily, weekly, quarterly, and end-of-year assessments aligned to the Common Core State Standards and the Next Generation Science Standards. Each of these will enable teachers and the leadership team to monitor individual and whole-group progress towards mastery of the standards and make adjustments to both whole and small group instruction necessary for student mastery. Quarterly and end-of-year assessment data will be analyzed with the support of instructional coaches using a structured data reflection protocol. Analysis of these assessments will include a deep dive into student performance on individual assessment items, identification of patterns or trends in the data, hypothesis of root causes for misconceptions, and development of a re-teaching plan to address whole class misconceptions and plan small group and/or individual student remediation. This close and thoughtful attention to data will support student mastery and achievement in all content areas.

In addition, by the school's second year, an Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) will be established consisting of department heads<sup>35</sup> from each subject area (ELA, math, science, social studies, and Speech and Debate/electives), which may include Master Teachers, and school leadership. This group, in concert with school leadership will be responsible for conducting classroom observations, monitoring student data, and developing targeted instructional professional development, such that the school is being responsive to both qualitative and quantitative measures of student achievement.

For a complete accounting of Invictus Academy's data systems and structures, see **Element 3: Data Analysis**.

### **3. Students are regularly challenged to think critically and problem solve creatively.**

“By creating opportunities for exploration, challenging students to think critically, and empowering students to teach and learn from their peers, students will have a greater sense of ownership over their education.”—*WCCUSD Strategic Plan Report, 2014-2019*<sup>36</sup>

In a time when a world of knowledge is regularly at students' fingertips in the form of a smart phone, colleges and employers are increasingly placing a premium on students' critical thinking and problem-solving abilities over their factual knowledge. As Tony Wagner and Ted Dintersmith write in *Most Likely to Succeed*, “Technology is turning our economy upside down...[C]areer options for creative problem solvers will become ever more abundant, while options for hoop-jumpers will be dismal.”<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Marsh, Julia A., John F. Pane, and Laura S. Hamilton. *Making Sense of Data-Driven Decision Making in Education*. RAND Corporation, 2006. Web.

<sup>35</sup> Department heads earn a stipend for their additional responsibilities, including service on the ILT. This expense is accounted for in our budget under line item “Professional Development”, which can be found in **Appendix 7: Budget Base Case—School of the District**.

<sup>36</sup> *West Contra Costa Strategic Plan Report, 2014-2019*. Publication. p.19: Third Plateau Social Impact Strategies and Capitol Impact, n.d. Print.

<sup>37</sup> Wagner, Tony, and Ted Dintersmith. *Most Likely to Succeed: Preparing Our Kids for the Innovation Era*. NY: Scribner, 2016. Print. p. 62

To develop these increasingly important skills, we will challenge students with complex, multi-day assignments in which students apply their knowledge and skills to defend their positions using evidence and solve problems without finite answers. In math and science classes, students will tackle case studies that challenge them to pair their quantitative and qualitative reasoning skills to form and defend a solution to problems without finite solutions. In English and history classes, students will be asked to synthesize multiple fiction and non-fiction texts or historical documents of varying perspectives to form and defend an argument in response to discussion questions. This vision explicitly moves students away from the world that valued rote memorization and regurgitation to the one we live in now, which rewards critical thinking and analytical capacity. Endemic to this vision is ensuring that students:

- Attack meaningful, engaging challenges
- Have open access to resources
- Grapple with problems and ideas, often for days, and learn to recover from failure
- Form their own point of view
- Engage in frequent debate
- Collaborate
- Display accomplishments publicly
- Work hard because they are intrinsically motivated<sup>38</sup>

With an intentional focus on critical thinking, by the time students at Invictus Academy graduate in 12<sup>th</sup> grade, their higher order thinking skills will be at a college level. As a result, in college and beyond, students will be equipped with the quantitative and qualitative reasoning skills to solve relevant problems across various disciplines.

#### **4. Intentional use of technology personalizes student learning.**

Though we do not believe that technology represents a silver bullet to our students' educational challenges, we do believe it can facilitate and enhance instruction in ways that otherwise might be impossible. Strategic and thoughtful use of technology can shift the cognitive load from teachers to students when used appropriately. For a list of the specific technologies we plan to use, please see **Appendix 11: Technology Platforms Chart**. There are three ways in which technology will enhance instruction and therefore student outcomes at Invictus Academy of Richmond:

- **Empowering teachers to use real-time data:** Instant response systems, such as the platform Gooru, allow teachers to check students' understanding and individual and class-wide data in real-time.<sup>39</sup> By supporting teachers in identifying precisely which students have grasped a concept and which are still struggling, teachers can tailor their instruction to the needs of their classes immediately and address any whole-class misconceptions. This also allows for teachers to identify and address individual misconceptions with students who are struggling with specific concepts during class, based on data.

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<sup>38</sup> Most Likely to Succeed, p. 205.

<sup>39</sup> Software programs are grouped as a lump-sum expense in our budget under "Books and Software," which can be found in **Appendix 7: Budget Base Case—School of the District**.

- **Empowering students to learn at their own pace:** Programs like ST Math and Khan Academy allow students to work on content, particularly in math, appropriate for their skill level. Students learn best when tackling work that is within this ‘zone of proximal development,’ the level at which work is appropriately difficult for a given child.<sup>40</sup> In large classes in which students are at widely varying skill levels, providing appropriately difficult work at each level can be difficult, which is especially important in 7<sup>th</sup> grade because students will arrive at Invictus Academy with varying levels of content mastery and skill. Thus, we will use a blended approach to ensure that students work at the appropriate level, so that they can grow as quickly as possible.
- **Providing students with more practice:** One of the major advantages of technology is that it can enable students to get more practice and feedback than when a class of students is tied to the same pacing.<sup>41</sup> When students complete a problem, software enables them to move on to the next one, rather than having to wait for the rest of the class to progress. In addition, the same software that is used in class can be made available after school or at home, including on mobile devices, so students can seek out extra practice when they need it. To ensure that this practice is meaningful, we will provide teachers with access to and training with effective software platforms to provide students with extra practice when appropriate.

## 5. Students thrive within purposeful structures that cultivate strong academic habits.

Students’ academic and personal habits are just as critical to their success in college and in life as their academic knowledge and skills.<sup>42</sup> To develop these habits, we will pursue the following:

- **Purposeful and gradual release of responsibility over time:** We know from our observation of the highest performing charter schools around the country that students thrive in structured environments. At the same time, structure must be released over time so that students learn to take ownership and accountability for their own trajectory as they move towards the independence required of post-secondary students.<sup>43</sup> Thus, we will intentionally and strategically release structure as our students progress through Invictus Academy. For example, in 7<sup>th</sup> grade, students who fail to complete their homework will be assigned to Homework Center during lunch and their parents will be notified. By 10<sup>th</sup> grade, we expect that students will have internalized the importance of homework completion, and they will be expected to complete their homework without a structured support. This gradual release of responsibility will be executed with systems including homework completion, transitions, and Tutorial, such that when they enter their senior year

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<sup>40</sup> Subban, Pearl. "Differentiated Instruction." *International Education Journal* 7.7 (2006): 935-47. Web and Lemov, Doug. *Teach like a Champion: The Complete Handbook to Master the Art of Teaching*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2011. Print.

<sup>41</sup> Tullis, Jonathan G., and Aaron S. Benjamin. "On the Effectiveness of Self-Paced Learning." *Journal of Memory and Language* 64.2 (2011): 109-18. Web. 4 Mar. 2017.

<sup>42</sup> Tough, Paul. *How Children Succeed: Confidence, Curiosity and the Hidden Power of Character*. London: Arrow, 2014. Print.

<sup>43</sup> Tough, Paul. "What It Takes to Make a Student." *The New York Times*. *The New York Times*, 25 Nov. 2006. Web. 22 Feb. 2017.

students are accustomed to and able to navigate the independence that accompanies college.

- **Cognitive development through deliberate practice:** Though academic achievement drives the design of Invictus Academy, we recognize that strengths developed in non-academic settings often permeate academics in a positive manner, as was explained by Paul Tough in *Helping Children Succeed*.<sup>44</sup> Thus, each teacher will design and lead a 10-week enrichment that will build students' discipline and persistence in a non-academic activity daily.

The exact course offerings will be determined by teachers, who will select, with school leadership approval, the offering they want to lead. For teachers, this represents an opportunity to bring a passion of theirs outside of school into the school building. Students will provide preferences based on offerings determined by teachers, and school leadership will, to the best of its ability, strive to honor students' choice for their three 10-week rotations of Deliberate Practice. However, every student will partake in at least one 10-week rotation of coding, as we view exposure to computer programming as a vital part of a student's education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (see **Element 1: An Educated Person in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century** below). Some examples of possible Deliberate Practice courses may include, but are not limited to:

- Coding
- Music
- Chess
- Basketball
- Yoga
- Dance
- Running
- Mindfulness
- Soccer

The cognitive development generated through deliberate practice in non-academic settings will support students in developing the habits of mind that will, in turn, engender academic success. School leadership will support teachers in the design and implementation of their deliberate practice courses, ensuring high-quality execution of deliberate practice. The cognitive skills developed through this enrichment are the same that drive academic performance, and as a result, supports the development of academic skills and habits.

- **Explicit conversations about character and identity:** To support students in their development of character, we must have a space in which teachers and students can explicitly engage in dialogue about key issues and challenges. This will be one of the primary functions of our daily Advisory period. In Advisories, Advisors lead students in lessons that spur critical conversations around our core values. These lessons begin with reflective questions followed by a reading or activity, and then close with a class discussion, with students seated in a circle. These discussions are designed to foster

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<sup>44</sup>Tough, Paul. *Helping Children Succeed: What Works and Why*. N.p.: n.p. n.d Print.

authentic social and emotional learning opportunities. The curriculum will be designed based on a successful pilot at Leadership Public Schools-Richmond (modeled after the Penn Resiliency Program), where survey data indicated the vast majority of teachers and students viewed the program as effective.<sup>45</sup> These critical conversations about core values are essential to students’ success both academically and interpersonally. Central to these discussions is the idea that issues of values, beliefs, and character are relevant for everyone, adults and students alike. These conversations are framed thematically by grade level, as shown in **Figure 3**.

**Figure 3. Advisory Themes by Grade Level**

Grade level	Advisory Theme
7 <sup>th</sup>	Core Values
8 <sup>th</sup>	Ethics
9 <sup>th</sup>	Privilege
10 <sup>th</sup>	Gender
11 <sup>th</sup>	College
12 <sup>th</sup>	Career

In academic classes, and as outlined below, specific core values are practiced within the first five minutes of class. Following a short set of academic questions that students answer when class begins, called the launch, students stand and teachers select and lead students in a ritual rooted in one of our core values. These rituals are selected by teachers from the options featured in **Figure 4**.

**Figure 4. Classroom Core Values Rituals**

Core Value	Exercise
Mindfulness	Teacher leads students in a mindful minute. <sup>46</sup>
Gratitude	Teacher solicits three items of gratitude from three students using the sentence stem, “I am grateful for...because...”
Purpose	Teacher solicits three student goals for the class period using the sentence stem, “My goal in this period is to...and this goal matters because...” <sup>47</sup>
Joy	Three students share one good thing, each, about their day.
Kindness	Three students each give one “shout out” of another student, staff member, or teacher.

<sup>45</sup> Seligman, Martin E. P. *Authentic Happiness: Using the New Positive Psychology to Realize Your Potential for Deep Fulfillment*. London: Nicholas Brealey, 2013. Print.

<sup>46</sup> Research indicates mindfulness practices in schools increase students’ attention, focus, and emotional regulation. This is consistent with the strong positive effects of the Mindful Life Project in Richmond. See: Sedlmeier, P., Eberth, J., Schwarz, M., Zimmermann, D., Haarig, F., Jaeger, S., & Kunze, S. (2012). *The psychological effects of meditation: A meta-analysis*. *Psychological Bulletin*, 138(6), 1139.

<sup>47</sup> Research has consistently shown the verbal or written expression of gratitude to increase self-reported wellbeing. See: Sansone RA, et al. "Gratitude and Well Being: The Benefits of Appreciation," *Psychiatry* (Nov. 2010): Vol. 7, No. 11, pp. 18–22.

Purpose, perseverance, integrity, productivity, and growth mindset	Teacher reads quote pertaining to core value, and asks 1-2 students to reflect on its meaning and/or importance.
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To support with the development of academic habits, Invictus Academy intentionally scaffolds academic expectations of students throughout their middle and high school years. With appropriate scaffolding by grade level, students will complete longer assignments with fewer interim deadlines, have opportunities to make more independent choices, assume leadership responsibilities within the school, and take initiative and ownership of the supports that will best help them in their academic courses. These experiences will challenge students to exhibit core values in authentic settings, complementing explicit discussion of core values in Advisories. We believe that these traits will live with students well beyond their time at Invictus Academy, enabling them to be prudent in their decision-making, resilient in the face of professional and personal obstacles, and successful in their careers.

## 6. A structured, joyful school community allows students and staff to thrive.

We believe that a structured and joyful school community aides students’ academic pursuits as well as in the growth and development of staff. At Invictus Academy, we are committed to developing a school culture that values the strengths of individuals as well as the collective group within a structured and joyful community. This kind of environment is established by celebrating student and staff success, openly showing gratitude and appreciation for one another, and building a culture that rests on positivity. For both students and staff, this culture is critical, as it is shown to have strong positive effects on intellectual, social, and physical well-being.<sup>48</sup> Three key components of our plan to establish this environment follow:

- **Community meeting:** Each week, the school will gather together in a common space for our Community Meeting. At each meeting, we will have community building activities as well as a celebration of one **Student of the Week** in each grade level and one **Staff Member of the Week**. When appropriate, these meetings may also serve to showcase student talents in art, music, or other potential enrichment areas.
- **Discipline system rooted in restorative justice practices:** Invictus Academy will have an environment that is both warm and strict. This mix will be accomplished through a discipline system that emphasizes positive reinforcement and praise. Teachers will be trained to set clear expectations and give clear directions, looking to positively narrate students who meet expectations before correcting those who are not. Additionally, staff will be trained in having positive, restorative conversations with students who violate classroom norms and/or expectations. For a full description of our discipline policies and practices, including our use of trauma informed practices, see **Element10: School Culture**.

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<sup>48</sup> Fredrickson, Barbara. *Positivity: Groundbreaking Research to Release Your Inner Optimist and Thrive*. Oxford: Oneworld, 2011. Print.

- **A purposeful system of recognitions and corrections:** Like the top schools in the country, we will employ a system that is tied to student rewards and consequences.<sup>49</sup> Recognitions for achievements and positive behaviors will be given to students publicly, joyfully, and using wording that links each recognition to one of the school’s core values. For example, a teacher might say, “Shawn, you’re receiving a recognition for kindness—offering help to a peer strengthens our community. Thank you.” By contrast, corrections will be administered quickly, calmly, and, whenever possible, privately. One of the major advantages of this system is that it enables our leadership team to track data regarding recognitions and corrections using an online platform, such as Kickboard.<sup>50</sup> Through a combination of quantitative and observational data, we can ensure that school culture is positive while maintaining high expectations for student conduct.
- **Robust support and appreciation of staff:** We believe that for Invictus Academy to achieve its mission, it must be a place where staff are supported and appreciated. This type of work environment aligns with our core values as a school and will help us attract top talent. At the outset of each weekly professional development session, we make 10 minutes for staff to respond, as a whole group, to three check-in prompts that enable staff to learn more about one another, recognize a colleague, or express gratitude. One of the three check-in questions carries over across all meetings: “Express gratitude for or recognize another staff member.” In addition, each week at community meeting we celebrate a **Staff Member of the Week**. The Staff Member of the Week receives a commemorative t-shirt and has one student and one other staff member speak to his/her merits in front of the whole school community. During **Teacher Appreciation Week**, we show our gratitude for the tremendous efforts of our teachers in a variety of ways each day including hosting a special community meeting in which we celebrate each teacher publicly.

In addition to personal recognition, we will ensure our staff is supported professionally. Each quarter, we will offer our staff an anonymous survey modeled upon research-backed survey items from *12: The Elements of Great Managing*.<sup>51</sup> Starting in our second year of operation, responding to survey data will be the responsibility of the School Culture Leadership Team. The Executive Director will also have one-on-one check-ins with every staff member before the start of the school year and at least once each semester to ensure all voices are heard and all staff concerns are addressed.

## 7. Students learn to communicate confidently, and communicate confidently to learn.

Confident communication is a critical skill for college-bound students, and it has been identified by numerous Richmond alumni as a gap that steepened their learning curve during their first year of college. Our model is responsive to this need, and our instructional design is constructed to support students towards communicating with confidence to diverse audiences and for diverse

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<sup>49</sup> Our approach is modeled after Leadership Public Schools-Richmond and Valor Academies in Nashville, TN, both of which have strong positive cultures and exceptional student achievement results.

<sup>50</sup> Use of an online Student Information Systems platform is accounted for in the budget under “Student Information System” in **Appendix 7: Budget Base Case—School of the District**.

<sup>51</sup> Wagner, Rodd, and James K. Harter. *12: The Elements of Great Managing*. New York: Free, 2007. Print. See our planned staff survey in **Appendix 14: Staff, Parent, and Student Surveys**.

purposes. The following structures and systems ensure that students develop their communication skills, particularly public speaking, extensively.

- **Speech and Debate:** Every 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grader takes a Speech and Debate course at Invictus Academy. The course map for this subject can be found in **Appendix 10: Speech and Debate Course Map**, and builds student skills to enable them to deliver progressively longer speeches with increasingly original content over time. Once students transition to high school, we allocate resources to enable interested students to join the Speech and Debate Team, which will compete in the high school National Speech & Debate Association.<sup>52</sup> In addition to the benefits of developing strong public speaking ability, many local tournaments are held on college campuses across the Bay Area and bring together a diverse body of students. We believe it is crucial to provide our students access to opportunities that broaden their horizons, and competing with top students around the Bay Area at prestigious colleges, including Stanford University, UC Berkeley, and Santa Clara University, offers our students one such opportunity.
- **Socratic Seminars:** Across classes, our teaching staff will be trained to execute Socratic seminars on a regular basis. At Invictus Academy, a Socratic seminar is defined as a formal, open-discussion rooted in text(s) in which the discussion leader asks open-ended questions and participants are free to share their views, backed by evidence. Responses offered in Socratic seminars are evaluated according to an objective rubric and scored for grading purposes. These discussions challenge students to build strong habits of reading and discussion, providing time and space for students to think critically, state and defend arguments, evaluate evidence, evaluate claims, and refine their viewpoints on critical issues. These discussions are possible across disciplines, but will be featured most prominently in humanities classes, and can take multiple forms at teachers' discretion.
- **Class Presentations:** The foundational skills students develop in their Speech and Debate courses will be activated in their other academic classes through frequent class presentations. Across content areas, students will be asked to present work to the whole class, which will take multiple forms. For example, in English classes, students might develop and deliver a presentation that synthesizes a research paper they have written. In science classes, students might deliver a similar presentation on a recent lab experiment they conducted in class. Teachers may also opt to have students deliver less formal presentations without slides at their discretion. However, in all classes, students are required to deliver a minimum of one formal presentation per semester on an assignment selected by teachers.

## The Educated Person in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

Invictus Academy is committed to equipping students with the knowledge, skills, abilities, and mindsets to thrive in the changing economic and social landscape brought about since the turn of

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<sup>52</sup> In our staffing model, we hire two middle school Speech and Debate teachers, who will lead the high school team. We allocate \$500/student for entry fees and travel starting in the 2020-2021 school year. Budgeting for the Speech and Debate team can be found in **Appendix 7: Budget Base Case—School of the District** under the line item “Enrichment program.”

the century. In particular, we recognize that the growth of technology has catalyzed a shift in the skills and abilities most in demand in the modern workplace. Our design is responsive to these modern demands, which are encompassed by the following elements of our program.

### **Students develop technological literacy and data analysis skills.**

The growing role of technology places an increased onus on schools to support students in developing technological literacy and data analysis skills. In October of 2016, LinkedIn revealed its top ten skills most sought after by employers<sup>53</sup>:

1. Cloud and distributed computing
2. Statistical analysis and data mining
3. Web architecture and developmental framework
4. Middleware and integration software
5. User interface design
6. Network and information security
7. Mobile development
8. Data presentation
9. Search Engine Optimization/Search Engine Marketing
10. Storage Systems and Management

The list above underscores the growing need to provide students with exposure and understanding of computers and data, as a strong foundation of technological understanding and data analysis is increasingly indispensable to economic opportunity. Our program is designed to provide students with this strong foundation.

In our Deliberate Practice period in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades, students partake in introductory web design and introductory Python courses. These modules are self-paced using free online courses provided by Udacity, Code Academy, and Code.org, which were selected because of their pedagogical strength, as evaluated by our leadership team.<sup>54</sup> In 9<sup>th</sup> grade, all students are required to take Computer Programming, and starting in their sophomore years, students also have the option to take a Computer Science elective course, which will build on the required course from 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Additionally, all seniors will take either Advanced Placement Statistics or College Preparatory Statistics. Together, these opportunities set students up to navigate a world increasingly influenced by technology, whether they pursue careers in the field of data science and technology or not.

### **Students can quantitatively and qualitatively reason to solve interdisciplinary problems without finite solutions.**

Whereas the transmission of knowledge was a primary driver of schooling in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the development of skills is taking precedence in the 21<sup>st</sup>, largely because the Internet has reduced the importance of memorization and regurgitation of facts. The modern workplace requires that professionals be able to apply their learning in new contexts and be comfortable using their skills

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<sup>53</sup> <https://blog.linkedin.com/2016/10/20/top-skills-2016-week-of-learning-linkedin>.

<sup>54</sup> <http://blog.udacity.com/2012/08/high-school-offers-credit-for-udacity.html>; Code.org has been used to garner positive results in Oakland Unified School District: <https://code.org/educate/partner/district-partners>.

to navigate uncertainty.<sup>55</sup> Our instructional model is designed to meet these demands, with a problem-solving focus in all math and science classes.

In mathematics, in middle school, students benefit from both a personalized skill-building period as well as a case-based, analytical problem-solving period daily. This model ensures that students develop procedural mathematical understanding and are challenged to apply their mathematical tools to solve real-world problems. Our coursework builds to the point where students can, by 8<sup>th</sup> grade, read a multi-page case with exhibits and apply their reasoning skills to present and defend a solution where no single right answer exists, coupling qualitative and quantitative reasoning with the ability to produce multiple solutions to problems.

In science classes, students will be asked complex questions and required to form research-based hypotheses and design experiments to test these hypotheses, all in accordance with the scientific method. This inquiry-based approach mimics upper-level coursework and moves away from teaching science as simply a body of knowledge. Taken together, our instructional design prepares students to apply their learning to solve relevant problems both in college and beyond.

### **Students are able to use evidence to form and defend an argument to diverse audiences.**

Across professions, the ability to form and defend an argument is critical to opportunity, particularly in the age of big data. From classrooms to boardrooms, it is crucial that persons in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are able to consult a range of evidence and discern patterns and/or trends to form conclusions. At Invictus Academy, we believe in the importance of defending an argument across disciplines, and have designed our coursework to match this ever-important need through our Speech and Debate courses, class discussions, and writing exercises in multiple content areas.

Our innovative Speech and Debate program is uniquely suited to support students in this area. In both 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade, students deliver speeches and engage in debates in a variety of formats to develop their understanding of audience, purpose, and presence. One of the significant benefits of the course is that it is designed for students to develop their proficiency in code-switching, or communicating to different audiences.

Skills that students develop in argumentation and presentation are then activated in core content courses throughout middle school (7-8) and high school (9-12). The foundation of our English and history classes is text-based analysis. In English classes, students will read seminal texts and analyze their content in the context of essential questions. In history classes, students will synthesize historical documents to form arguments in response to historical questions. Through small group and class discussions, students will hone their skills in crafting and defending arguments. Collectively, our program provides students with the knowledge, skills, coaching, and practice to make communication a strength that will support their success in college and beyond.

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<sup>55</sup> Schmidt, Eric. *How Google Works*. Place of Publication Not Identified: Grand Central, 2016. Print. p. 17-20

## Population to be Served by the Charter School

According to the most recently available enrollment information, West Contra Costa Unified School District enrolled 28,598 students in 2015-2016. The demographics of these nearly 30,000 students are shown in **Figure 5** below.

**Figure 5. WCCUSD Demographics by Percentage**

<b>Subgroup</b>	<b>WCCUSD</b>
African American	18%
Asian	11%
Filipino	5%
White	11%
Hispanic or Latino	51%
Pacific Islander	1%
English Language Learners	34%
Socio-economically Disadvantaged	71%
Special Education	12%

Invictus Academy aims to enroll a high-needs population that meets or exceeds the District's demographic percentages with respect to historically underserved students, including English Language Learners, students who are socio-economically disadvantaged, students with special needs, and vulnerable student populations including, but not limited to, foster youth and newcomers.

Invictus Academy has chosen to locate in Richmond, as it has a high number of students who have not been academically successful in elementary school and strong parent demand for a high performing, college preparatory middle and high school. These factors resonated with the founding team of Invictus Academy, which has deep roots in Richmond. The majority of the founding team works in, has worked in, and/or lives in Richmond, and the entire founding team has relevant professional experience in education. As a result, we recognize and understand the challenges to providing a great education to the students of Richmond, specifically.

Recently, there have been increases in student achievement on both the math and ELA Smarter Balance Consortium (SBAC) Exams within WCCUSD. With that said, there remain significant gains to be made in *both* District and charter schools, as a majority of students in Richmond are not meeting the college readiness benchmarks on both the Smarter Balance Consortium (SBAC) Exams and the Early Assessment Program (EAP). On the SBAC Exam, less than one in four students in Richmond are currently demonstrating college readiness in math and one in three are doing the same in English, as outlined in **Figure 6** below.

**Figure 6. 2015-2106 Richmond Middle and High School SBAC Proficiency<sup>56</sup>**

School Name	Math SBAC	ELA SBAC
Aspire Richmond Ca. College Preparatory Academy	29%	59%
Caliber: Beta Academy	27%	34%
De Anza High	13%	30%
Greenwood Academy	1%	6%
John F. Kennedy High	3%	17%
Leadership Public Schools: Richmond	30%	74%
Lovonya Dejean Middle	5%	7%
Making Waves Academy	27%	41%
Manzanita Middle	20%	28%
Richmond Charter Academy	40%	49%
Richmond High	10%	40%
<b>WCCUSD Averages</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>32%</b>
<b>California Averages</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>48%</b>

Prior to the implementation of the SBAC Exams, the Early Assessment Program (EAP) was commonly used as a metric for college readiness. On this assessment, more than seven in 10 students were deemed not ready, or not conditionally ready, for college in English, and more than six in 10 were deemed not ready for college in math. The data from these assessments, which can be found in **Figure 7**, also revealed stark disparities in achievement across subgroups, with performance amongst historically underserved minorities, students from low-income households, and English Learners trailing the average performance for the general student population.

**Figure 7. 2013-2014 Early Assessment Program Student Performance<sup>57</sup>**

Subgroup	Ready/Conditionally Ready for College in ELA	Ready/Conditionally Ready for College in Mathematics
African American	21%	27%
American Indian	0%	0%
Asian	45%	57%
Filipino	36%	52%
Hispanic	18%	24%
Pacific Islander	0%	8%
White	43%	51%
English Learners	0%	4%
Low-Income	19%	26%
Special Education	1%	5%
<b>Average</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>38%</b>

<sup>56</sup> Los Angeles Times Staff. "California's New K-12 Test Scores: What They Are, Why They Matter and How Your School Scored." *Los Angeles Times*. 24 Aug. 2016. Web. 02 Feb. 2017. Proficiency is defined as students who meet or exceed the SBAC standard.

<sup>57</sup> <http://www.wccusd.net/Page/5385>.

There remains significant work to be done to academically prepare all students, particularly those from historically disadvantaged subgroups, for college. Invictus Academy is committed to providing increased learning opportunities for all learners, and particularly subgroups who have struggled academically and who have been low-achieving. The model of Invictus Academy is designed based on best practices observed at nearly 40 high-performing schools across the country that serve historically underserved students. In particular, extra instructional time in ELA in middle school in conjunction with the communications and speech and debate focus of our school is uniquely supportive of English Language Learners (see alignment of ELD standards and Speech and Debate course map in **Appendix 10: Speech and Debate Course Map**).

For students to thrive in the college of their choice, Invictus Academy of Richmond will work relentlessly to ensure students are prepared, both academically and with the appropriate habits to succeed in college. As a school, we are committed to students completing the A-G course requirements, ensuring students are eligible for admission at UC/CSU institutions. Currently in WCCUSD, a majority of students are ineligible for admission based on these requirements. In 2014-2015, 42% of high school graduates completed the requisite A-G courses for UC/CSU eligibility. As with student achievement data, there were significant gaps between subgroups on this measure, with socio-economically disadvantaged, English Learner, African American, and Hispanic students falling below their more affluent white and Asian peers in college preparation rates.

**Figure 8. WCCUSD A-G Completion Rate by Subgroup<sup>58</sup>**

<b>Group</b>	<b>A-G Completion Rate</b>	<b>Cohort Graduation Rate</b>
African American	26%	81%
Asian	55%	92%
Filipino	60%	97%
Hispanic/Latino	43%	82%
White	44%	87%
English Learners	6%	76%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>85%</b>

The lack of completion of college preparatory coursework, along with significant disparities in achievement across subgroups, has driven significant demand for college preparatory schooling options across grade levels in Richmond, and particularly at the high school level. This demand is reflected by lengthy waitlists at existing charter schools.<sup>59</sup> WCCUSD identified the aforementioned areas for growth in its *Strategic Plan Report*, published in 2013. The report stated that “[t]he achievement gap between white students and students of color persists, and District-wide there is an urgent need to dramatically increase and improve student learning.”<sup>60</sup> This problem is not unique to the District, but rather, one that is observable nation-wide.

<sup>58</sup> *West Contra Costa Kids Can First Annual Student Outcomes Report*. Rep. GO Public Schools, West Contra Costa, 25 Jan. 2017. Web. 25 Jan. 2017.

<sup>59</sup> Ioffe, Karina. "Richmond considering Regulations of Charter Schools." *East Bay Times*. East Bay Times, 15 Aug. 2016. Web.

<sup>60</sup> *West Contra Costa Strategic Plan Report, 2014-2019*. Publication: Third Plateau Social Impact Strategies and Capitol Impact, p.4.

Invictus Academy is committed to supporting the achievement of its students and, to the extent possible, supporting broader efforts within the District towards the achievement of all students in WCCUSD. Further, we hope to support the District in achieving Objective 31.4 of the same *Strategic Plan Report*: “Partner with Charter Schools: The District should consider partnering with local charter schools to develop a set of guidelines for District-charter collaboration and shared learning. Both District schools and charters can learn from one another and should develop a healthy working relationship.”

## **Community Support for the Proposed School**

We believe strongly in the importance of family and community engagement to the success of Invictus Academy. Through outreach to key local stakeholders, we have worked to develop a model that is uniquely responsive to the needs of students and families in Richmond, and also incorporates best practices with track records of success. In building the model and vision for Invictus Academy, we have worked to engage the community and create channels of communication to inform our plan and this petition.

Through our outreach, we have collected 10 signatures of teachers who are meaningfully interested in joining the staff of Invictus Academy, which we submit in accordance with the legal requirement for charter compliance. These signatures can be found in **Appendix 1: Teacher Signatures**. We have also collected 38 signatures of 5<sup>th</sup> grade parents who are meaningfully interested in enrolling their child at Invictus Academy in our opening year as 7<sup>th</sup> grade students, demonstrating parent demand for the school. These signatures can be found in **Appendix 2: Parent Signatures**. In addition, we have collected 48 signatures of parents with children who are in 4<sup>th</sup> grade or below who are meaningfully interested in enrolling their children at Invictus Academy once the school has opened and is in operation. These signatures can also be found in **Appendix 2: Parent Signatures**. Together, these signatures reflect the significant parent demand for a grade 7-12 option in Richmond. We expect that, with continued outreach, we will continue to find that parent demand for Invictus Academy is high.

## **Community Input**

Through our conversations with stakeholders, we have affirmed or modified our model in significant ways. Key aspects of Invictus Academy’s proposed program that have been influenced or affirmed by community input include, but are not limited to:

- Family engagement plan
- Double-periods in math and English
- Daily tutoring embedded in the school day
- Inclusion of an Advisory period focused on core values
- Inclusion of mindfulness education
- Contents of Parent University
- Race, Class, Gender, and Justice elective course in 9<sup>th</sup> grade

Our model includes systems and structures for soliciting continued parent and student input on our school model, and we plan to continue to utilize this input to ensure we fully serve the families with which we work.

There are three pillars that have guided our community outreach thus far:

1. **We communicate and refine core elements of our proposed model.** The foundation of Invictus Academy's model was developed by lead petitioner Gautam Thapar through his study of high-performing urban charter schools across the country as part of the Building Excellent School's Fellowship, as well as through his experience as a teacher in Richmond at Leadership Public Schools-Richmond. This model includes, but is not limited to:

- Extended school day and school year
- Additional instructional time in math and English in the middle grades
- Intentional use of technology
- Daily tutoring and advising
- Partnership with families
- Robust speech and debate program

In communicating our model with local stakeholders, we have focused on these core elements and solicited input, ideas, and feedback openly. Over the course of our outreach, multiple elements of our design have evolved, including, but not limited to:

- Partnership with the Mindful Life Project to offer mindfulness education
- Extension of the tutorial period in our daily schedule
- Offering of Deliberate Practice on a daily basis
- Inclusion of a mandatory Race, Class, Gender, and Justice course in 9<sup>th</sup> grade
- Content of Parent University
- Creation of a Family Advisory Council
- Our discipline system's consequence ladder, including our restorative justice protocol

As an independent, start-up school, we are committed to designing a model that is built for Richmond, specifically. Ours has evolved over time to unite the insights of multiple perspectives within the community, and we are committed to continuing to refine our practices in response to local needs.

2. **Through grass-roots organizing, we are building awareness and investment.** Over the past nine months, Invictus Academy has proactively reached out to stakeholders throughout the Richmond community, including students, alumni, parents, teachers, school leaders, churches, local government officials, and leaders of community organizations. Our outreach has taken a variety of forms, which include:

- Individual meetings with Richmond students, alumni, community leaders, teachers and school leaders, and other community stakeholders

- Broad dissemination of flyers to community members and community organizations, including churches
- Tabling events led by representatives of Invictus Academy to distribute information about the school
- Facebook advertisements targeted to the Richmond community for the Invictus Academy Facebook Page and website
- Holding of information sessions for parents and other stakeholders
- Attendance by Invictus Academy founding team members at local events

A summary of select metrics indicative of this outreach is available in **Figure 9** below.

**Figure 9. Measures of Community Outreach**

<b>Outreach Type</b>	<b>Progress</b>
One-on-one meetings	172
Local events attended	23
Tabling events	8
Information sessions	11
Richmond school visits	13
Website visits	454
Website page views	1,212
Facebook Page post engagements	2,006
Petition signatures, parents of 5 <sup>th</sup> grade students	38
Petition signatures, parents of students in 4 <sup>th</sup> grade and below	48
Total signatures	86

The most impactful community engagement has been grass-roots efforts led by parents. Beginning in mid-March, a team of invested parents has met weekly, at a minimum, to organize and build awareness amongst parents and other key stakeholders. Their work has included distributing flyers, hosting information sessions, and spreading word of Invictus Academy through their personal networks. The Parent Leaders team will continue to partner with the Invictus Academy leadership team (Executive Director, Dean of Students, and Director of Operations) to engage the community and ensure access to Invictus Academy for any and all interested families in the community.

3. **We are planning strategically.** The Invictus Academy Founding Team is working diligently to develop relationships and partnerships that will ensure a strong foundation for our school’s first year of operation. This work has included outreach to teachers, locally and nationally, to build a pipeline of teacher talent and solicit input from educators. Members of our team have also met with school founders and leaders to seek advice, lessons learned, and ideas based on the previous experience of teams who have navigated the process we are currently engaged in. These relationships have yielded valuable insights, and we envision strengthening our working relationship with local and regional schools to share resources and best practices once we open.

The totality of these efforts has ensured that our community engagement and outreach efforts have built significant public support for Invictus Academy. We will continue to empower

invested members of the community to lead in our outreach and support them diligently in these efforts. Our community engagement work has enabled us to build a model that is tailored to the needs of students and families in Richmond, and as we amplify these efforts, we will continue to be responsive to local voices.

## Enrollment

Invictus Academy will implement a slow growth model starting with 128 students in 7<sup>th</sup> grade, the natural transition point to middle school in the District, and add one additional grade each year until we reach full enrollment. After allotting for a planning year during the 2017-2018 school year, we will open in the Fall of 2018 and reach full capacity in the Fall of 2023. Our first cohort of students will graduate from high school prepared for college in the spring of 2024. Invictus Academy will backfill seats through all grades, consistent with the practice of traditional district schools in WCCUSD.

Starting small and growing slowly provides the best conditions for a strong opening school year, which research shows to be predictive of future school performance. According to the CREDO report, published out of Stanford University, 80% of charter schools that open in the bottom quintile in performance remain in that category five years later, while 94% of schools that open in the top quintile remain there over the same period of time.<sup>61</sup> Our slow growth model enables us to focus our time and attention in Year 1 to support strong performance from the moment we open. Our slow growth model ensures we can focus on refining one grade level of curriculum and professional development at a time, ensuring high quality results.

**Figure 10. Invictus Academy of Richmond 5-year Enrollment Plan**

Grade	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
7 <sup>th</sup>	128	128	128	128	128
8 <sup>th</sup>	0	128	128	128	128
9 <sup>th</sup>	0	0	128	128	128
10 <sup>th</sup>	0	0	0	128	128
11 <sup>th</sup>	0	0	0	0	128
12 <sup>th</sup>	0	0	0	0	0
Total	128	256	384	512	640

**Figure 11. Invictus Academy of Richmond Full-Scale Enrollment Plan**

Grade	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
7 <sup>th</sup>	128	128	128	128	128	128
8 <sup>th</sup>	0	128	128	128	128	128
9 <sup>th</sup>	0	0	128	128	128	128
10 <sup>th</sup>	0	0	0	128	128	128
11 <sup>th</sup>	0	0	0	0	128	128
12 <sup>th</sup>	0	0	0	0	0	128

<sup>61</sup> "Charter School Growth and Replication." *Center for Research on Educational Outcomes*(n.d.): n. pag. CREDO, 30 Jan. 2013. Web.

Total	128	256	384	512	640	768
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**Daily Schedule - Middle School**

In accordance with best practices studied at high performing charter schools across the country, Invictus Academy will opt for an extended school day and an extended school year calendar. These features allow for additional instructional time for students as well as additional professional development for teachers. Our school day begins at 8:00AM and ends at 4:00PM four (4) days per week, and ends at 1:50PM one (1) day per week, on our abbreviated day. The abbreviated day allows for two hours for staff Professional Development each week. The additional hours of instruction each week relative to the California minimum requirement amount to over 50 additional instructional days over the course of the school year. In total, our calendar and schedule ensures that Invictus Academy will exceed the California minimum requirements of 175 instructional days, as well as the required minutes for middle school.<sup>62</sup>

This additional instructional time is crucial, as we recognize that a large portion of our student body will enter 7<sup>th</sup> grade behind grade level in both reading and math, based on the most recently available student achievement data.<sup>63</sup> The extended school day allows us to include double periods in both English and mathematics, which amounts to 100 minutes of daily instruction in each subject. Our schedule was designed based on models from Leadership Public Schools-Richmond and Excel Academy in Boston, both of which have consistently out-performed both their respective districts and states on the SBAC and PARCC state assessments, while serving a high-needs population similar to the anticipated population of Invictus Academy or Richmond.

Our middle school schedule is designed to support students’ development of foundational skills while challenging them to also grow their higher order skills. Under this model, we expect that by the time students matriculate to high school, their skills will be at or above grade-level in both reading and mathematics.

In addition to providing more time for English and mathematics instruction, the extended school day also enables us to include a Speech and Debate course in both 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade, a Deliberate Practice period, Advisory, and Tutorial. The combination of these innovative elements of our program enable students to develop their knowledge, skills, and mindsets outside of traditional academic settings, build strong relationships with adults, and receive targeted, individual instruction as needed.

**Figure 12. Sample Middle School Schedule (8<sup>th</sup> grade)**

Start	End	Period
7:35	7:55	Breakfast

<sup>62</sup> California requires 54,000 instructional minutes for students in grades 4-8 and 64,800 instructional minutes for students in grades 9-12. For the California minimum requirements, see <http://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/aa/pa/instructionaltimetable.asp>.

<sup>63</sup> Rich, Motoko, Amanda Cox, and Matthew Bloch. "Money, Race and Success: How Your School District Compares." *The New York Times*. The New York Times, 29 Apr. 2016. Web. 30 Apr. 2017. [https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/04/29/upshot/money-race-and-success-how-your-school-district-compares.html?\\_r=1](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/04/29/upshot/money-race-and-success-how-your-school-district-compares.html?_r=1).

8:00	--	Official Start of School Day
8:00	8:50	ELA Foundational Skills
8:50	9:40	ELA Text Analysis
9:40	9:50	Break
9:50	10:40	Math Fundamentals
10:40	11:30	Math Problem Solving
11:35	12:00	Advisory
12:00	12:25	Lunch
12:25	12:50	Deliberate Practice
12:55	1:45	U.S. History
1:45	2:35	Science
2:35	3:25	Speech and Debate
3:30	4:00	Tutorial
4:00	--	Dismissal/End of School

**Figure 13. Sample Thursday Abbreviated-Day Middle School Schedule (8<sup>th</sup> grade)**

Start	End	Period
7:35	7:55	Breakfast
8:00	--	Official Start of School Day
8:00	8:50	ELA Foundational Skills
8:50	9:40	Math Fundamentals
9:40	9:50	Break
9:50	10:40	U.S. History
10:40	11:30	Science
11:30	11:55	Lunch
11:55	12:20	Deliberate Practice
12:25	1:15	Speech and Debate
1:20	1:50	Tutorial
1:50	--	Dismissal/End of School
2:15	4:15	Professional Development

**Figure 14. Sample Friday Schedule with Community Meeting**

Start	End	Period
7:35	7:55	Breakfast
8:00	--	Official Start of School Day
8:00	8:50	ELA Foundational Skills
8:50	9:40	ELA Text Analysis
9:40	9:50	Break
9:50	10:40	Math Fundamentals
10:40	11:30	Math Problem Solving
11:30	11:55	Lunch
11:55	12:20	Deliberate Practice

12:25	1:15	U.S. History
1:15	2:05	Science
2:05	2:55	Speech and Debate
3:00	3:30	Tutorial
3:35	4:00	Community Meeting
4:00	--	Dismissal/End of School

### Daily Schedule - High School

When students transition to 9<sup>th</sup> grade, their schedule is adjusted to accommodate college preparatory course requirements. The high school schedule remains an extended day model, supporting six periods instead of seven, and running from 8:00am until 4:00pm. The additional instructional time provided for by this model amounts to over 40 additional instructional days over the course of the school year. Our high school calendar and schedule ensures that Invictus Academy will exceed the California minimum requirements of 180 instructional days, as well as the required minutes for high school.<sup>64</sup>

The most common daily schedule for our high school students will consist of a single math, English, science, social studies, and language course, along with two elective courses. Students are grouped into four cohorts in this six-period model, ensuring that teachers have two planning periods to write lessons, grade student work, and/or meet with instructional coaches to develop their craft.

Though the high school schedule shifts significantly to ensure students' completion of college preparatory requirements, some supports from the middle school design remain in place. First, students loop with their Advisors from middle school into high school and retain the same Advisory groups. This consistency enables Advisors to deepen relationships with their advisees and advisees' parents, helps advisees deepen relationships with each other, and this approach maintains a consistent point of contact for parents. Second, the Tutorial period extends into high school, but is re-titled as Office Hours in alignment with college nomenclature. This 25-minute period remains essential to providing time and space during the school day for students to get targeted content support from teachers on topics students find challenging. In 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade, student regrouping for Office Hours is assigned by teachers, similar to the middle school grades, while in 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students are afforded more choice in how they utilize that time to parallel the level of choice students have in college. Similarly, every student in 9<sup>th</sup> grade takes a Computer Programming and Race, Class, Gender, and Justice elective, and in 10<sup>th</sup> grade and beyond students are able to choose the elective which is best fit for them.

**Figure 15. Sample 9<sup>th</sup> Grade High School Schedule**

Start	End	Subject
7:30	8:00	Breakfast

<sup>64</sup> California requires 54,000 instructional minutes for students in grades 4-8 and 64,800 instructional minutes for students in grades 9-12. For the California minimum requirements, see <http://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/aa/pa/instructionaltimetable.asp>.

8:00	--	Official Start of School Day
8:00	9:00	English Language Arts 9
9:05	10:05	Algebra 1
10:10	11:10	Biology
11:15	11:40	Advisory
11:40	12:10	Lunch
12:10	12:45	Office Hours
12:50	1:50	Race, Class, Gender, and Justice
1:55	2:55	Spanish 9
3:00	4:00	Computer Programming
4:00	--	Dismissal/End of School

**Figure 16. Sample Thursday Abbreviated-Day High School Schedule (9<sup>th</sup> Grade)**

Start	End	Subject
7:30	8:00	Breakfast
8:00	--	Official Start of School Day
8:00	8:50	English Language Arts 9
8:55	9:45	Algebra 1
9:50	10:40	Biology
10:40	11:30	Race, Class, Gender, and Justice
11:30	12:00	Lunch
12:00	12:50	Spanish 9
12:55	1:45	Computer Programming
1:50	--	Dismissal/End of School Day
2:15	4:15	Professional Development

**Figure 17. Sample 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Friday Schedule with Community Meeting**

Start	End	Subject
7:30	8:00	Breakfast
8:00	--	Official Start of School Day
8:00	9:00	English Language Arts 9
9:05	10:05	Algebra 1
10:10	11:10	Biology
11:15	11:50	Office Hours
11:50	12:20	Lunch
12:20	1:20	Race, Class, Gender, and Justice
1:25	2:25	Spanish 9
2:30	3:30	Computer Programming
3:35	4:00	Community Meeting
4:00	--	Dismissal/End of School Day

## Annual School Calendar

Our complete school calendar can be found in **Appendix 9: 2018-2019 Draft Calendar**. We utilize an extended school year model, with our first day of school beginning one week before schools in the District and ending the same week as the local schedule. During the course of the school year, we offer regular and frequent opportunities for professional development, such that the number of instructional days is similar to the District at 182. We offer 24 full days of professional development during the school year, which include Data Days after major assessments. Our holiday schedule mirrors that of the District, including the week-long break that taken during the week of President's Day in February.

## Curriculum and Instruction

Invictus Academy's mission is to educate students so that 100% of students thrive in the colleges of their choice, solve relevant problems, and communicate with confidence. Our curriculum and instructional approach are designed specifically to ensure that we achieve this mission.

Invictus Academy will use the California Common Core State Standards (CCSS), adopted by the California State Board of Education in 2010, as the anchor for our curriculum.<sup>65</sup> Our program is built to match the rigor and depth of the curriculum frameworks in Mathematics and English Language Arts, as well as the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), such that we provide students with the knowledge, skills, abilities, and beliefs needed to be successful in college and beyond. To successfully execute on these goals, we will vertically align courses to ensure students meet new challenges each successive year, and horizontally aligned courses in the same grade that complement one another. For example, students will utilize a standardized framework for annotating text, which will apply in their math, English, social studies, and science classes, and the rigor of the texts students read will increase as they transition from one grade to the next. This approach best ensures that students get consistent practice with key skills that transcend disciplines and are accountable for continuously improving as they progress through school.

This high degree of alignment we have targeted extends from our assessment and lesson planning approach. At the outset of the school year, teachers will be provided with a summative, end-of-year assessment as well as three interim assessments that make Invictus Academy's bar for student achievement clear.<sup>66</sup> These assessments will be built using the CCSS and are designed as benchmarks to support students towards mastery of the Smarter Balance Assessment Consortium (SBAC) exam in May. During the 2017-2018 school year, Invictus Academy's Executive Director will modify and finalize all end-of-year assessments based on those shared by Excel Academy Charter Schools and Brooke Charter Schools in Boston, MA.<sup>67</sup> Assessments are provided along with a scope and sequence for each course, which will be adapted by our Executive Director. Teachers may make adjustments in their pacing relative to the scope and sequence over the course

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<sup>65</sup> <http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/cc/ccssfaqs.asp>.

<sup>66</sup> Wiggins, Grant, and Jay McTighe. "Backwards Design: Why 'Backwards' Is Best." *Edutopia*. Web.

<sup>67</sup> We selected curriculum from Excel Academy and Brooke Charter Schools because their schools are amongst the highest performing in the state of Massachusetts. Through observation of their schools and analysis of their assessments, we believe these curricula to be of a level of rigor that will ultimately put students on a path to college.

of the school year in response to student data, but their adjustments will be anchored by the interim and summative assessments, which serve as tools with which to backwards plan instruction.<sup>68</sup>

Equipped with aligned assessments and a scope and sequence, teachers are then responsible for designing unit and daily lesson plans in accordance with their grade and subject level standards. Four weeks of exemplar lesson plans and one exemplar unit plan are provided to each middle school teacher, specific to their grade level and subject area at the beginning of the academic year. These will be developed by the Executive Director during the 2017-2018 school year. In high school, when content becomes increasingly specific to each discipline, additional summer professional development time will be allocated to support precise instructional planning. These resources are intended to support teachers in (1) focusing their attention early in the school year on building strong class culture and (2) developing a clear understanding for the level of rigor and detail expected in future unit and lesson plans. Teachers work with their instructional coaches throughout the school year to hone their unit and lesson planning skills, ensuring that both provide students with the rigor and support necessary for them to be on the path to college. This cycle of regular feedback on instructional materials, and more specifically, lesson plans is outlined below in **Figure 18**.

**Figure 18. Lesson Planning Feedback Cycle**

Day and Time	Feedback Cycle Step
Thursday by 10pm (one week and a half prior to lesson execution)	Teacher submits lesson plans using Invictus Academy lesson planning template. Lessons may be adapted from established curriculum and are aligned to the CCSS.
Monday by 8pm (one week from execution)	Instructional coach provides precise, written feedback to teacher for revision.
Monday by 7:30am (morning of execution)	Teacher has printed all lesson plans and instructional materials for the week, which reflect his/her coach's feedback. Feedback implemented in execution of lessons during the course of the week.

### Teacher Professional Development

We believe that strong student outcomes are driven by high quality instruction, which begins with detailed lesson planning and is a skill that teachers develop through intentional and consistent coaching. The District's *Strategic Plan Report* states that "[a] stronger professional development program for teachers will enhance teacher leadership opportunities and lead to greater student success and higher teacher retention."<sup>69</sup> As a result, we will engage our teachers in intensive professional development prior to the start of each school year, every Thursday during the school year on our abbreviated days, and on designated "Data Days" and PD days that follow major assessments or significant school breaks.

<sup>68</sup> Wiggins, Grant P., and Jay McTighe. *Understanding By Design*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2008. Print.

<sup>69</sup> *West Contra Costa Strategic Plan Report, 2014-2019*, p. 11.

## Summer Professional Development

At Invictus Academy, we believe that starting the school year off strong yields positive results for students. To that end, we ensure all teachers are prepared to lead effective lessons beginning on the first day of school. Invictus Academy holds a three-week long Summer Professional Development each year to ensure all staff members are in alignment with our mission and vision, are prepared to deliver effective lessons.

- **Week One:** The goal of the first week of professional development with teachers is to orient them to the school's mission and vision, build teamwork and culture, and begin the work of building critical skills required for high quality instruction. The activities included with staff include a deep dive into the school's mission and vision, in which staff identify concrete, specific knowledge, skills, abilities, and beliefs students must have for the school to achieve its mission. In addition, meetings will begin with team-building "ice breakers," and all staff will take the Total SDI personality inventory to help the team gain insight into each individual's working style and needs.<sup>70</sup> The week will close with modeling and practice of key instructional techniques in a simulated classroom setting.
- **Week Two:** The second week of summer professional development focuses on building teachers' capacity in lesson planning and execution. During this week, teachers will delve into the CCSS, SBAC, interim assessment, AP, SAT, and ACT exam items, and unit and lesson planning exemplars by content area. In addition, we will practice key instructional skills related to classroom management and culture in simulated classroom settings. By the end of this week, teachers will be prepared to execute their first week of lessons with strong precision.
- **Week Three:** During the third week of summer professional development, we will allocate a smaller portion of time to instructional skills and lesson planning and shift our focus to unit and lesson planning, as well as differentiation to support all learners. In addition, we will review key schoolwide and classroom procedures to ensure a strong start to the school year. These procedures include arrival and dismissal, bathroom breaks, and breakfast/lunch procedures, amongst others. This mix is intentional: teachers will still be able to build skills and develop lessons, but the focus will be on executing the first week of the school year with fluency. Our study of high-performing schools across the country has shown that a strong first month is irreplaceable in developing a strong school culture, and to that end we have dedicated a substantial portion of summer PD to ensuring a strong start.

## Weekly Professional Development

Invictus Academy staff will convene every Thursday to engage in a two-hour professional development, planned by the leadership team (Executive Director, Dean of Students, and Director of Operations in Year 1). These meetings are guided towards (1) achieving the school's annual goals, which are an extension of the school's mission and (2) responding to formative observational and assessment data. Weekly PD will always begin with a check-in question aimed

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<sup>70</sup> Winsborough, Tomas Chamorro-PremuzicDave. "Personality Tests Can Help Balance a Team." *Harvard Business Review*. N.p., 19 Mar. 2015. Web. 04 Mar. 2017.

at fostering and supporting a strong adult culture. This will also be the forum in which weekly student awards are nominated and voted upon. Following these opening PD routines, teachers will engage in learning on a variety of instructional topics, including best practices for scaffolding questions and content to support English Learners and students with special needs, item analysis of relevant SBAC and MAP exam questions, instructional technique workshops, grading calibration of performance tasks, and video observation discussion and feedback sessions. When appropriate after year one, staff will break into content-specific teams to work on instructional practices specific to a particular discipline. For example, this might include norming on and vertically aligning practices related to lab protocol in science classes, habits of discussion in history and ELA classes, and best practices for implementing the case method in math classes. These activities build capacity both individually, within classrooms, and collectively, by creating consistent instructional practices across the school. Each week, we ensure time is reserved for Grade-Level Team collaboration. A sample PD agenda is below in **Figure 19**.

**Figure 19. Sample Weekly PD Agenda**

Time	PD Activity
2:15pm—2:25pm	Check-in Question
2:25pm—2:35pm	Student recognition
2:35pm—2:55pm	Taxonomy practice
2:55pm—3:30pm	Grade-Level team collaboration
3:30pm—4:00pm	Collaborative planning time
4:00pm—4:15pm	Process check

### Professional Development Days

Annually, Invictus Academy of Richmond will have 24 full day staff PD days during the school year. These includes four Data Days.

- Data Days:** The importance of data-driven instruction is proven to have strong positive effects on student learning. As Dr. Roland Fryer of Harvard University explains, “Data can drive more-personalized and more-efficient learning, allowing both teachers and students to track progress and to make sure that each individual student is on an appropriate path.”<sup>71</sup> At Invictus Academy, four Data Days are dedicated to delving into the details of assessment items to analyze precisely where students have misconceptions, identify the root cause of those misconceptions, and develop re-teaching plans to close any gaps that might have been surfaced. They are planned by the Executive Director in Year 1 and in collaboration with the Instructional Leadership Team thereafter.
- PD Days:** Full-day professional development days serve as “tune-ups” throughout the year, enabling the leadership team to address any areas for growth that emerge over time in observational and instructional data. Content will vary for each PD day, and will include instructional planning, execution, and/or school systems. These days will also be used to introduce new techniques to push the rigor of instruction. There are five PD Days (not

<sup>71</sup> Fryer, Roland G., Jr. “Learning from the Successes and Failures of Charter Schools.” *The Hamilton Project*. 2012. <http://student.harvard.edu/fryer/publications/learning-successes-and-failures-charter-schools>.

including 15 summer PD days) and four Data Days during the academic calendar year, which can be identified in **Appendix 9: 2018-2019 Draft Calendar**.

## Individual Professional Development

It is well-established that to effectively develop teachers' knowledge and skills, formal systems of feedback and individual professional development are vital.<sup>72</sup> This has been demonstrated consistently in our study of effective schools across the country, as well as in the top-performing education systems around the world.<sup>73</sup> At Invictus Academy, we believe investment in individual teacher development is crucial to student achievement, and in accordance with this belief we utilize the following systems to support teacher growth.

- **Classroom Observations:** Regular observation and feedback of teachers a research-based, established best practice. As Dr. Fryer states, “[S]chools that give formal or informal feedback (more human capital) ten or more times per semester have annual math gains that are equal to 0.6 more months of school and annual ELA gains that are equal to 0.55 more months than other schools.” We believe that observational data and feedback are essential to developing strong teachers. As a result, each teacher will be observed weekly, at a minimum, for 20 minutes and receive immediate, written feedback thereafter. In addition, teachers engage in a coaching conversation with their instructional coach once per week, at a minimum. In Year 1, all teachers are coached by the Executive Director. In addition to these observations, teachers will receive feedback during shorter observations of an average of five minutes at least once per week. These observations will be unscheduled, unless the teacher and instructional coach agree to hone in on a particular lesson to target a specific skill or technique the teacher is working on (e.g. scheduling a coaching session for a lesson in which there is a Socratic seminar occurring). We believe that teachers thrive when given immediate, intentional feedback, and as a result we intend to provide such feedback on a regular basis in accordance with our mission.
- **Peer Observations:** Consistent with research demonstrating the positive effects of teacher collaboration and peer observation, we will have a formal system for teachers to observe and offer feedback to each other on a weekly basis.<sup>74</sup> This will occur both amongst teachers in the same content areas (e.g. math teachers observing other math teachers), as well as cross-content during teachers' planning periods. Teachers will collaborate with their coaches to select a focus area of growth and observe other teachers on campus with the goal of identifying techniques and strategies to help them strengthen their practice. Observing teachers will complete a structured feedback form for each teacher they observe commenting on both strengths and areas for growth. Each teacher will debrief their peer observations as part of their weekly meeting with their coach and identify concrete adjustments they can make in their planning or instruction based on their takeaways. Through peer observations, collaborative planning time at weekly PD sessions, the School Culture Leadership Team, the Instructional Leadership

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<sup>72</sup> Gates, Bill. "Teachers Need Real Feedback." *Bill Gates: Teachers Need Real Feedback | TED Talk | TED.com*. TED, May 2013. Web.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Darling-Hammond, Linda, and Nikole Richardson. "Research Review / Teacher Learning: What Matters?" *Educational Leadership: How Teachers Learn* 66.5 (2009): 46-53. Web.

Team, and content-team collaboration, we will establish a Professional Learning Community that values feedback, growth, and results.<sup>75</sup>

- **Staff Evaluation:** We utilize staff evaluations as an anchor for goal setting, feedback, and staff improvement. Our evaluation rubric is based on the model published by The New Teacher Project, which was designed to support meaningful feedback to teachers.<sup>76</sup> Formal evaluations will be conducted two times per year, once at the midpoint of the school year and once in the Spring. Evaluations will represent the culmination of the coaching feedback process, which is rooted in the evaluation framework. Teachers will be assessed holistically based upon their performance and growth in key areas of focus selected by the school, student achievement data, and coaching team observations. We will be transparent, such that evaluations represent a fair and useful means of developing our team.

### Curriculum Selection and Subject-Specific Instructional Models

To achieve our mission and ensure that students thrive in the colleges of their choice, solve relevant problems, and communicate with confidence, we have planned the following course offerings. This course list is consistent with the best practices of strong schools observed by our Lead Founder through the BES Fellowship, in concert with feedback received from community leaders and parents.

**Figure 20. Planned Middle School Course Offerings**

	Course	Grades Offered	Grading	Course Credits	A-G
<b>ELA</b>	ELA 7: Text Analysis	7	A - F	N/A	N/A
	ELA 7: Foundational Skills	7	A - F	N/A	N/A
	ELA 8: Text Analysis	7	A - F	N/A	N/A
	ELA 8: Foundational Skills	8	A - F	N/A	N/A
<b>Math</b>	Math 7: Problem Solving	7	A - F	N/A	N/A
	Math 7: Foundational Skills	7	A - F	N/A	N/A
	Math 8: Problem Solving	8	A - F	N/A	N/A

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Our draft teacher evaluation rubric can be found in **Appendix 12: Draft Teacher Evaluation Rubric**.

	Math 8: Foundational Skills	8	A - F	N/A	N/A
<b>History/Social Sciences</b>	World Civilizations I	7	A - F	N/A	N/A
	American History and Government	8	A - F	N/A	N/A
<b>Science</b>	Integrated Science I	7	A - F	N/A	N/A
	Integrated Science II	8	A - F	N/A	N/A
<b>Speech and Debate</b>	Speech and Debate I	7	A - F	N/A	N/A
	Speech and Debate II	8	A - F	N/A	N/A
<b>Deliberate Practice</b>	Teacher Designed	7 and 8	Credit/No Credit	N/A	N/A
<b>Tutorial</b>	Tutorial	7 and 8	Credit/No Credit	N/A	N/A
<b>Advisory</b>	Advisory	7 and 8	Credit/No Credit	N/A	N/A

**Figure 21. Planned High School Course Offerings**

	<b>Course</b>	<b>Grades Offered</b>	<b>Grading</b>	<b>Course Credits</b>	<b>Core or Non- Core</b>	<b>A-G</b>
<b>English</b>	English I	9	A - F	10	Core	“b” - CSU and UC freshman admission requirement of 4 years of college preparatory English composition/literature (including no more than 1 year of Advanced ESL/ELD, which cannot be completed during the senior year for UC admission).
	English II	10	A - F	10	Core	
	English III or AP English Language and Composition	11	A - F	10 each	Core	
	English IV or AP English Literature and Composition	12	A - F	10 each	Core	
	English Extension	9-12	A - F	10	Non- Core	
<b>Math</b>	Math I	9	A - F	10	Core	“c” - CSU and UC freshman admission requirement of 3
	Math II	9/10	A - F	10	Core	
	Math III	10/11	A - F	10	Core	

	Discrete Math, Probability, and Statistics	11/12	A – F	10		years of mathematics (Algebra I and II, Geometry) (4 years recommended).
	Pre-calculus	11/12	A – F	10	Core	
	Calculus AB AP	11/12	A – F	10	Core	
	Statistics or AP Statistics	12	A – F	10	Core	
<b>History/ Social Science</b>	Race, Class, Gender, and Justice	9	A - F	10	Core	“a” - CSU and UC freshman admission requirement of 2 years of history/social science, including one year of U.S. history or one semester of U.S. history and one semester of American government, and 1 year of history/social science from either the “a” or “g” subject area (CSU)/ 1 year of world history, cultures, and geography (including European History) from the “a” subject area.
	World History or AP World History	10	A - F	10	Core	
	U.S. History or AP U.S. History	11	A - F	10 each	Core	
	U.S. Govt. & Economics or AP Government & Politics	12	A - F	10	Core	
<b>Laboratory Science</b>	Biology	9	A – F	10	Core	“d” - CSU and UC freshman admission requirement of 2 years of laboratory science with at least 1 year of physical science and 1 year of biological science (one from the “d” subject area and the other from “d” or “g” (CSU)/ at least two of the three foundational subjects of biology, chemistry, and physics (3 years recommended) (from the “d” subject area) (UC).
	Chemistry/Physics	10/11	A - F	10 each	Core	
	Physics or AP Physics	11/12	A - F	10 each	Core	
	AP Biology	11/12	A - F	10	Core	
<b>Foreign Language</b>	Spanish I-III	10/11/12	A - F	10	Core	

	Spanish for Spanish Speakers	10-12	A - F	10	Core	CSU and UC freshman admission requirement of 2 years (or equivalent of the 2nd level high school course) of language other than English (3 years recommended for UC).	
	AP Spanish Language	10/11/12	A - F	10	Non-Core		
<b>Visual and Performing Arts “f”</b>	Digital Art and Design	11/12	A - F	10	Non-Core	CSU and UC freshman admission requirement of 1 year, chosen from: dance, interdisciplinary arts, music, theater, or visual arts.	
	Advanced Digital Art and Design	12	A - F	10	Non-Core		
	Speech and Debate I	9	A - F	10	Non-Core		
	Speech and Debate II	10	A - F	10	Non-Core		
	Speech and Debate III	11	A - F	10	Non-Core		
	Speech and Debate IV	12	A - F	10	Non-Core		
	Dance	9/10/11/12	A - F	10	Non-Core		
		Computer Science I (Programming)	9	A - F	10		Core
<b>College Prep Elective “g”</b>	AP Computer Science A	11/12	A - F	10	Non-Core	CSU and UC freshman admission requirement of 1 year of an elective from any area on approved “a-g” course list.	
	AP Psychology	11/12	A - F	10	Non-Core		
	College & Career Readiness I	11	A - F	10	Core		
	AP Microeconomics	12	A - F	10	Non-Core		
	AP Psychology	11/12	A - F	10	Non-Core		
	College & Career Readiness I-II	11/12	A - F	10 each	Non-Core		
	Journalism I	10-12	A - F	10	Non-Core		
	Journalism II	11-12	A - F	10	Non-Core		
	Journalism III	12	A - F	10	Non-Core		
	African American Studies	10-12	A - F	10	Non-Core		
	Latin American Studies	10-12	A - F	10	Non-Core		
		Health I	9/10/11/12	Credit/ No Credit	5		Core

<b>Health and Physical Education</b>	Health II	10/11/12	Credit/ No Credit	5	Non-Core
	PE I	9/10/11/12	Credit/ No Credit	5	Non-Core
	PE II	10/11/12	Credit/ No Credit	5	Non-Core
<b>Advisory</b>	Advisory I, II, III, IV	9/10/11/12	Credit/No Credit	5	Core

## Course Descriptions<sup>77</sup>

An overview of courses at Invictus Academy of Richmond can be found below. We will operate on a semester system, with grades reported on progress reports each quarter. Each course is listed using an “A/B” nomenclature in accordance with the semester system.

### English Language Arts

#### English Text Analysis 7A/7B (Grade 7)

##### Core/College-Preparatory

**Description:** The major purpose of this course is to provide students with the skills and content knowledge to transition from the process of learning to read to the more advanced processes of reading to learn. Students will build academic vocabulary, in oral and written forms, and independent reading skills to significantly improve reading comprehension and vocabulary. An increased familiarity with models of good writing and the conventions of writing and spelling will be developed in order to support students in building proficiency in the California Standards in English Language Arts for 7th grade. Students are expected to develop strategies for organizing and giving focus to their writing with an increased emphasis on the use of evidence and extension of organizational strategies. In accordance with the California Reading/Language Arts Framework, students are expected to read at least one million words annually, to write narrative, persuasive and descriptive works of at least 500 to 700 words, and to demonstrate a command of Standard English.

#### English Foundational Skills 7A/7B (Grade 7)

##### Core/College-Preparatory

**Description:** The major emphasis of this course is to provide strategic instruction that supports student access to rigorous grade level English Language Arts content. Using content-specific, research-based instructional methodologies, including a station rotation model (see **Element 1: Instructional Models**), this course advances student proficiency in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and thinking as measured by the grade level ELA California Standards. Students will learn systematic strategies in reading, writing, and organization that will enable them to listen, speak, think, read, and write about content material. Instruction is based on and responsive to student needs.

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<sup>77</sup> The scope and sequence of courses were modeled after those of BES school California Collegiate Charter School in Los Angeles, CA.

## **English Text Analysis 8A/8B (Grade 8)**

### **Core/College-Preparatory**

**Description:** The major purpose of this course is to build student readiness required for successful achievement with secondary content in grades nine through twelve and to support the development of proficiency with the 8th grade California Standards. Students are expected to demonstrate their ability to grapple with the treatment, scope, and organization of ideas by finding similarities and differences among texts. They will be asked to compare an original text with a summary to determine whether it accurately captures the main ideas, includes critical details, and conveys the underlying meaning. They are also expected to evaluate the unity, logic, internal consistency, and structural patterns of text. In accordance with the California Reading/Language Arts Framework, students are expected to read at least one million words annually, to write narrative, persuasive and descriptive texts of at least 500 to 700 words, and to demonstrate a command of Standard English.

## **English Foundational Skills (Grade 8)**

### **8A/8B**

### **Core/College-Preparatory**

**Description:** The major emphasis of this course is to provide strategic instruction that supports student access to rigorous grade level English Language Arts content. Using content-specific, research-based instructional methodologies, including a station rotation model, this course advances student proficiency in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and thinking as measured by the grade level ELA California Standards. Students will learn systematic strategies in reading, writing, and organization that will enable them to listen, speak, think, read, and write about content material. Instruction is based on student needs.

## **English IA/IB (Grade 9)**

### **Core/College-Preparatory “b”**

**Description:** English I is a literature-based course that focuses on the development of fluency in the English language through the study of the literary genres and historically and culturally significant works and authors from American and world literature. Students will develop professional speaking and listening skills by conducting and participating in in-depth discussions and be asked to compose well-written analytical responses to fiction and nonfiction classic and contemporary selections. Students will be asked to write in multiple genres, including argumentative, informational, and narrative forms. The curriculum is designed to help students develop their academic English reading, writing, speaking and listening fluency through literary analysis and research writing projects, the study of English grammar and mechanics, vocabulary exercises and class discussion. Students in the 9th grade are expected to read one and one-half million words annually on their own and to produce written works of at least 1,500 words each.

## **English IIA/IIB (Grade 10)**

### **Core/College-Preparatory “b”**

**Description:** English II focuses on reading, writing, and speaking; students will read and analyze prose written in a variety of periods, disciplines, and rhetorical contexts. Students will write and speak in a variety of rhetorical modes, namely argument, expository, and narration. Students will formulate skillful judgments of their own and deliver focused and coherent presentations that convey clear perspectives and solid reasoning. Students will develop the conventions of standard

English grammar and usage when writing or speaking. Students in the 10th grade are expected to read one and one-half million words annually on their own and to produce written works of at least 1,500 words each.

**English IIIA/IIIB (Grade 11)**  
**Core/College-Preparatory “b”**

**Description:** English III continues the development of reading, writing, and speaking skills. The major purpose of this course is to explore themes, issues, and ideas from complex fiction, nonfiction, and informational materials and to focus on writing coherent and complex texts that convey well-defined perspectives and tightly reasoned arguments. Over the course of the year there is a steady progression in text complexity levels, sophistication of writing tasks, speaking and listening activities, and increased opportunities for independent and collaborative work. Students engage in close reading of classical and contemporary complex texts. They write in the argument, informational, and narrative genres and engage in speaking and listening activities throughout the year. Students receive concentrated preparation for the genres of writing on college placement tests in English. Students in the 11th grade are expected to read two million words annually on their own and to produce written works of at least 1,500 words each.

**AP English Language & Composition A/B (Grade 11)**  
**Core/College-Preparatory “b”**

**Description:** The AP English Language and Composition course aligns to an introductory college-level rhetoric and writing curriculum, which requires students to develop evidence-based analytic and argumentative essays that proceed through several stages or drafts. Students evaluate, synthesize, and cite research to support their arguments. Throughout the course, students develop a personal style by making appropriate grammatical choices. Additionally, students read and analyze the rhetorical elements and their effects in non-fiction texts, including graphic images as forms of text, from many disciplines and historical periods.

**English IVA/IVB (Grade 12)**  
**Core/College-Preparatory “b”**

**Description:** The goal of this course is to prepare college-bound seniors for the literacy demands of higher education and the world of work. Students in this year-long, rhetoric-based course develop advanced proficiency in expository, analytical, and argumentative reading and writing. Students will be expected to increase their awareness of the rhetorical strategies employed by authors, and to apply those strategies in their own writing. They will read closely to examine the relationship between an author’s argument or theme and his or her audience and purpose, to analyze the impact of structural and rhetorical strategies, and to examine the social, political, and philosophical assumptions that underlie the text. Students in the 12th grade are expected to read two million words annually on their own and to produce written works of at least 1,500 words each.

**AP English Literature & Composition A/B (Grade 12)**  
**Core/College-Preparatory “b”**

**Description:** The AP English Literature and Composition course aligns to an introductory college-level literary analysis course. The course engages students in the close reading and critical analysis of imaginative literature to deepen their understanding of the ways writers use language to provide

both meaning and pleasure. As they read, students consider a work's structure, style, and themes, as well as its use of figurative language, imagery, symbolism, and tone. Writing assignments include expository, analytical, and argumentative essays that require students to analyze and interpret literary works.

### **English Extension A/B (Grades 9-12)**

#### **Core/College-Preparatory**

**Description:** This course is designed as a supplement to high-school level English courses for students who require additional academic support and development of literacy skills. The course focuses on the further development of student reading and writing skills, as well as providing additional support for other English coursework. This course may be repeated as needed; if sufficient need is identified, grade-specific versions may be created at the high school level.

### **English Language Electives**

#### **Intro to Journalism IA/IB (Grade 10-12)**

##### **Core/College-Preparatory**

**Description:** The purpose of this course is to offer introductory training in writing news stories, feature articles, and editorials; students will also explore the language of still photography, organized around photojournalism in newspapers and magazines. Students will develop skills in basic interviewing techniques, collecting research, selecting appropriate evidence and support, and organizing material from other sources. Students are involved in the development of photo essays and character studies, and will learn how a good photo for journalistic purposes enhances the written word and tells its own story. Laboratory experiences in preparation of the school newspaper and/or magazine provide practice in editing and publication procedures, including copy reading, caption writing, headline writing, page makeup, proofreading, and achieving a balanced publication through a selection of editorial accounts.

#### **Journalism IIA/IIB (Grades 11-12)**

##### **Core/College-Preparatory**

**Description:** The purpose of this course is to focus on writing and publishing the school newspaper/magazine/yearbook at an introductory level by using advanced publishing software and graphic programs. Students practice all aspects of journalism through hands-on experience and a study of journalism-related literature. Students will analyze the structure and format of various newspapers, magazines, and yearbooks, and explain how the writers use the features to achieve their purpose.

#### **Journalism IIIA/IIIB (Grades 11-12)**

##### **Core/College-Preparatory**

**Description:** The purpose of this course is to focus on writing and publishing the school newspaper/magazine/yearbook at a developing level by using advanced publishing software and graphic programs. Students practice all aspects of journalism through hands-on experience and a study of journalism-related literature. Students will analyze the structure and format of various newspapers, magazines, and yearbooks, and explain how the writers use the features to achieve their purpose.

## Mathematics

### **Math Problem Solving 7A/7B (Grade 7)**

#### **Core/College-Preparatory**

**Description:** This is a course designed to meet the needs of 7th grade students under the California Standards for Mathematics. This course will focus on four critical areas: (1) developing understanding of and applying proportional relationships; (2) developing understanding of operations with rational numbers and working with expressions and linear equations; (3) solving problems involving scale drawings and informal geometric constructions, and working with two- and three-dimensional shapes to solve problems involving area, surface area, and volume; and (4) drawing inferences about populations based on samples.

### **Math Foundational Skills 7A/7B (Grade 7)**

#### **Core/College-Preparatory**

**Description:** Math Foundational Skills is provided to students as a second course to support and supplement the core mathematics class in grade 7. The course is designed to enhance the student's knowledge of prerequisite skills that are needed to access the grade level mathematics course. The course is taught using a station-rotation model (**Element 1: Instructional Models**), in which students work at their own pace to further develop foundational skills.

### **Math 8A/8B (Grade 8)**

#### **Core/College-Preparatory**

**Description:** This is a course designed to meet the needs of 8th grade students under the California Standards for Mathematics. This course will focus on three critical areas: (1) formulating and reasoning about expressions and equations, including modeling an association in bivariate data with a linear equation, and solving linear equations and systems of linear equations; (2) grasping the concept of a function and using functions to describe quantitative relationships; (3) analyzing two- and three dimensional space and figures using distance, angle, similarity, and congruence, and understanding and applying the Pythagorean Theorem.

### **Math Foundational Skills 8A/8B (Grade 8)**

#### **Core/College-Preparatory**

**Description:** Math Foundational Skills is provided to students as a second course to support and supplement the core mathematics class in grade 8. The course is designed to enhance the student's knowledge of prerequisite skills that are needed to access the grade level mathematics course. The course is taught using a station-rotation model, in which students work at their own pace to further develop foundational skills.

### **Math I A/B (Grade 8 or 9)**

#### **Core/College-Preparatory “c”**

**Description:** The fundamental purpose of Mathematics I is to formalize and extend the mathematics that students learned in the middle grades. The critical areas, organized into units, deepen and extend understanding of linear relationships, in part by contrasting them with exponential phenomena, and in part by applying linear models to data that exhibit a linear trend. Mathematics 1 uses properties and theorems involving congruent figures to deepen and extend understanding of geometric knowledge from prior grades. The final unit in the course ties together

the algebraic and geometric ideas studied. The Mathematical Practice Standards apply throughout each course and, together with the content standards, prescribe that students experience mathematics as a coherent, useful, and logical subject that makes use of their ability to make sense of problem situations.

### **Math II A/B (Grade 9 or 10)**

#### **Core/College-Preparatory “c”**

**Description:** The focus of Mathematics II is on quadratic expressions, equations, and functions, comparing their characteristics and behavior to those of linear and exponential relationships from Mathematics I as organized into six critical areas, or units. The need for extending the set of rational numbers arises and real and complex numbers are introduced so that all quadratic equations can be solved. The link between probability and data is explored through conditional probability and counting methods, including their use in making and evaluating decisions. The study of similarity leads to an understanding of right triangle trigonometry and connects to quadratics through Pythagorean relationships. Circles, with their quadratic algebraic representations, round out the course. The Mathematical Practice Standards apply throughout each course and, together with the content standards, prescribe that students experience mathematics as a coherent, useful, and logical subject that makes use of their ability to make sense of problem situations.

### **Math III A/B (Grade 10 or 11)**

#### **Core/College-Preparatory “c”**

**Description:** It is in Mathematics III that students pull together and apply the accumulation of learning that they have from their previous courses, with content grouped into four critical areas, organized into units (Inferences and Conclusions from Data; Polynomial, Rational, and Radical Relationships; Trigonometry of General Triangles and Trigonometric Functions; and Mathematical Modeling). They apply methods from probability and statistics to draw inferences and conclusions from data. Students expand their repertoire of functions to include polynomial, rational, and radical functions. They expand their study of right triangle trigonometry to include general triangles. Finally, students bring together their experience with functions and geometry to create models and solve contextual problems. The Mathematical Practice Standards apply throughout each course and, together with the content standards, prescribe that students experience mathematics as a coherent, useful, and logical subject that makes use of their ability to make sense of problem situations.

### **Discrete Math, Probability, and Statistics A/B (Grade 11 or 12)**

#### **Core/College-Preparatory “c”**

**Description:** Discrete mathematics is centered around elementary logic, methods of proof, set theory, basic counting, mathematical induction, recursion, matrices, optimization techniques and their applications in computer science, probability, and cryptography. The course will also offer an introduction to the study of probability, interpretation of data, and fundamental statistical problem solving. Mastery of this academic content will provide students with a solid foundation in probability and facility in processing statistical information.

### **Pre-calculus A/B (Grade 11 or 12)**

#### **Core/College-Preparatory “c”**

**Description:** Topics include the properties of the real number system, the theory of equations, coordinate geometry, relations, functions and their graphs, exponential and logarithmic functions, circular and trigonometric functions, sequences and series, and conic sections. The calculus ideas of limits and slopes of curves are introduced. The graphing calculator is used extensively throughout the course.

### **AP Statistics A/B (Grade 12)**

#### **Core/College-Preparatory “c”**

**Description:** The AP Statistics course is equivalent to a one-semester, introductory, non-calculus-based college course in statistics. The course introduces students to the major concepts and tools for collecting, analyzing, and drawing conclusions from data. There are four themes in the AP Statistics course: (1) exploring data, (2) sampling and experimentation, (3) anticipating patterns, and (4) statistical inference. Students use technology, investigations, problem solving, and writing as they build conceptual understanding.

### **AP Calculus AB A/B (Grade 12)**

#### **Core/College-Preparatory “c”**

**Description:** AP Calculus AB is approximately equivalent to a first semester college calculus course devoted to topics in differential and integral calculus. The AP course covers topics in these areas, including concepts and skills of limits, derivatives, definite integrals, and the Fundamental Theorem of Calculus. The course teaches students to approach calculus concepts and problems when they are represented graphically, numerically, analytically, and verbally, and to make connections amongst these representations. Students learn how to use technology to help solve problems, experiment, interpret results, and support conclusions.

## **Math Electives**

### **Programming I A/B (Grade 9)**

#### **Core/College-Preparatory “g”**

**Description:** This elective helps students develop problem-solving skills and exercise logical abilities. Students learn programming fundamentals in Java. Topics include input, output, variables, conditional control structures, random numbers, and loops. Programming assignments include a Fahrenheit-to-Celsius converter, a multiplication tutoring program, and rock-paper-scissors and Nim number games. Students produce simple graphics and applets on the screen and learn how to output colorful geometric shapes and the fractal Sierpinski’s triangle. Students use BlueJ, a visual and interactive Java programming environment. No previous programming experience is required.

### **AP Computer Science A A/B (Grades 10-12)**

#### **Core/College-Preparatory “g”**

**Description:** AP Computer Science A is equivalent to a first-semester, college-level course in computer science. The course introduces students to computer science with fundamental topics that include problem solving, design strategies and methodologies, organization of data (data structures), approaches to processing data (algorithms), analysis of potential solutions, and the ethical and social implications of computing. The course emphasizes both object-oriented and imperative problem solving and design using Java language. These techniques represent proven

approaches for developing solutions that can scale up from small, simple problems to large, complex problems. The AP Computer Science A course curriculum is compatible with many CS1 courses in colleges and universities.

## **History and Social Sciences**

### **World Civilizations I A/B (Grade 7)**

#### **Core/College-Preparatory**

**Description:** This course introduces students to the history of selected world civilizations. By examining the social, political, intellectual, cultural, and economic aspects of these societies, students gain a greater understanding of global issues. Students focus on geography and its impact on human activity, patterns of historical development, the role of religion in shaping historical action, and the effects of cultural diffusion. Skills cultivated in the class include essay writing, verbal expression, and proficient use of primary and secondary sources.

### **American History and Government A/B (Grade 8)**

#### **Core/College-Preparatory**

**Description:** This course explores the functions of American government and its development over time. Students become familiar with the underlying principles and unique structure of our democratic republic, analyze the U.S. Constitution and landmark Supreme Court cases, discuss the principles that inform our political processes, and consider the social and cultural implications of important legislation and political events. This course aims to provide an understanding of American government so that students become informed, committed citizens. Study strategies and organizational skills—including careful reading and annotation, primary source analysis, critical thinking, note taking, and research skills—are taught. Students develop interpersonal communication skills through collaborative projects, class discussion and debate, the writing of analytical essays, oral presentations, and electronic communication. Use of a variety of digital tools enhance students’ twenty-first-century learning experience.

### **Race, Class, Gender, and Justice A/B (Grade 9)**

#### **Core/College-Preparatory “a”**

**Description:** This course enables students to develop an analytical model to examine and understand issues in American society that relate to racial, class, and gender. This course utilizes: seminar-style discussion; academic, magazine, and newspaper articles as well as books; excerpts from fictional works and memoirs; video and film; the Internet; personal interviews; and students’ individual experiences. Students must complete a service learning project as part of this course.

### **World History A/B (Grade 10)**

#### **Core/College-Preparatory “a”**

**Description:** Students study major turning points that shaped the modern world, from the late 18th century through the present. Students trace the rise of democratic ideas and develop an understanding of the historical roots of current world issues. Students will develop an understanding of current world issues and relate them to historical, geographic, political, economic, and cultural contexts. Assignments focus on historical methods and critical thinking skills by analyzing a variety of primary resource documents, visuals, artifacts, and maps.

**AP World History A/B (Grade 10)****Core/College-Preparatory “a”**

**Description:** AP World History is the equivalent of a college-level survey course in world history. This World History course provides a way to understand history and a foundation from which to view the complexities of today’s world. Its emphasis is on encounters and interactions. The long-term objective is for students to demonstrate an understanding of how the big picture of world history assists in understanding the complexities of today’s world. Students who complete this course and perform successfully on the Advanced Placement Exam in May have the ability to earn college credit from a participating college or university.

**U.S. History A/B (Grade 11)****Core/College-Preparatory “a”**

**Description:** Students examine prominent features of the American experience: the nature of colonial life, the reasons for the revolutionary break from England, the constitutional system, the development of democracy and capitalism, reform movements and the Civil War, the impact of the frontier, the changing nature of business and government, the changing role of the United States as a world power, and the struggle to achieve class, ethnic, racial, and gender equality. Students develop the ability to read historical material analytically and critically and to pursue independent research. In addition to primary documents and historical narratives, selections from American literature and audiovisual materials are used.

**AP U.S. History A/B (Grade 11)****Core/College-Preparatory “a”**

**Description:** The Advanced Placement version of the United States History course prepares students for the Advanced Placement examination in American history. This course, as stated by the College Board, “is designed to provide students with the analytic skills and factual knowledge necessary to deal critically with the problems and materials in U.S. history. The program prepares students for intermediate and advanced college courses by making demands upon them equivalent to those made by full-year introductory college courses.”<sup>93</sup> In addition to essential primary and factual information, this course also seeks to acquaint students with a variety of studently interpretations of major historical issues.

**Government/Economics A/B (Grade 12)****Core/College-Preparatory “a”**

**Description:** This course is a survey of the American government with an emphasis on the national level, while also including elements of state and local government. Students study the U.S. Constitution and examine American political, social, economic and legal systems. The economic and political systems of the major countries of the world are compared with those of the United States. Students study fundamental economic concepts such as scarcity, opportunity costs and trade-offs, productivity, economic systems, economic institutions and incentives. The course will also include such microeconomics concepts as market and prices, supply and demand, competition and market structure, income distribution and the role of government. Macroeconomics concepts include international trade, unemployment, inflation and deflation, and fiscal and monetary policy.

## **AP Government/Economics A/B (Grade 12)**

### **Core/College-Preparatory “a”**

**Description:** This is an accelerated college-level course focusing on both the United States Government and how individuals make choices with limited resources. Students will undergo a thorough examination of The Constitution, fundamental rights, political system and major governmental institutions. Students will engage in critical analysis of contemporary political events and will be encouraged to begin to develop their own involvement in both social and political institutions. Students will also examine concepts such as supply and demand, factors of production, roles of labor and management, the relationship between the environment and the economy, and the impact of the government on individual decision-making processes. Students study the stock market as an investment option and trace various stocks throughout the semester using the Wall Street Journal and the internet as resources. This course prepares students for the May Advanced Placement American Government and Microeconomics exams.

## **History and Social Sciences Electives**

### **AP Psychology A/B (Grades 10-12)**

#### **Core/College-Preparatory “g”**

**Description:** AP Psychology is designed to introduce students to the systematic and scientific study of behavior and mental processes of human beings and other animals. Students are exposed to the psychological facts, principles, and phenomena associated with each of the major subfields within psychology. They also learn about the ethics and methods psychologists use in their science and practice.

### **African-American Studies A/B (Grades 10-12)**

#### **Core/College-Preparatory “g”**

**Description:** This course presents an overview of the Black experience in the United States from the African background to today. Students become familiar with some of the contributions of Black Americans to a pluralistic American society. The class also studies such topics as the fight against slavery, the role of Blacks in the building of the nation, and the civil rights movement.

### **Latin-American Studies A/B (Grades 10-12)**

#### **Core/College-Preparatory “g”**

**Description:** This course, offered in English, is an interdisciplinary introduction to the peoples and cultures of Latin America. Students will explore the social and cultural contexts of Latin America through representative works of literature, contemporary and historical themes, major religions, social structures, gender roles, and politics.

## **Science**

### **Integrated Science I A/B (Grade 7)**

#### **Core/College Preparatory**

**Description:** In this Integrated Science course aligned with the Next Generation Science Standards, students explore the cross-cutting concepts of energy and matter, including cause and effect and flows, cycles, and conservation while learning about ecosystems, natural resources, and the structure and property of matter. Students will consider human impact on these systems and

explore engineering approaches to these concepts. This aligns with the NGSS Physical Science sequence.

### **Integrated Science II A/B (Grade 8)**

#### **Core/College Preparatory**

**Description:** In this Integrated Science course aligned with the Next Generation Science Standards, students explore the cross-cutting concepts of stability and change along with scale, proportion, and quantity. These concepts inform their study of the history of the earth, space systems, waves and electromagnetic radiation, energy, forces and interactions, and natural selections. Students will consider human impact on these systems and explore engineering approaches to these concepts. This aligns with the NGSS Life Sciences sequence.

### **Biology A/B (Grades 10-12)**

#### **Core/College Preparatory “d”**

**Description:** Biology will fulfill both the laboratory science requirement for colleges and high school graduation requirement. The course will cover topics such as DNA, evolution, photosynthesis, cellular respiration, energy and reproduction with an overarching question of how structure impacts function. Students are expected to develop scientific thinking, a reasoned approach to problem solving and an understanding of the role biology plays in our daily lives.

### **Chemistry A/B (Grades 10-12)**

#### **Core/College Preparatory “d”**

**Description:** Chemistry will fulfill both the laboratory science requirement for colleges and the high school graduation requirement. The class will cover topics such as atomic structure, nomenclature, bond formation, chemical reactions, gases, reaction rates, thermodynamics and stoichiometric calculations. Students are expected to have a firm foundation in basic algebraic and problem solving skills.

### **Physics A/B (Grades 10-12)**

#### **Core/College Preparatory “d”**

**Description:** Students investigate the following topics: energy, forces, motion and matter at a college preparatory level of analysis. Laboratory activities are designed to lead to discovery and appreciation of concepts in these areas.

### **AP Biology A/B (Grade 11 or 12)**

#### **Core/College Preparatory “d”**

**Description:** AP Biology is designed to be equivalent to a first-year college-level general biology course. Students will study materials presented in a rigorous, biochemical-oriented introductory college biology course. Required laboratory experiments are part of the course. Students are expected to be independent learners and to devote extensive studying beyond the basic concepts. Details of molecules, chemistry, cells, genetics, evolution, organisms and populations are included in this course. Students will be prepared to take the Advanced Placement Biology exam in May.

### **AP Chemistry A/B (Grade 11 or 12)**

#### **Core/College Preparatory “d”**

**Description:** This is the equivalent of a first-year college course in chemistry and is designed to prepare students for the Advanced Placement Chemistry test. It includes all the material covered in chemistry but at a greater depth. Specific emphasis is placed on problem solving using mathematics. Students taking this course should be prepared for extensive reading, problem solving, and study assignments. This class meets the physical science graduation requirement, and the laboratory science requirement for California public universities.

### **AP Physics 1 A/B (Grades 11 or 12)**

#### **Core/College Preparatory “d”**

**Description:** This course introduces the following topics: one- and two-dimensional motion, Newtonian mechanics, rotational dynamics, energy and momentum, oscillatory phenomena, and electricity. It offers a college-level, non-calculus-mathematical treatment of physics that requires laboratory work, sophisticated problem solving, and substantial conceptual understanding. Experimental design and qualitative explanations are major components. Although this course covers fewer topics than Physics, it provides more in-depth study and serves as a good background for those who wish to continue in science or engineering. Students take the Advanced Placement Physics 1 examination in May.

## **Foreign Language**

### **Spanish I A/B (Grades 10)**

#### **Core/College Preparatory “e”**

**Description:** Students will be introduced to the basic language and culture of the Spanish-speaking world. Language and culture are acquired through meaningful communicative activities centered on real life situations involving everyday common topics. Students develop linguistic proficiency as they perform relevant tasks in the new language.

### **Spanish II A/B (Grades 11)**

#### **Core/College Preparatory “e”**

**Description:** Spanish 2 continues the process of developing the speaking, listening, reading and writing introduced in Spanish 1. Students will increase the number of language functions and expand their knowledge of grammar. Vocabulary and knowledge of culture will expand with authentic materials and real life situations allowing students to function comfortably as they express themselves in the new language.

### **Spanish III A/B (Grades 12)**

#### **Core/College Preparatory “e”**

**Description:** Spanish 3 supports students as they move from the comfort of memorized phrases to the creation of structures that reflect exactly what they want to communicate in the Spanish language. Selection of literature is introduced to increase vocabulary and enhance cultural perspective. Spanish 3 students will continue to communicate completely in Spanish orally and in writing and will be able to produce paragraphs and essays. The primary focus is for students to become independent users of the language.

### **Spanish for Native Speakers I A/B (Grades 10-12)**

#### **Core/College Preparatory “e”**

**Description:** Spanish I for Native Speakers is designed for students who have been extensively exposed to listening, speaking, reading and writing in Spanish and are interested in polishing their skills and acquiring new ones on their native language. The class includes a thorough review of the grammar rules and the orthography of Spanish. Students will read and write extensively, give oral presentations, and participate in debates, all while learning about the fundamental grammatical structures of Spanish and the many ways this language can be used in both formal and informal settings. Students will examine not only linguistic but socio-cultural issues, developing a greater appreciation of their Hispanic heritage.

### **Spanish for Native Speakers II A/B (Grades 11-12)**

#### **Core/College Preparatory “e”**

**Description:** This course is intended for students who can demonstrate fluency in spoken Spanish and a basic knowledge of written Spanish. This is a comprehensive course covering an introduction to literature, composition, grammar, speech and stories and articles, writing grammatically correct compositions, improving vocabulary, and enhancing listening and speaking skills.

### **AP Spanish Language and Culture A/B (Grades 11-12)**

#### **Core/College Preparatory “e”**

**Description:** The AP Spanish Language and Culture course emphasizes communication (understanding and being understood by others) by applying interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational skills in real-life situations. This includes vocabulary usage, language control, communication strategies, and cultural awareness. The AP Spanish Language and Culture course strives not to overemphasize grammatical accuracy at the expense of communication. To best facilitate the study of language and culture, the course is taught almost exclusively in Spanish. The AP Spanish Language and Culture course engages students in an exploration of culture in both contemporary and historical contexts. The course develops students’ awareness and appreciation of cultural products (e.g., tools, books, music, laws, conventions, institutions); practices (patterns of social interactions within a culture); and perspectives (values, attitudes, and assumptions).

## **Visual and Performing Arts**

### **Speech and Debate 7A/7B (Grade 7)**

#### **Non-Core/College-Preparatory**

**Description:** The major purpose of this course is to offer students an opportunity to gain skill, confidence, and fluency in creative oral expression. Students develop an understanding of both basic communication principles and public speaking strategies through their application of these principles to a variety of speaking assignments (see full Speech and Debate course map in **Appendix 10: Speech and Debate Course Map**), formats, and audiences. The fundamentals of effective oral delivery, including body control, use of voice and diction, and analysis of audience will be addressed.

### **Speech and Debate 8A/8B (Grade 8)**

#### **Non-Core/College-Preparatory**

**Description:** This course builds on its predecessor to further offer students an opportunity to gain skill, confidence, and fluency in creative oral expression. Students develop an understanding of both basic communication principles and public speaking strategies through their application of

these principles to new speaking assignments (see full Speech and Debate scope and sequence in **Appendix 10: Speech and Debate Course Map**), formats, and audiences. The fundamentals of effective oral delivery, including body control, use of voice and diction, and analysis of audience will be addressed.

### **Speech and Debate I, II, III, IV A/B (Grade 9-12)**

#### **Non-Core/College-Preparatory**

**Description:** These courses are designed for students who choose to participate on Invictus Academy's forensics team. Students continue to hone their skills, confidence, and fluency in creative oral expression by selecting and competing in two events from the catalogue of competitive speaking categories offered by the National Forensic League. Students are expected to complete preparation for competitions in their respective speech and/or debate events, participate in practice sessions with coaches and peers, and compete in a minimum of three tournaments each semester.

### **Digital Media A/B (Grades 9-12)**

#### **Non-Core/College-Preparatory**

**Description:** This course will introduce students to the fundamental elements that are integral to the strands of Media Arts and Entertainment Design through Digital Filmmaking, photography, Web Design, Music and Animation. Skills learned in iPhoto will form the foundation for the more advanced skills of Photoshop. Illustrator will be introduced as the basis for graphic design. Film analyses will continue and students will learn additional techniques to advance graphic design and filmmaking.

### **Dance I A/B (Grades 9-12)**

#### **Core/College-Preparatory "f"**

**Description:** Students need not have any prior dance experience, just the desire to study the art of dance. This course introduces students to the technical and creative elements of contemporary dance. Students gain an understanding of movement vocabulary and the choreographic process by developing skills including coordination, agility, flexibility, confidence, proper alignment, and creative expression. Students have the opportunity to perform in a dance showcase toward the end of the year.

### **Dance II A/B (Grades 10-12)**

#### **Core/College-Preparatory "f"**

**Description:** Dancers choreograph and analyze dance while strengthening their technique through a deeper study of contemporary dance. This course explores movement from jazz, ballet, modern, and contemporary styles of dance and challenges dancers' flexibility and strength. Dancers choreograph in any style of dance that interests them, in addition to completing various choreographic assignments. Students explore improvisational exercises and view dance videos to further their critical thinking about dance. Students perform in a showcase at the end of the year.

## Health and Physical Fitness

### **Physical Fitness/Health I A/B (Grade 9)**

#### **Non-Core/College-Preparatory**

**Description:** Students will continue to work on improving their cardiovascular fitness, upper body strength, abdominal strength, and flexibility, participating in personal fitness and weight training, individual sports, and team sports. In addition, one day a week, students will analyze their health and well-being in regard to fitness, disease, abuse, prevention and awareness, communication, family and environmental health. Students will have an opportunity to personalize assignments in order to reflect and develop plans that will foster health habits.

### **Physical Fitness II A/B (Grade 10)**

#### **Non-Core/College-Preparatory**

**Description:** Students will continue to work on improving their cardiovascular fitness, upper body strength, abdominal strength, and flexibility, participating in personal fitness and weight training, individual sports, and team sports.

### **Physical Fitness III A/B (Grade 11)**

#### **Non-Core/College-Preparatory**

**Description:** Students will continue to work on improving their cardiovascular fitness, upper body strength, abdominal strength, and flexibility, participating in personal fitness and weight training, individual sports, and team sports.

### **Physical Fitness IV A/B (Grade 12)**

#### **Non-Core/College-Preparatory**

**Description:** Students will continue to work on improving their cardiovascular fitness, upper body strength, abdominal strength, and flexibility, participating in personal fitness and weight training, individual sports, and team sports.

## College Readiness Electives

### **College & Career Readiness III: Preparation A/B (Grade 11)**

#### **Non-Core/College Preparatory**

**Description:** College Readiness III will offer students an extensive program of ACT preparation. The course will devote two days weekly to ACT math practice and two days weekly to ACT Critical Reading practice. Students will learn strategic annotation and problem-solving skills, time-management skills, and will practice with ACT vocabulary, completing timed drills and working to increase their speed and accuracy. The grade 11 College Readiness course is also the grade level course in which students will compose drafts of their personal statements and learn about the college application process

### **College & Career Readiness IV: Workshop A/B (Grade 12)**

#### **Non-Core/College Preparatory**

**Description:** In 12th grade, the College Readiness IV class will guide students through every academic and financial step of the college application process, including writing personal statements, requesting recommendations, compiling supplemental materials, and comparing

financial aid packages. In the spring semester, once students have matriculated to their colleges of choice, college readiness shifts to a transitions class to ensure that students are academically, financially, and socially prepared for what they will encounter on campus. The course also covers relevant information about career paths after college.

## Graduation Requirements

The high school graduation requirements of Invictus Academy are designed to ensure that all students meet the admissions requirements and are academically prepared for competitive, four-year colleges and universities. Invictus Academy’s graduation requirements adhere to all state requirements and require that all students meet the A-G admission requirements for admission to schools in the University of California and California State University systems. Students must earn a grade of C or higher to receive credit for a course, or “Credit” where applicable.

**Figure 22. Invictus Academy College Graduation Requirements**

Subject	UC Admission Requirements <sup>78</sup>	Invictus Academy Graduation Requirement
History/Social Science “a”	Two years, including one year of world history, cultures and historical geography and one year of U.S. history, or one-half year of U.S. history and one-half year of American government or civics.	Three years of eligible courses (30 credits)
English “b”	Four years of college preparatory English that integrates reading of classic and modern literature, frequent and regular writing, and practice listening and speaking.	Four years of eligible courses (40 credits)
Mathematics “c”	Three years of college-preparatory math, including or integrating the topics covered in elementary and advanced algebra and two- and three-dimensional geometry.	Four years of eligible courses (40 credits)
Laboratory Science “d”	Two years of laboratory science providing fundamental knowledge in at least two of the three disciplines of biology, chemistry and physics.	Three years of eligible courses (30 credits)
Language other than English “e”	Two years of the same language other than English or equivalent to the second level of high school instruction.	Three years of eligible courses (30 credits)
Visual and Performing Arts “f”	One year chosen from dance, music, theater or the visual arts.	One years of eligible courses (10 credits)

<sup>78</sup> UC A-G requirements taken directly from the University of California A-G Guide, <http://www.ucop.edu/agguide/a-g-requirements/>.

College Preparatory Elective “g”	One year chosen from the “a-f” courses beyond those used to satisfy the requirements above, or courses that have been approved solely in the elective area.	Two years of eligible courses (20 credits)
Physical Education & Health	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One year of physical education (10 credits)</li> </ul>
Other	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One year of college and career readiness sequence (10 credits)</li> </ul>
<b>Total Credits Required for Graduation</b>		<b>220 credits required for high school graduation</b>

Some of our students will be students with special needs that may interfere with their ability to successfully complete all graduation requirements. A student identified as having a disability who has an Individualized Education Plan that suggests that such student cannot reasonably be expected to meet the Invictus Academy graduation requirements due to an identified disability may have graduation requirements waived upon election of the student and her/his parent or guardian and approval by the Executive Director, in consultation with teaching staff familiar with the student’s academic performance and ability. Policies related to requirements for students with IEPs will be outlined in the Invictus Academy Student and Family Handbook.

### Credit Recovery Opportunities

There may be students who fail to earn credit in a given course by earning a grade lower than a C. Provided such students have not failed greater than two graduation requirement courses in an academic school year, such students will have the opportunity to recover full course credit for failed graduation requirement courses during our three-week Summer Academy. In order to recover course credit during Summer Academy, students will be required to:

- Attend Summer Academy at a greater than 95% attendance rate;
- Earn at least a C grade on the course final exam;
- Resubmit any projects or major papers from the normal academic year for which the student did not receive a C grade or higher; and
- Complete a personal academic improvement plan.

Students who complete the above requirements during Summer Academy will receive full course credit in applicable courses and will not be subject to retention. Pursuant to these promotion and retention policies, students who do not earn greater than a C grade, or credit where applicable, in greater than two courses in any one school year may be subject to retention. A student failing three courses in a school year may recover credit for two failed courses during Summer Academy and promote to the next grade level with the requirement that they retake and pass the third failed course from the previous school year.

## Transfer Students

Transfer students will be provided the opportunity to access the Invictus Academy academic program and fulfill graduation requirements. Course credit earned at other high schools by transferring students will be recognized and accepted by Invictus Academy as fulfilling graduation course requirements and A-G requirements when applicable. If needed, students transferring to Invictus Academy after the ninth grade with inadequate transfer course credits to reasonably fulfill Invictus Academy’s graduation requirements by the completion of the twelfth grade will be placed on an alternative course program designed to support such students to fulfill the A-G requirements prior to graduation.

## Accreditation

Invictus Academy will apply for and receive accreditation by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (“WASC”). The review process by WASC will commence in our third year of operation to ensure full accreditation prior to the high school graduation of our inaugural class. The Executive Director will be responsible for the WASC accreditation process.

## Transferability of Courses

In the event students leave Invictus Academy prior to high school graduation, such students’ A-G course credits will be transferable to other public schools. Further, any such transferring courses will meet the admission requirements for UC and CSU schools. Parents will receive notification of course transferability in student recruitment and student enrollment materials, which will be available in both English and Spanish, or other language as appropriate to the student and family. Invictus Academy college counselors, hired in Years 3 and 5, will also work closely with students and families to ensure that they are aware of requirements and where each child stands in relation to those requirements.

## Instructional Models

Our course offerings, curricular design, and instructional choices are grounded in psychological and educational research. We selected our instructional materials through careful analysis of a variety of curricula, opting to make available the vetted, proven curricula of Brooke Charter Schools and Excel Academy Charter Schools, both in Boston, MA and North Star Academy of Newark, NJ for study and adaptation by our teachers.<sup>79</sup> These schools’ curricula are thoughtfully aligned to CCSS and provide a rigorous starting point for our teachers to build upon. These instructional resources also fit with the instructional models we employ in each of our subject areas, as outlined below.

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<sup>79</sup> Curriculum expenditures are accounted for as a single line item in our budget, which can be found in **Appendix 7: Budget Base Case—School of the District**. The three schools cited are amongst the highest performing in both math and ELA in their respective states.

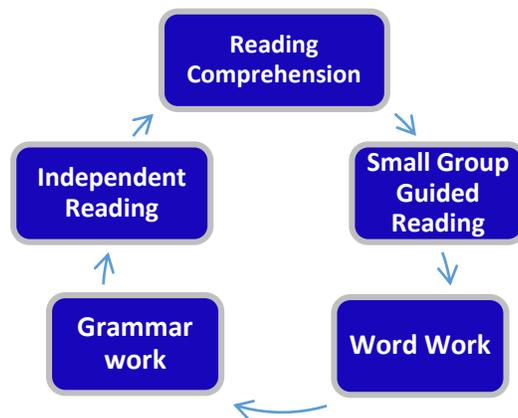
## English Language Arts

We feature a double-period of literacy in middle school, meaning students spend 100 minutes each day in their English classes in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades. This provides us with the time and space to offer a foundational skills period along with one focused on close reading and analysis of fiction and non-fiction texts. Similar to our math model, one period of ELA will be taught using a self-paced, station rotation model, and the other will focus on close analysis of texts. In the foundational skills block, students engage in five stations:

1. **Reading Comprehension:** Students master reading comprehension skills by reading leveled texts using the personalized, adaptive Lexia platform. Lexia includes specifically designed supports for English Learners.
2. **Small Group Reading:** In a small group of 5-7 students of similar Lexile levels, students receive targeted instruction from their teacher using a guided reading model. This may include phonics, fluency, and comprehension.
3. **Word Work:** In pairs, students utilize the Wordly Wise platform to build spelling and vocabulary skills.
4. **Grammar Work:** Students work on practice through the platform No Red Ink, which offers grammar challenges in a variety of forms and provides immediate feedback.
5. **Independent Reading:** Students read a self-selected book independently, and assess their comprehension by completing Accelerated Reader quizzes once finished.

The skills taught in this literacy block are sequenced to support the work happening in students' core ELA class. For example, during the first literacy block the ELA teacher would teach the structure of a well-written persuasive essay, while during the second literacy block the same teacher could have students write a persuasive essay based on a non-fiction text read in class. This second literacy block is rooted in close analysis of texts and writing practice. Consistent with our belief in a gradual release of responsibility, teachers utilize a mix of whole class text analysis and small group text analysis as appropriate. Whole class text analysis serves the crucial function of enabling teachers to model proper methods of analysis, while small group text analysis gives students crucial opportunities to practice and develop their analytical skills.

**Figure 23. ELA Station-Rotation Model**



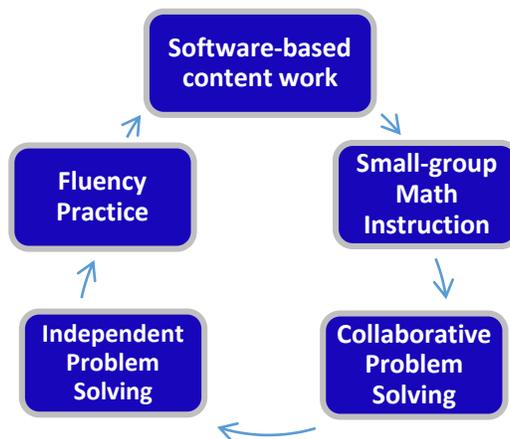
## Mathematics

We will implement a combination of station-rotation and the case method for mathematics instruction at Invictus Academy in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade. We have two periods of mathematics in middle school, with one of them using the station-rotation model and the other utilizing the case method.

The station-rotation model is geared towards prioritizing student practice, appropriate degrees of self-pacing, and small group instruction. In this approach, there are five stations that students rotate through, which serve to shrink the class size into stations of 5-7 students:

1. **Software-based content:** Students utilize a mixture of Khan Academy, Querium, and ST Math to absorb content at their own pace and work through practice problems.
2. **Small group instruction with the teacher:** Students work with the teacher in a small, leveled group of 5-7 students to get targeted support on misconceptions. The teacher uses data from interim and unit assessments to strategically group students to efficiently remediate knowledge and skill gaps.
3. **Pair problem solving:** Students work with a peer who is working on similar content to collaboratively solve problems using the software program IXL.
4. **Individual problem solving:** Students work independently on practice problems using IXL.
5. **Fluency Practice:** Students work with a peer on procedural fluency questions and mental math.

Figure 24. Math Station Rotation Model



Math teachers can utilize data dashboards provided by the software platforms we have selected, which have proven track records of effectiveness, to hone in precisely on where misconceptions have occurred. Teachers can then address misconceptions directly with students. In this model, the teacher's preparation is heavily rooted in data analysis and preparation for small group instruction.

This station-rotation model serves to develop students' foundational and procedural understanding, which can then be applied in more complex problems, which we offer in the form of cases. A case is characterized by the following two features:

1. A text-based description of a problem a real decision-maker in any field has faced that challenges students to make and defend a decision in the same scenario.
2. A series of quantitative exhibits that provide data with which students must make calculations and inferences to arrive at deeper understanding.

For example, a case might expose students to the historical context surrounding President Harry Truman's decision to use the atom bomb in World War II, with the case exhibits providing casualty estimates and relevant probabilities provided by national security agencies. Students would be challenged to form a decision-tree using probabilities, confidence intervals, and scenario analysis to justify their own decision, were they in President Truman's seat. Cases presented earlier in the year will feature greater guidance and teacher direction, with a gradual release of responsibility occurring over the course of each year. This model aligns closely with the CCSS, which requires students to read multiple pages of text that describe a scenario, discern relevant quantitative information, and answer questions using that quantitative information.

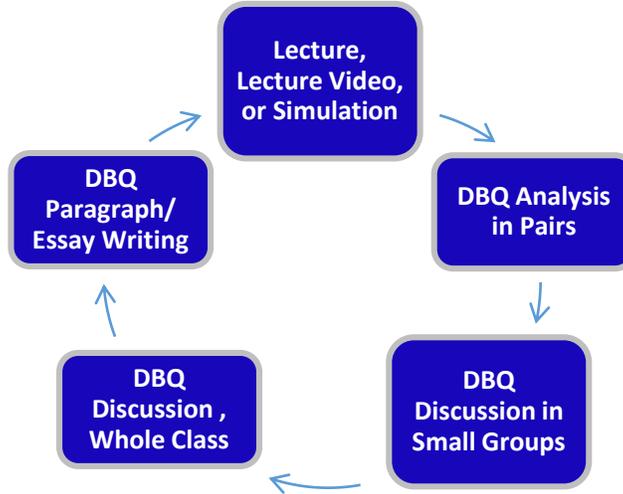
Once students transition to high school, teachers use a mix of station-rotation work and the case method, as appropriate. Station-rotation work will be used over the course of a class period or a series of class periods to support students' development of foundational conceptual and procedural understanding, with teachers the facilitating small group work on deeper case problems. Central to this approach is a gradual release of responsibility, such that students take on greater ownership of their goals and independence in their work as they grow older. Whereas in middle school, teachers closely monitor student data and respond with targeted interventions, in high school students will be coached to monitor their own achievement data and seek out additional practice as needed, as well as small group/individual support both in class and during tutorial time.

## **History and Social Sciences**

We believe that understanding history is about much more than simply memorizing facts. To support students in becoming true historians, we will anchor our history classes with Document Based Questions (DBQ), assignments that require students to synthesize and evaluate several primary and secondary historical documents in relation to an essential question. In this format, teachers will introduce basic historical context through a college-style lecture, a recorded lecture that students can watch at their own pace, or a historical simulation. Next, students work in pairs to analyze a DBQ using close reading strategies and compose independent arguments taking a position in response to the DBQ in preparation for a class discussion. Prior to the whole class discussion, students have an opportunity to test and practice delivering their arguments in a small group discussion. A whole group discussion follows, with students' responses being evaluated and noted for a grade by the teacher according to a standard rubric. At the conclusion of the DBQ discussion, students compose either a persuasive paragraph or essay codifying their insights in written form. This cycle of activities can take place over the course of a single class period or multiple ones, depending on the depth of the topic and richness of the discussion. Endemic to this model is the development of students habits of discussion. Teachers will leverage sentence starters and pair/small group work to ensure that students build strong habits of discussion, learning to agree, disagree, clarify, step up, and step back as appropriate. Taken collectively, this model builds several college-ready skills:

- College style lecture note-taking
- Analysis of primary and secondary sources
- Construction of arguments using evidence
- Defense of arguments in class discussion
- Persuasive writing using facts and evidence
- Habits of discussion

**Figure 25. History Document Based Question Model**



**Figure 26. Habits of Discussion Sentence Starters**

Grade Levels	Agree	Disagree	Push the Discussion
<b>7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>	1. Building on what _____ said, I think that _____ because of the fact that _____. 2. I like to add to what _____ said. 3. I agree with _____ because of the fact that _____	1. Can you please clarify your claim that _____? 2. That's a valid point, but I think _____ because of the fact that _____. 3. Could you say more about _____? 4. What do you think, _____?	1. I think it's important for us to revisit _____'s point because.... 2. As a thought experiment, imagine if _____ were different, because this helps us to understand... 3. Before we move further, I think it's important for
<b>9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>	1. I concur with _____ and want to emphasize how important it is that we think about... 2. I agree with _____ and think that their	1. I disagree with _____'s evaluation because... 2. Though _____ has a valid point, I'd disagree and point out that...	

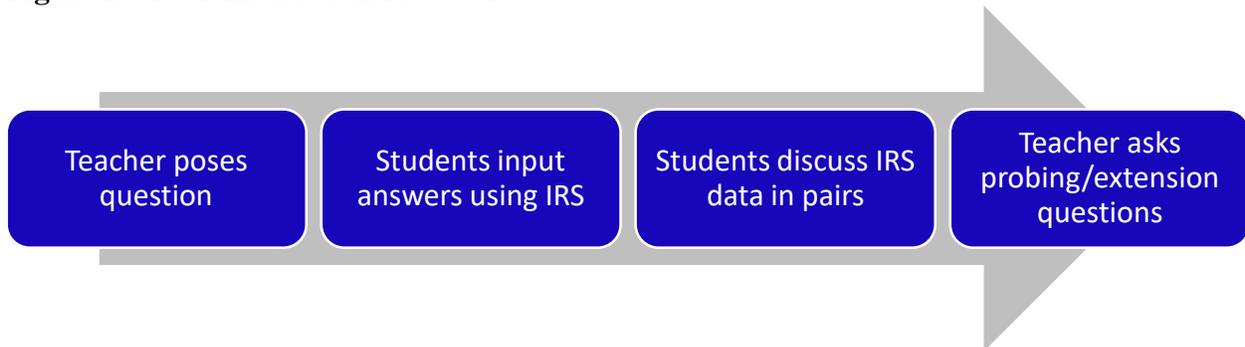
	<p>evidence also shows another point, namely that...</p> <p>3. Another reason _____'s point is important because...</p> <p>4. I agree with _____ and there's more evidence to strengthen his/her point...</p> <p>5. I agree with _____ and _____ would offer the additional argument that...</p>	<p>3. Even if _____ is right, he/she still ignores the more important point that...</p> <p>4. More evidence is needed to justify _____'s point because...</p> <p>5. I understand your point, but it is called into question by the fact that...(insert evidence here)...</p> <p>6. _____ has a valid point but this point is outside of the scope of the question because....</p>	<p>us to define _____ because...</p>
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## Science

Our science classes are designed to meet the demands of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), which emphasize students' learning to execute the scientific process with detail, test hypotheses, and analyze data for patterns and trends. Our science classes will feature frequent laboratory experiment days, in which students form and test hypotheses authentically. We also employ science classes as a platform for students to engage in rigorous reading of non-fiction texts, bolstering their literacy skills across different disciplines.

In science classes, teachers will utilize peer instruction frequently, in which students log their answers to pre-scripted questions using instant-response systems. Following the initial answer, students discuss their answers and the class-wide data, displayed through systems like Gooru, and re-log their answers. Teachers then probe for understanding and explanation using follow-up questions. This model is displayed in **Figure 27** below.

**Figure 27. Peer Instruction Protocol**



## Speech and Debate

Surveys of the American public consistently show that public speaking ranks amongst Americans' top fears, often ahead of such phobias as fear of the dark and heights. We believe this represents an opportunity to equip our students with communication skills, especially in public speaking, that will distinguish them in college and beyond. As a result, every 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade student at Invictus Academy will take Speech and Debate. The types of speeches students learn to deliver over the course of these two years vary in both purpose and audience. In addition, the course is aligned to the English Language Development (ELD) standards under the Common Core and supports students' development of reading and writing skills. The format of the speeches and debates students engage in parallel those of the National Speech & Debate Association, the most prominent competitive high school speech and debate league nationally. Once students start high school, they have the option to join the Speech and Debate team, which carries with it elective credits that meet both the Visual and Performing Arts and College Preparatory Elective A-G standards.

## Deliberate Practice

In 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade, all students take a Deliberate Practice course, which supports them in developing habits of mind in authentic, engaging settings. Each teacher selects and designs a practice-based course which they teach as their second subject. Examples of possible courses include any activity rooted in practice (e.g. chess, basketball, dance, coding, etc.).

Research by Anders Ericsson has shown that expertise is developed through thousands of hours of a specific kind of practice, which he titles “deliberate practice.” This entails breaking down a larger activity—chess, basketball, dance, coding, etc.—into smaller, component parts and repeatedly practicing these smaller parts and receiving feedback.<sup>80</sup>

This type of practice stimulates a form of cognitive development that supports the building of strong habits and self-regulation.<sup>81</sup> Leading researchers in the field of education have cited this type of practice as crucial to the development of students' non-academic strengths, which, incidentally, have an outsized impact on their future academic performance.<sup>82</sup>

A wide and growing body of research demonstrates that students' habits and other non-academic qualities play as important a factor in their persistence in college and careers as their academic performance. This research also shows that experiences in authentic, non-academic settings can often be the key to unlocking positive, productive student mindsets and beliefs.<sup>83</sup> Our program is specifically designed to support students in the development of these habits and qualities in authentic settings through the Deliberate Practice period.

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<sup>80</sup> Ericsson, Anders. *Peak*. NY: Vintage, 2017. Print.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> Duckworth, Angela. *Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance*. NY: Simon & Schuster, 2016. Print.

<sup>83</sup> Tough, Paul. *Helping Children Succeed: What Works and Why*. NY: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016. Print.

## Advisory

Strong student-teacher relationships are associated with higher academic achievement and growth for students, stemming from improved motivation, self-esteem, and social capital.<sup>84</sup> Our Advisory period is designed to ensure that adults and students form strong, positive relationships. Starting in 7<sup>th</sup> grade, students have an Advisor who helps them set goals, interfaces directly with their advisees' parents during parent conferences, and monitors their advisees' progress. Advisors loop with their same advisees from 7-12<sup>th</sup> grade, allowing for the Advisor/advisee relationship to grow over time.

Students benefit from a variety of activities that occur in Advisory. Advisors conduct quarterly goal-setting conferences with each individual advisee, implement an Advisory curriculum rooted in Invictus Academy's core values, disseminate college information, and facilitate critical conversations about current events of interest. These activities follow a routinized regimen and an established curriculum, reducing the planning burden on teachers and freeing them to devote their time to supporting students individually.

## Tutorial

Daily tutoring is a research-based best practice. As stated by Dr. Roland Fryer, "Schools that tutor students at least four days a week in groups of six or fewer have annual ELA gains that are equal to 0.5 more months than other schools."<sup>85</sup> Tutorial provides a time and space for this support to occur. Students will be re-grouped based on grade data and student input to teachers from whom they need additional help. Teachers then lead small group instruction, re-teach material, support students through longer assignments, and leverage software for additional practice as needed. Students who do not require this additional support are grouped to work collaboratively through homework, longer assignments, or work towards their Accelerated Reader goals. This format provides for maximum differentiation based on student needs and ensures resources are devoted to our most vulnerable students.

## Homework Center

There is strong evidence that completion of homework is correlated with both middle school and high school achievement.<sup>86</sup> Homework Center is a means to support students to build the habit of regularly completing their homework by routinizing the completion of homework and removing the reward for failing to complete homework.<sup>87</sup> For grades seven, eight, and nine, when students fail to complete their homework they will be required to attend Homework Center at lunch, where

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<sup>84</sup> Gallagher, Emily. "Department of Applied Psychology." *The Effects of Teacher-Student Relationships: Social and Academic Outcomes of Low-Income Middle and High School Students*. New York University-Steinhardt, n.d. Web. <<http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/appsych/opus/issues/2013/fall/gallagher>>.

<sup>85</sup> Fryer, Roland G., Jr. "Learning from the Successes and Failures of Charter Schools." *The Hamilton Project*. 2012. <http://student.harvard.edu/fryer/publications/learning-successes-and-failures-charter-schools>.

<sup>86</sup> *What Research Says about the Value of Homework: Research Review*. Rep. Center for Public Education, n.d. Web. 5 Feb. 2007.

<sup>87</sup> Duhigg, Charles. "Habits: Why We Do What We Do." *Harvard Business Review* 30 Mar. 2015. Web.

they complete the homework that was missing or incomplete. Once students reach 10<sup>th</sup> grade, students who fail to complete their homework will lose credit for that homework, which counts against their grade. There is no Homework Center for 10<sup>th</sup> graders and above. This structure ensures that students build the routine of completing their homework, but also develop the habit of doing homework absent the Homework Center consequence to ensure they are prepared for the independence of college.

## Non-academic Goals

Students must possess both academic and non-academic knowledge and skills to be successful truly successful in college and beyond. This category of preparation is far-reaching, including academic and personal habits, which tend to be more difficult to measure. The non-academic goals, techniques used to support achievement of them, and metrics used for measurement are described below.

- **Students will demonstrate perseverance regularly:** We know that our students will face uncommon obstacles in their path to and through college, and therefore we understand the importance of students persisting through challenges. We believe that if students view perseverance as part of their identity, they will be more likely to overcome these challenges. As a result, our teachers will be trained to praise students based on identity. As opposed to saying, “You worked hard on this assignment,” teachers will be encouraged to go a step further, stating, “You did well on this assignment because you are a hard worker.” This form of praise encourages students to craft their identity in the mold of their strengths and positive traits.<sup>88</sup> Indeed, a study of parenting methods of Holocaust protestors, who embodied the utmost character, found this form of praise to be a pattern during protestors’ youth.<sup>89</sup> We will measure student growth in this area using the University of Pennsylvania Grit Survey, which has been deployed in a variety of fields and shown to have remarkable predictive power.<sup>90</sup> We will offer the survey at the start and end of every school year and measure cumulative change over time and across cohorts of students.
- **Students believe that their abilities grow with effort:** Instrumental to students’ development of strength in our core values is students’ belief that they can improve with effort, which is the definition of a growth mindset. This is why we view a growth mindset as essential to our school culture. Carol Dweck’s influential book, *Mindset*, showed that students who hold this belief tend to be more successful on a range of measures over the long run.<sup>91</sup> Consequently, we will heed her advice and avoid offering praise to students around intelligence, instead commending for their effort and encouraging them to see positive traits as part of their identity, as referenced above. To measure the effect of these efforts, we will offer Dweck’s growth mindset survey as well as Dr. Martin Seligman’s optimism survey, which measures similar qualities as Dweck’s but in greater detail.<sup>92</sup> Each

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<sup>88</sup> Grant, Adam. *The Originals*. New York: Penguin, 2017. Print.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Duckworth, Angela. *Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance*. NY: Simon & Schuster, 2016. Print.

<sup>91</sup> Dweck, Carol S. *Mindset*. London: Robinson, 2017. Print.

<sup>92</sup> Seligman, Martin E. P. *Learned Optimism*. North Sydney, N.S.W.: Random House Australia, 2011. Print.

survey will be administered at the beginning and end of each year in advisory, with the data analyzed at professional development sessions held at the end of each year.

- **Students, parents, and staff view Invictus Academy as having a positive school culture:** We aim to make Invictus Academy a safe, supportive, rigorous, and joyful school. There are numerous elements that build such a school culture, and to better understand our school’s effectiveness in this area, we will survey both students and parents. These surveys can be found in **Appendix 14: Staff, Parent, and Student Surveys**. Questions will center on students feeling safe, supported, and challenged, and families feeling strong bonds of communication and partnership with the school. These surveys will be designed in-house and administered at the end of each semester. On these surveys, we seek to have 80% of students, parents, and staff state the school culture is positive on relevant items.

### Instructional Practices

Our core pedagogical approach extends from studies of nearly 40 high-poverty, high-performing charter schools across the country. When observing the details of each school and what the key reasons are for student achievement, a number of trends emerged. Chief among these was that teachers are trained to deploy a specific set of techniques to manage their classes effectively, engage students in learning, and execute rigorous lessons. These techniques have been best chronicled in the taxonomy established by Doug Lemov in his seminal text, *Teach Like a Champion*, which will inform the language we use with and training we provide to teachers.<sup>93</sup>

Like many of the strongest schools in the country, our instructional focus will shift over the course of the year. During Summer Professional Development and coaching over the first month of the school year, our focus with teachers will be on supporting the establishment of a strong class culture. The techniques we practice during this period will center on classroom management, routines and procedures, and setting high expectations for student achievement. The techniques in **Figure 28** below will be our focus during the first month of classes:

**Figure 28. Month One Instructional Focus Areas**

Skill	Description	Example
100%	Using a variety of techniques, teachers ensure that 100% of students are on task 100% of the time.	The teacher asks students to put down pencils and one still has a pencil in hand. The teacher uses either a nonverbal or verbal reminder to ensure 100% of students are meeting expectations.
Sweat the Details	An approach in which teachers identify and address any and all instances in which students fall short of expectations, including minor ones.	Teachers set an explicit goal for how long it should take for students to pass papers in and practice the procedure with students.
No Opt Out	Students who are unable to answer a question are supported to an answer; there is never a situation	A student is unable to conjure the correct answer to a teacher’s question. The teacher will provide cues and hints to the student until they arrive at the

<sup>93</sup> Lemov, Doug. *Teach like a Champion: The Complete Handbook to Master the Art of Teaching*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2011. Print.

	in which a student is passed over because they do not have an answer to a question.	correct answer. If necessary, the teacher has another student respond correctly and calls on the original student again to repeat the correct answer.
Circulate	Teachers move through the aisles of the physical classroom, using proximity to support student engagement and looking over student work whenever possible.	The teacher has students complete a written check for understanding question independently for two minutes. The teacher moves strategically through the aisles of the classroom during those two minutes looking at student responses to gauge student understanding.
Warm strict	Teachers exhibit both a caring and empathetic tone and demeanor while remaining firm in holding students accountable to high expectations.	The teacher has set the expectation that students raise hands before speaking, but one student calls out an answer to a question, earnestly forgetting to raise his/her hand. Teacher says, “[Student’s name], your enthusiasm is fantastic, but I need you to raise your hand. Please try again.”
Cold call	All students are accountable to answering all questions; teachers may select a student who has not raised his/her hand to share an answer to a question at any time.	Following independent work time, the teacher calls students’ attention. Instead of taking hands, the teacher uses popsicle sticks with students’ names on them to select which student will answer each question. Teacher says, “What is the answer to number 1, [Student’s name].”

Once a strong class culture is established across the school, it is possible for the focus of coaches and teachers to shift towards increasing the rigor of instruction. This requires the use of techniques that challenge students to shoulder an increasing cognitive load in classes, articulate their answers in a college preparatory fashion, and hone their knowledge, skills, and habits. The following techniques support this aspect of the school’s mission:

**Figure 29. Full-year instructional focus areas:**

Skill	Description	Example
Check for understanding	Teachers assess students’ understanding during lessons in multiple forms, using questions that are scripted in lesson plans.	After reading a passage in ELA, the teacher has students write a summary at the bottom of their notes, share and improve their summary with a partner, and then calls on three students to share their answers to the whole class for whole group evaluation.
Ratio	The amount of student voice and thought (relative to teacher voice and thought) in classes is maximized.	During a history lesson, the teacher orchestrates a debate around an essential question grounded in historical documents. The teacher makes time for students to respond to each other’s views before intervening to push the conversation forward.
At Bats	Teachers should maximize the number of attempts they offer students to practice and master a given concept or skill.	During a math lesson, the teacher includes multiple practice problems during independent practice so that students can solidify their understanding with multiple attempts on each problem type.

Format matters	Teachers consistently coach students around both their written and oral communication, including use of grammatically correct sentences and high level vocabulary	1. A student responds to a teacher’s question, “They don’t got no books” and the teacher intervenes by repeating the phrase. The student then knows to correct the phrase to, “They don’t have any books.” 2. Student responds to a question with the word “view” and the teacher challenges the class to choose a better word, with another student offering the word “perspective.”
Stretch it	Even when students provide the correct answer to questions, teachers challenge students to explain, defend, and justify their answers with follow up questions.	During a science class, a student correctly identifies the density of an object in a given problem. The teacher follows up by asking the student to explain how they arrived at their answer, and then asks how they would have approached the problem differently had they been given the density of the object and not the mass.
Right is Right	Teachers set a high bar for what constitutes a correct answer, and are direct and clear in drawing the line between correct and incorrect answers.	A student incorrectly provides the definition of a vocabulary word. The teacher says, “No, that is incorrect.” The teacher then executes strategies learned for “No Opt Out” to coach the student to the correct answer.

### Assessment System

To achieve our mission, we must measure student progress thoughtfully and precisely. We believe that data must drive instruction for instruction to be excellent, and as a result, we collect student achievement data frequently and systematically. Analysis of data informs instruction, professional development, and communication with families and students regarding performance. We rely on a variety of types of assessment data to drive decisions within the school and through rigorous analysis of this data, we hone in on a complete picture of our areas of strength and areas for growth, taking action to close gaps whenever and wherever they occur. A full description of assessments and data analysis can be found in **Element 3: Data**.

### Local Control and Accountability Plan Compliance

Invictus Academy will comply with all requirements pursuant to California Education Code § 47605(b)(5)(A)(ii) including developing annual goals, for all pupils (i.e. schoolwide) and for each subgroup of pupils as identified in California Education Code § 52052, for each of the applicable eight (8) state priorities identified in California Education Code § 52060(d). Please refer to the table in **Element 2: Measurable Pupil Outcomes** for the schoolwide goals for relevant subgroups and corresponding assessments. Beginning in fiscal year 2018, Invictus Academy will comply with all elements of the Local Control Accountability Plan pursuant to regulations and templates adopted by the State Board of Education and reserves the right to establish additional, school-specific goals and corresponding assessments throughout the duration of the charter.

## Special Populations

Invictus Academy will be a school for all learners, regardless zip code or background. To that end, we are intentional about designing school structures and supports to ensure that our most at-risk student populations receive an excellent education. In Richmond, these groups include, but are not limited to, high-achieving students, low-achieving students, English Language Learners, historically disadvantaged minorities, low-income students, and students with special needs. The following curricular and instructional design features intentionally support these students:

- **Extended Time:** Extended instructional time is a research-based best practice. As stated by Dr. Fryer, “Schools that add 25 percent or more instructional time to the average New York City traditional public school’s time have annual math gains that are equal to 0.625 more months than other schools.”<sup>94</sup> Invictus Academy features an extended day to include time for tutoring, Advisory, and, in middle school, daily double periods of both math and literacy. In seventh and eighth grades, extended time is used to offer foundational or procedural skills instruction paired with problem solving and textual analysis. This approach ensures that students who begin school with skill gaps have time to close them, while still working on grade level content. Over time, these additional minutes add up to additional school days, which enable students to catch up on any material they might have previously missed and get the help they need to stay on pace to be college ready.
- **Saturday Math Camps:** For all students, we offer eight optional Saturday school sessions, specifically focused on closing students’ knowledge and skill gaps in math. These sessions will be led by teachers and executed using a station-rotation model with extra small-group support. The goal of these sessions is for students who have significant foundational knowledge or skill gaps in math to close them in a small, supported environment, such that they are then able to better access grade-level appropriate content. Any student who is 1.5 grade levels behind in math, according to the NWEA MAP assessment, will be recommended for Saturday Math Camps.
- **Daily Tutoring:** As mentioned above, our schedule includes a tutorial period specifically, created in part to support our most struggling students. Our staff convenes each week to analyze grade data and assign students to teachers for tutorial period. Teachers may use tutorial for (1) skills remediation, (2) strategic re-teaching, or (3) homework support. This system ensures students who need help get it in a timely, attentive fashion.
- **Strategic Use of Technology:** Invictus Academy uses technology intentionally to meet students’ needs. Teachers will be trained in instant response systems, which empower them to check students’ understanding in class and instantly respond to data. This responsive system prevents teachers from moving on if and when there are significant misconceptions within class. These systems also provide teachers with student-level data, so teachers can quickly identify precisely which students to offer extra help to in the middle of lessons. In addition, we utilize video-creation software (EdPuzzle), artificial intelligence tutoring

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<sup>94</sup> Fryer, Roland G., Jr. “Learning from the Successes and Failures of Charter Schools.” *The Hamilton Project*. 2012. <http://student.harvard.edu/fryer/publications/learning-successes-and-failures-charter-schools>.

(Querium) and live tutoring (Zeal) supports to ensure students get immediate, precise feedback as they work through content.

- **Advisory and Parent Communication:** We recognize that motivating students to put forth their best effort is a major part of their success in school. As a result, we utilize Advisory time to help students set and monitor academic goals, and communicate regularly with families to reinforce students' goals at home. We host one parent/teacher conference each semester, communicate with parents through texts, calls, and emails at least once per week, and host monthly events to build relationships with families. We believe that these forms of purposeful communication align the motivational messaging to students to encourage them to invest themselves fully in their schoolwork.

### **Plan for Academically High-Achieving Students**

Invictus Academy will be responsive to the needs of all students, including those that are identified as academically high-achieving. A student will be designated as high achieving if their level on the Northwest Education Association Measure of Educational Progress (NWEA MAP) assessments at the outset of the school year registers two or more years above grade level in English and/or math. For all such students, the parents will be notified and a conference between parents, the student, one of the student's teachers, and a member of the school leadership team will be held to construct individual goals for the student and discuss differentiation techniques that the student's teachers will utilize to ensure the student is challenged. These techniques include, but are not limited to, providing extension exercises and providing leadership opportunities with peers within the classroom.

Students who are academically high-achieving will be challenged at Invictus Academy. Our program ensures that these students have ample opportunity to learn at an appropriate pace, complete courses of college-level rigor, and explore interests and develop skills outside of core content.

- **Self-paced middle school math and English courses:** In both ELA and Math Foundational Skills, students will engage in self-paced skill-building using a station-rotation model. Through this instructional model, students have the opportunity to navigate through content and receive small group instruction on challenges that are appropriately leveled to match their mastery level. Several of the software programs we use, including Querium, Khan Academy, ST Math, Lexia, Newsella, and No Red Ink are mastery-based and/or adaptive to student skill level.
- **A robust offering of Advanced Placement (AP) courses:** Research has demonstrated that student performance on AP Exams have strong predictive power of future performance in the same discipline in college.<sup>95</sup> These courses represent rigorous, college-level work available to students in high school. Students may opt into AP courses at their discretion based on their preparation and interest level, enabling them to sample content across disciplines at a college level.

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<sup>95</sup> Morgan, R., & Klaric, J., (2007). AP Students in College: An Analysis of Five-Year Academic Careers. NY: The College Board.

- **Opportunities to engage in a variety of electives:** Beyond core-content classes, student have access to a variety of elective courses in math, science, ELA, history and social sciences, and visual and performing arts. These elective courses offer students the opportunity to develop new skill-sets through different challenges, including speech and debate, journalism, dance, coding, and digital arts.

## Plan for Academically Low-Achieving Students

Invictus Academy is dedicated to serving all students, especially those who have historically been low achieving. To ensure equitable access to an excellent education for all students, Invictus Academy will utilize the Response to Intervention (“RtI”) model used by the state and district to monitor and intervene appropriately when students struggle. RtI is “a systematic, data-driven approach to instruction that benefits every student. RtI integrates resources from general education, categorical programs, and special education through a comprehensive system of core instruction and tiered levels of interventions to benefit every student.”<sup>96</sup> Through meticulous implementation of RtI, Invictus Academy will ensure timely and appropriate assessments for students for special education services and bolster achievement for all students.

Any student who is two or more grade levels behind in reading or mathematics, or earns below a 60% level of overall mastery in two or more academic subjects will be classified as “low-achieving.” Parents of any such student will be immediately notified and a meeting will be held with a parent, the student, and a member of the school’s leadership team. Thereafter, teachers, in collaboration with a Special Education teacher and their coach, will design a plan for specific, in-class interventions to support the student and monitor the student’s progress in response to the interventions.

Should the initial interventions in the class prove to be unsuccessful through Tier I<sup>97</sup> interventions, a certified staff member will identify and implement Tier II interventions to support students in making the growth necessary for mastery of the content or skill. Students for whom interventions fail to improve achievement will be referred to our Special Education Department for testing to determine eligibility for Special Education services. Should testing indicate that the student qualifies for Special Education supports/services an Individual Education Plan (IEP) will be written. These IEPs will be reviewed annually and each student will be reevaluated at least every three years. In our first year of operation our Special Education teacher and the Executive Director will work with the District and specialists in the Richmond community to ensure the development of the necessary management and monitoring of IEPs within our building.

We anticipate a Special Education population similar to that of West Contra Costa Unified School District, which has approximately 12% of students in Special Education programs.<sup>98</sup> During year one of operation, the Director of Operations will be in charge of monitoring the RtI process as well as ensuring the IEP process is followed with fidelity. Additionally, they will oversee coordinating service hours for IEP students in conjunction with the Special Education teacher.

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<sup>96</sup> California Department of Education “California Philosophy and Definition RtI.” Web. 7 October.

<sup>97</sup> See Tier definitions below.

<sup>98</sup> <http://www.wccusd.net/Page/8099>.

To prepare our teachers to serve all students identification, intervention, and ultimately moving through the Student Support Team (“SST”) process we will dedicate time during summer professional development to training our teachers in these processes. All academic and behavioral data will be tracked by subgroup, including students in Special Education and English Language Learners.

## **Tier Definitions**

The following are definitions of Tier I, II, and III students and interventions.<sup>99</sup>

### **Tier I**

Tier I interventions are the core instruction that occurs within the general education classroom. All students receive Tier I interventions as needed. Tier I is standards aligned, high-quality, consistent instruction. The teacher checks for understanding regularly and addresses misconceptions. Exit tickets, weekly quizzes, and other progress monitoring assessments lead to remediation to ensure all students meet lesson objectives. Tier I instruction includes differentiation for all students, including small group remediation, use of multiple modalities, guided practice, and active monitoring of student work during independent practice. When teachers implement the core program effectively and are given sufficient support and professional development, 80% or more of the students will appropriately progress to mastery of standards in the general education classroom.

### **Tier II**

Tier II interventions are initiated when a student fails to demonstrate evidence of growth towards mastery of standards with Tier I interventions. Tier II interventions *supplement* or *replace* Tier I interventions. Tier II interventions are research based, specifically selected instruction which take place in small groups of 1-6 students, and consist of focused instruction on specific objectives. In determining which objective to focus on, teachers should consider the root causes of student performance, which standards or skills will allow students access to other standards or benchmarks, and target Tier II interventions on those root causes and skills. For example: A seventh grader struggling with understanding a text that he reads might need phonics instruction or fluency practice before moving to comprehension. Tier II interventions also incorporate progress monitoring and tracking of implementation. Tier II interventions are executed 3 - 5 times per week for 4 - 6 weeks. The student will be reassessed on the material to determine progress. Should a student fail to make progress during their Tier II interventions, they move onto Tier III.

For students who fall in Tier II interventions, aside from a pull-out group twice a week during core content classes, they will be pulled out during Tutorial to review the material for the day, such that they receive a significant amount of small group time with a low teacher to student ratio. Additionally, student’s may use other adaptive computerized programs that are leveled for their

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<sup>99</sup>The following was adapted from Cornerstone Academy Preparatory School’s Special Education Playbook.

specific zone of proximal development, the level at which work is appropriately difficult for the child, and allows them to move at their own pace.

### **Tier III**

Tier III interventions are initiated when a student does not show progress in Tier II. Tier III intervention replaces some Tier I and II interventions. Tier III interventions are research based, specifically selected instruction which takes place in small groups of 1-4 students, and consist of focused instruction on specific objectives. Tier III interventions include monitoring of progress and tracking of implementation. Small groups in Tier III interventions are executed at least 5 times per week, for 6 weeks. Both Tier II and Tier III interventions occur in small groups, and the distinction is the number of sessions per week, and data collected on student progress. Tier III interventions always occur at least daily, continue for 6 weeks, with data collected at least 3 times per week.

### **Special Education Students**

Invictus Academy of Richmond will provide students with special needs a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) within the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) possible. We will comply with all requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and other statutes set forth by the Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (OCR). We are an open enrollment school and do not discriminate in any way in our admission or enrollment; indeed, we will actively recruit students with special needs where possible, in accordance with our aim of mirroring the demographic makeup of Richmond schools. Invictus Academy's Executive Director is responsible for assuring compliance with all laws and regulations, and ensuring the provision of speech and language therapy, tutoring, speech, and occupational supports for students with special needs, as appropriate.

In accordance with this assurance, Invictus Academy pledges to work in cooperation with the West Contra Costa Unified School District or Eldorado County SELPA to ensure that all students, including those with special needs, receive a free and appropriate education. Furthermore, Invictus Academy will comply with AB 602, West Contra Costa Unified School District guidelines, and all California laws pertaining to students with special needs. The practices above are firmly in line with our belief that all students can achieve at high levels, a belief that is supported by our policies and practices outlined below.

Invictus Academy shall initially remain, by default, a public school of West Contra Costa Unified School District for purposes of special education, pursuant to Education Code Section 47641(b). However, Invictus Academy reserves the right to apply and become an independent local education agency (LEA) member in a special education local plan area (SELPA) for purposes of special education without a material revision to the charter. Invictus Academy will make written, verifiable assurances that it will become an independent local educational agency (LEA) and, upon acceptance into a SELPA, will be an independent LEA member of that SELPA pursuant to Education Code Section 47641(a).

So long as Invictus Academy operates as a public school of the West Contra Costa Unified School District, solely for purposes of providing special education and related services under the IDEA pursuant to Education Code Section 47641(b), in accordance with Education Code Section 47646 and 20 U.S.C. 1413, West Contra Costa Unified School District will provide special education services for students enrolled in Invictus Academy to the extent required by law. Specifically, West Contra Costa Unified School District will (A) serve children with disabilities in the same manner as it serves children with disabilities in its other schools; and/or (B) provide Invictus Academy with an equitable share of state and federal special education funding to support special education instruction or designated instructed and services to students enrolled in the charter school. Invictus Academy reserves the right to contract with agencies and vendors outside the West Contra Costa Unified School District when appropriate to secure special education services, including administrative support services.

Invictus Academy anticipates that a Memorandum of Understanding (“MOU”) will be developed between the school and West Contra Costa Unified School District, which shall delineate the respective responsibilities of Invictus Academy and West Contra Costa Unified School District with regard to the funding and delivery of special education and related services.

Per Federal Law, all students with disabilities will be fully integrated into the programs of Invictus Academy, with the necessary materials, services, and equipment to support their learning. The school will ensure that any student with a disability attending Invictus Academy is properly identified, assessed and provided with necessary services and supports.

Invictus Academy will meet all the requirements mandated within a student’s Individual Education Plan (IEP). The school will seek to include all special needs students with non-disabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate according to their IEP. However, if the student’s needs as documented on the IEP require a program other than inclusion, the school will work with West Contra Costa Unified School District and/or SELPA to provide an appropriate placement and services.

Invictus Academy will work with West Contra Costa Unified School District and/or SELPA to make time and facilities available to meet the needs of the student’s IEP. Invictus Academy will actively participate in all aspects of the IEP to enable the student to be successful, including the appropriate individual tutoring schedule and classroom modifications, strategies, and techniques. The school will make available student’s work products for analysis and evaluation of progress and will participate in the IEP reviews conducted by the West Contra Costa Unified School District, where applicable.

If a parent or faculty member feels the student’s educational needs are not being met, they may request a reassessment or a review of the IEP by the IEP team at any time during the year via written notice to Invictus Academy, which will then forward such written notice to Invictus Academy and/or SELPA within two school days. The school will encourage open communication between the parents and the West Contra Costa Unified School District and/or SELPA for any items related to the special education services. Students at Invictus Academy who have IEP’s will continue to attend the school, unless the IEP recommends otherwise.

In order to comply with Child Find requirements as specified by law, Invictus Academy will establish a referral and assessment process that brings together the parent/guardian, student, and school personnel to address any problems that interfere with a student's success at the school. This process will entail search and serve, a Student Support Team, referral, assessment and IEP review.

### **Search and Serve**

Upon the commencement of Invictus Academy's school year, all students will be evaluated as a means of class placement. No assessment or evaluation will be used for admission purposes. Through collaboration between the faculty and Executive Director, Invictus Academy will work to identify any students, who do not currently have an IEP but may be in need of a pre-referral intervention plan. The Executive Director and faculty will then convene the Student Support Team for that student.

Students possibly in need of special education can be screened from already available data (i.e. school tests, teacher observations, grades, etc.) regarding the student's progress or lack of progress within the general program.

For students who are identified as needing interventions, a Student Support Team composed of the student, the student's parent or guardian, the Executive Director, and an Invictus Academy faculty member will be responsible for identifying the student's needs and developing a plan to enable that student to be successful, including, but not limited to, the appropriate individual tutoring schedule, classroom modifications, strategies and techniques to enhance that student's ability to be successful. If the Student Support Team finds that the pre-intervention plan is not sufficient to meet the student's needs, they will recommend that student for a formal special education assessment. Invictus Academy may also choose to refer a student for services through the provisions of a Section 504 Plan, if appropriate.

Parents will be informed that special education and related services are provided at no cost to them.

### **Interim and Initial Placements of New Charter School Students**

If a student enrolls at Invictus Academy with an existing IEP, Invictus Academy will notify the West Contra Costa Unified School District and/or SELPA (where applicable according to SELPA policies) within five (5) days. An IEP meeting will be convened within 30 days to review the existing IEP, discuss the student's present levels of performance and needs, and offer an appropriate placement and services. Prior to such meeting and pending agreement on a new IEP, Invictus Academy shall work with the District and/or SELPA to implement the existing IEP at Invictus Academy or as otherwise agreed upon by the parent/guardian.

### **Referral for Assessment**

The referral process is a formal, ongoing review of information related to students who are suspected of having special needs and show potential signs of needing special education and related services. Invictus Academy's internal method for referral for assessment will be the Student Support Team. The parent of any student suspected of needing or qualifying for special education services may also make a referral for an evaluation. Any such referrals will be responded to in

writing by Invictus Academy within 15 days. Invictus Academy will notify the West Contra Costa Unified School District and/or SELPA (where applicable according to SELPA policies) of the assessment request within 5 days of receipt. Parents will be informed via the Director of Operations that special education and related services are provided at no cost to them.

If Invictus Academy, in collaboration with the District and/or SELPA, concludes that an assessment is appropriate, the parent will receive a written Assessment Plan within 15 days. The parent will be given at least 15 days to provide written consent to the Assessment Plan. Assessments will be done only upon receipt of written parent permission. The assessment will be completed and an Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting held within 60 days of receipt of the parent's written consent for assessment.

### **Assessment**

The Executive Director will be responsible for gathering all pertinent information and sharing such information with West Contra Costa Unified School District and/or SELPA (where applicable according to SELPA policies). Information gathered will be used as tools to determine the student's disability, eligibility for services, and determining the nature and extent of required services. Assessment procedures will be conducted in the student's primary language, and an interpreter will be provided if needed. The types of assessments that may be used for determining eligibility for specialized instruction and services will include, but not limited to:

- Individual testing
- Teacher observations
- Interviews
- Review of school records, reports, and work samples
- Parent input

Unless conflicting with West Contra Costa Unified School District or SELPA policies and procedures, Invictus Academy will follow the following assessment guidelines. If a conflict with West Contra Costa Unified School District or SELPA policies and procedures exists, then West Contra Costa Unified School District policies and procedures will govern.

- Parents or guardians of any student referred for assessment must give their written consent for the school to administer the assessment;
- The assessment will be completed and an Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting held within 60 days of receipt of the parent's written consent for assessment;
- The student must be evaluated in all areas related to his/her suspected disability;
- Assessments must be conducted by a person with knowledge of the student's suspected disability, and administered by trained and knowledgeable personnel and in accordance with any instructions provided by the producer of the assessments. Individually administered tests of intellectual or emotional functioning must be administered by a credentialed school psychologist;
- Assessments must be selected and administered so as not to be racially, culturally, or sexually discriminatory;
- Assessments will be delivered in the student's primary language, and a qualified interpreter will be provided if needed;

- Assessment tools must be used for purposes for which the assessments or measures are valid and reliable; and
- Assessments will be adapted as necessary for students with impaired sensory, physical or speaking skills; and
- A multidisciplinary team will be assembled to assess the student, including a teacher knowledgeable in the disability.

Upon completion of the assessment, an IEP team will be assembled to review the results of the assessment and determine the student's need for special education. Invictus Academy, in coordination with West Contra Costa Unified School District or SELPA will be responsible for scheduling, coordinating and facilitating the IEP meeting. Educators qualified to interpret test results will present the assessment data at the IEP meeting. Parents will be provided with written notice of the IEP meeting, and the meeting will be held at a mutually agreeable time and place.

### **Development and Implementation of IEP**

Every student who is assessed by the school will have an IEP that documents assessment results and eligibility determination for special education services.

Invictus Academy, in collaboration with West Contra Costa Unified School District or SELPA, will ensure that all aspects of the IEP and school site implementation are maintained. Invictus Academy will provide modifications and accommodations (outlined within each individual's IEP) in the general education environment taught by the general education teacher. Students at the school who have IEP's will be served in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). Lastly, IEP goals and services will be linguistically appropriate as per Ed Code Section 56345 (b).

Each student who has an IEP will have an IEP team that oversees the IEP Development, implementation and progress of the student. All decisions concerning the special education programs and services to be provided to a student with a disability are to be made by the IEP team. The IEP team must include all of the following members:

- The parent or guardian of the student for whom the IEP was developed;
- The Student;
- The Executive Director;
- At least one special education teacher;
- A General Education teacher who is familiar with the curriculum appropriate to that student, if the student is, or may be, participating in the general education environment;
- A West Contra Costa Unified School District or SELPA Special Education Representative
- If the child was recently assessed, the individual who conducted the assessment or who is qualified to interpret the assessment results;

Others familiar with the student may be invited as needed. Invictus Academy views parents as key stakeholders in these meetings and will make every effort to accommodate parents' schedules and needs so that they will be able to participate effectively on the IEP team. The school will provide an interpreter if necessary to ensure that all parents and/or guardians understand and can participate in the IEP process. If a parent cannot attend the IEP meeting, the school will ensure his/her

participation using other methods, such as conferencing by telephone or meeting at the parent's home.

A copy of the IEP will be given to the parent in accordance with state laws and West Contra Costa Unified School District or SELPA policies. Upon the parent or guardian's written consent, the IEP will be implemented by Invictus Academy, in cooperation with the West Contra Costa Unified School District or SELPA in which Invictus Academy is a member.

Upon the parent or guardian's written consent, the IEP will be implemented by Invictus Academy. The IEP will include all required components and be written on West Contra Costa Unified School District or SELPA forms.

The student's IEP will include the following:

- A statement of the student's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance;
- The rationale for placement decisions;
- The services the student will receive and the means for delivering those services;
- A description of when services will begin, how often the student will receive them, who will provide them, and where they will be delivered;
- Measurable annual goals and short-term objectives focusing on the student's current level of performance;
- A description of how the student's progress toward meeting the annual goals will be measured and monitored and when reports will be provided; and
- Accommodations necessary to measure the academic achievement and functional performance of the pupil on state and district assessments;
- For students 16 years of age and older, measurable postsecondary goals related to training, education, employment and independent living skills, along with transition services needed to assist the student in reaching those goals.

IEP meetings will be held according to the following schedule:

- Yearly to review the student's progress and make any necessary changes;
- Every three years to review the results of a mandatory comprehensive reevaluation of the student's progress;
- After the student has received a formal assessment or reassessment;
- When a parent or teacher feels that the student has demonstrated significant educational growth or a lack of anticipated progress (consistent with state and federal law, IEP meetings will be held within 30 days of a parent's request);
- When an Individual Transition Plan is (ITP) required at the appropriate age;
- When Invictus Academy seeks to suspend or remove the student for a period of 10 days or more for the same behavior, in order to determine if the student's misconduct was a manifestation of his/her disability.

## **IEP Review**

The IEP team will formally review the student's IEP at least once a year to determine how the IEP is meeting his/her needs. In accordance with IDEA regulations, the IEP team will also conduct a formal review of the IEP once every three years, in which the student is reassessed and the IEP is reviewed as part of an overall comprehensive reevaluation of the student's progress.

If a parent or faculty member feels the student's educational needs are not being met, they may request a reassessment or a review of the IEP by the IEP team at any time during the year via written notice to the school. Once the request is received, Invictus Academy will have thirty days, not including school vacations greater than five days, to hold the IEP meeting.

Unless otherwise specified on the student's IEP, parents will be informed four times a year of the student's progress toward meeting annual goals. The Goals and Objectives section of the IEP will be an attachment to the general progress report. This will serve to document the method by which the student's progress toward achieving the annual goal is measured, the student's progress during the relevant period, the extent to which it is anticipated the student will achieve the annual goal prior to the next annual review, and where needed, the reasons the student did not meet the goal.

## **Staffing**

Although West Contra Costa Unified School District will hold ultimate responsibility for providing Special Education services (so long as Invictus Academy operates as a school of the West Contra Costa Unified School District for purposes of special education), Invictus Academy is committed to assuring all IEPs are properly implemented and all students requiring services are adequately taken care of.

It is the goal of Invictus Academy to employ at least one full time teacher who in addition to having the proper credentials to teach a general education subject, will also possess the necessary Special Education Credential. This teacher, along with the Executive Director and Director of Operations of Invictus Academy, will be the primary Invictus Academy representatives tasked with assuring that all aspects of the IEP and any possible 504 plans are properly implemented. All teaching staff at Invictus Academy will also be involved in assuring that all IEPs and 504 plans are properly implemented.

The Executive Director and Director(s) of Operations will have duties that will include:

- Ensure that all aspects of IEPs are followed;
- Arrange for the teacher of the student to attend the team meetings;
- Communicate with parents about progress made toward attaining the goals stated on the student's IEP, and inform them of due process procedures and rights;
- Consult quarterly with the Executive Director to ensure that the objectives and goals of students with IEP's are being met;
- Complete the requisite paperwork, updating and filing of necessary information for initial referrals, triennial evaluations, ongoing monitoring of student progress, and appropriate provision of any/all test modifications as stipulated in the IEP;

- Maintain a central file with all special education evaluation material and IEP's in accordance with FERPA and IDEA guidelines; and
- Provide a report of student progress on the same schedule as students in general education

In addition to the above special education staff, Invictus Academy also seeks related services from the West Contra Costa Unified School District for special education students enrolled in Invictus Academy in the same manner as is provided to students in other West Contra Costa Unified School District schools (so long as Invictus Academy operates as a public school of the West Contra Costa Unified School District for purposes of special education). Invictus Academy also reserves the right to contract with service providers outside of the West Contra Costa Unified School District when appropriate.

## **Reporting**

Invictus Academy, in collaboration with West Contra Costa Unified School District, will collect and maintain the following information on disabled students as required by IDEA:

- A calculation of all school-age students with disabilities being provided special education services by age, grade, category of disability and the number of students with disabilities who are English Language Learners;
- The number of students provided with test modifications and the types and the number of students exempted from District assessments;
- The settings in which students with disabilities receive their services, specifically including the portion of the school day they receive services with non-disabled peers and time away from the regular classroom;
- The number of students with disabilities suspended "in-school" and out of school, organized by disability and length of suspensions; and
- The basis of exit from Invictus Academy of students with disabilities (i.e., attainment of diploma and type, declassified, moved, etc.).

All necessary procedures and practices to ensure confidentiality and accurate/timely reporting will be the responsibility of the Invictus Academy Executive Director. The Executive Director will ensure that a central file with all special education evaluation material and IEP's is maintained and that this file is locked and confidential, in accordance with IDEA guidelines. The Director of Operations will oversee access to these records, and will be responsible for ensuring that all providers responsible for the implementation of a student's IEP will have access to a copy of the IEP and will be informed of their specific responsibilities in implementing the IEP.

## **Procedural Safeguards**

Parents or guardians of students with IEPs at Invictus Academy must give written consent for the evaluation and placement of their child, be included in the decision-making process when change in placement, is under consideration, and be invited, along with teachers, to conferences and meetings to develop their child's IEP.

Any concerns or disagreements raised by parents will be acknowledged by the school within five days, after which a meeting between the parent and school will be scheduled to seek resolution of the disagreement. If a disagreement or concern persists, parents or guardians have the right to initiate a due process hearing to challenge a decision regarding the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of their child.

The school will provide the parent with a written Notice of Procedural Safeguards, which will include information on the procedure to initiate both formal and informal dispute resolutions, at least once per year. Invictus Academy will utilize the Notice of Procedural Safeguards used by the West Contra Costa Unified School District or SELPA in which it is a member.

### **Dispute Resolution<sup>100</sup>**

In the event that a parent/guardian files a request for a due process hearing or request for mediation, the West Contra Costa Unified School District and Invictus Academy shall work together to defend the case, so long as the Charter School operates as a school of the West Contra Costa Unified School District for special education purposes. In the event that the West Contra Costa Unified School District determines that legal representation is needed, Invictus Academy agrees that it shall be jointly represented by legal counsel of the West Contra Costa Unified School District's choosing.

So long as the Charter School operates as a school of the West Contra Costa Unified School District for special education purposes, West Contra Costa Unified School District may initiate a due process hearing or request for mediation with respect to a student enrolled in Invictus Academy if West Contra Costa Unified School District determines such action is legally necessary or advisable. Invictus Academy agrees to cooperate fully with the West Contra Costa Unified School District in such a proceeding.

So long as Invictus Academy operates as a school of the District for purposes of special education, Invictus Academy understands that the West Contra Costa Unified School District shall have sole discretion to settle any matter in mediation or due process. The West Contra Costa Unified School District shall also have sole discretion to file an appeal from a due process hearing or take other legal action involving any Charter School student necessary to protect its rights.

### **Complaint Procedures**

Parents or guardians also have the right to file a complaint with West Contra Costa Unified School District and/or California State Department of Education if they believe that the school has violated federal or state laws or regulations governing special education.

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<sup>100</sup> In the event that Invictus Academy opts to operate as an LEA in a SELPA other than WCCUSD, Invictus Academy reserves the right to make alternate arrangements for legal representation in and resolution of legal disputes pertaining to special education.

## **Special Education Strategies for Instruction and Services**

Invictus Academy will comply with the federal mandate of the “least restrictive environment,” (LRE), meaning that the school will make every attempt to educate special education students along with their non-disabled peers. Invictus Academy will mainstream all of its students as much as is appropriate according to each individual IEP, offering a comprehensive inclusion program that includes specialized individual tutoring through Invictus Academy’s extended day and year. Each student’s IEP requires different kinds of modifications for instruction and services, therefore the educational strategies of the IEP will be built around the student’s needs and how these fit within the general educational program of the school. The instruction outlined in each student’s IEP will be delivered by personnel qualified to do so.

## **Professional Development for Invictus Academy Staff**

The Executive Director, Dean of Students, regular and special education teaching staff, as well as other appropriate faculty and staff members will attend professional development and/or training meetings necessary to comply with state and federal special education laws, including those sponsored by the District or SELPA.

So long as Invictus Academy operates as a “school of the West Contra Costa Unified School District” for special education purposes, West Contra Costa Unified School District agrees to allow Invictus Academy staff access to all Special Education related professional development opportunities that are available to other employees of the West Contra Costa Unified School District.

Invictus Academy also intends to seek professional development opportunities for its’ staff through potential trainings facilitated by the County Office of Education, colleges and universities, and private companies or agencies.

## **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act**

Invictus Academy shall be solely responsible for its compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. All facilities of the School shall be accessible for all students with disabilities in accordance with the ADA.

Invictus Academy recognizes its legal responsibility to ensure that no qualified person with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program of Invictus Academy. Any student, who has an objectively identified disability which substantially limits a major life activity including, but not limited to, learning, is eligible for accommodation by the school.

A 504 team will be assembled by the Executive Director and shall include the parent/guardian, the student, a qualified staff member, and other qualified persons knowledgeable about the student, the meaning of the evaluation data, placement options, and accommodations. The 504 team will review the student’s existing records; including academic, social and behavioral records, and is responsible for making a determination as to whether an evaluation for 504 services is appropriate.

If the student has already been evaluated under the IDEIA but found ineligible for special education instruction or related services under the IDEIA, those evaluations may be used to help determine eligibility under Section 504. The student evaluation shall be carried out by the 504 team who will evaluate the nature of the student's disability and the impact upon the student's education. This evaluation will include consideration of any behaviors that interfere with regular participation in the educational program and/or activities. The 504 team may also consider the following information in its evaluation:

- Tests and other evaluation materials that have been validated for the specific purpose for which they are used and are administered by trained personnel.
- Tests and other evaluation materials include those tailored to assess specific areas of educational need, and not merely those which are designed to provide a single general intelligence quotient.
- Tests are selected and administered to ensure that when a test is administered to a student with impaired sensory, manual or speaking skills, the test results accurately reflect the student's aptitude or achievement level, or whatever factor the test purports to measure, rather than reflecting the student's impaired sensory, manual or speaking skills.

The final determination of whether the student is eligible for accommodations under Section 504 must be made by the 504 team in writing and notice is given in writing to the parent or guardian of the student in their primary language along with the procedural safeguards available to them. If during the evaluation, the 504 team obtains information indicating possible eligibility of the student for special education per the IDEA, a referral for assessment under the IDEA will be made by the 504 team.

If the student is found by the 504 team to have a disability under Section 504, the 504 team shall be responsible for determining what, if any, accommodations or services are needed to ensure that the student receives the free and appropriate public education ("FAPE"). In developing the 504 Plan, the 504 team shall consider all relevant information utilized during the evaluation of the student, drawing upon a variety of sources, including, but not limited to, assessments conducted by the School's professional staff.

The 504 Plan shall describe the Section 504 disability and any program accommodations, modifications or services that may be necessary.

All 504 team participants, parents, guardians, teachers and any other participants in the student's education, including substitutes and tutors, must have a copy of each student's 504 Plan. The Executive Director will ensure that teachers include 504 Plans with lesson plans for short-term substitutes and that he/she review the 504 Plan with a long-term substitute. A copy of the 504 Plan shall be maintained in the student's file. Each student's 504 Plan will be reviewed at least once per year to determine the appropriateness of the Plan, needed modifications to the plan, and continued eligibility.

Invictus Academy will comply with all requirements pursuant to California Education Code § 47605(b)(5)(A)(ii) including developing annual goals, for all pupils (i.e. schoolwide) and for each subgroup of pupils as identified in California Education Code § 52052, for each of the applicable

eight (8) state priorities identified in California Education Code § 52060(d). Please refer to the table in **Element 2: Measurable Pupil Outcomes** for the schoolwide goals for relevant sub-groups and corresponding assessments. Beginning in fiscal year 2018-19, Invictus Academy will comply with all elements of the Local Control Accountability Plan pursuant to regulations and templates adopted by the State Board of Education and reserves the right to establish additional, school-specific goals and corresponding assessments throughout the duration of the charter.

### English Language Learners

Our mission explicitly applies to *every* student at Invictus Academy, and thus, we will be intently focused on supporting all students, including our historically underserved ones. We anticipate, given the demographics of West Contra Costa Unified and Richmond specifically, that one major group we must account for is English Learners (EL). We will support these students with a full-inclusion model, employing instructional techniques to differentiate and accommodate for these students’ needs. Our schedule is structured to provide for significant amounts of small group instruction in ELA and Math classes, as well as tutoring time during Tutorial. Taken together, this model is in full compliance with all federal, state, and district regulations regarding equal access to the school curriculum for EL students.

Demographic data from district schools in or near our proposed location house substantial EL populations. This data generally reflects the population of EL students in WCCUSD, in which 34.4% of students qualify as EL. This data is presented below in **Figure 30**.

**Figure 30. EL Data from District Middle/High Schools in Richmond Area**<sup>101</sup>

Entity	EL Students	Total Enrollment	% EL
Lovonya Dejean Middle	208	529	39.3%
Helms Middle	408	985	41.3%
Crespi Middle	118	530	22.3%
John F. Kennedy High	280	858	32.6%
Richmond High	582	1,528	38.1%
Greenwood High	96	356	27.0%
<b>WCCUSD</b>	<b>10,652</b>	<b>30,973</b>	<b>34.4%</b>

### Identification of English Learners

Following enrollment, parents of students who will attend Invictus Academy will complete a home language survey, offered in multiple languages to ensure accuracy, in which they will indicate whether their children speak a language other than English at home. In accordance with federal and state laws, students for whom the primary language spoken at home is not English will be assessed for English proficiency using the CELDT/ELPAC IIA within 30 days of receipt of the home language survey. The CELDT/ELPAC IIA indicates whether a student is English proficient as well as the student’s level of English proficiency. Consistent with the law and Invictus Academy’s commitment to partnering with families, we will then notify parents of our responsibility to conduct CELDT/ELPAC testing and inform parents of CELDT/ELPAC testing

<sup>101</sup> <http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/longtermel/ELAS.aspx?cds=07617966120885&aggllevel=School&year=2015-16>.

results within 30 days following receipt of results. These results include whether the child qualifies for classification as an English Learner and, if so, the basis for this classification. All students classified as EL's will be assessed in the Spring of the same school year using the summative ELPAC to determine which EL's qualify for reclassification as English-proficient and, for those who do not, what progress they have made towards reclassification.

## **Instructional Supports for ELs**

Our program is designed to integrate the California English Language Development (ELD) standards into our instruction, with teachers designing daily lessons tailored to meet both an academic and a language objective. This approach aligns with a model of Specifically Designed Academic Instruction in English, in which is “the teaching of grade-level subject matter in English specifically designed for speakers of other languages...including planning, classroom management, lesson delivery, and assessment.”<sup>102</sup> The selection of this approach was intentional, as we are mindful that “[a] study of programs designed for limited-English-proficient students in California suggests that most limited-English-proficient students, especially those in middle and senior high schools, did not have access to aspects of the core curriculum that would permit them to advance to college preparatory courses or receive a diploma.”<sup>103</sup>

Successfully equipping teachers with the tools to implement an effective SDAIE program requires providing them with effective professional development, which we will offer by training teachers in Guided Language Acquisition Design (GLAD). The program Project GLAD provides “teachers a set of very specific, multistep instructional strategies to support students at various levels of English language proficiency, including native speakers.”<sup>104</sup> Controlled studies performed on classrooms implementing GLAD strategies found positive effects on student language acquisition across a range of skills when compared to a control group. Indeed, this same research suggests GLAD has positive effects even on non-EL students in full inclusion classrooms.

The implementation of SDAIE and Project GLAD in our program will provide our teaching staff with clarity around the instructional practices we will employ to serve our EL population. These practices include:

- Vocabulary previewing
- Peer instruction facilitated by instant response systems
- Additional direct literacy instruction during tutorial
- Consistency in classroom routines, procedures, and instructional practices
- Creation of a positive, supportive classroom culture
- Inclusion of literacy scaffolds where appropriate
- Deployment of culturally relevant curriculum
- Use of Word Walls

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<sup>102</sup> Genzuk, Michael. "Specifically Designed Academic Instruction in English for Language Minority Students." *Center for Multilingual, Multicultural Research-Occasional Paper Series* (2011): University of Southern California: Rossier School of Education. Web..

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> <http://educationnorthwest.org/sites/default/files/events/resources/impact-of-project-glad-paper-508.pdf> .

- Use of audiobooks
- Small group Math and ELA instruction
- Accelerated Reader (AR) assessments and tracking
- Standardized instruction of cross-discipline skills (e.g. annotation)
- Creation of ample “think-pair-share” and “turn and talk” opportunities
- Direct instruction on writing and grammar
- Choral reading and cloze notes

In addition to the CELDT/ELPAC, we will monitor EL students’ progress through the NWEA MAP Exam as well as ELA launches, exit tickets, quizzes, class participation, performance assessments, interim assessments, and a summative assessment. For students who do not demonstrate improvement on these measures, a combination of interventions will be deployed, including:

- At-home support with the use of books, packets, educational games, and online resources
- Additional small group work
- Use of supplemental technology-based literacy supports
- Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) support, as needed

Invictus Academy’s model also includes several built-in supports for EL students, which include:

- Extended instruction in ELA in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade
- Small group ELA instruction in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade
- Speech and Debate courses in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade
- Tutorial in both the middle and high school
- English Extension course offering in high school

We follow reclassification procedures consistent with the parameters set forth by the California Department of Education (CDE) and in Education Code, Section 313(d), as well as the general practice used in WCCUSD, by using inputs in determining EL reclassification. These inputs include the CELDT/ELPAC Exam, student performance on the SBAC Exam from the previous year, teacher evaluation, and parent consultation.

### **English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC)**

Consistent with state law, when the number of ELs at Invictus Academy reaches 21 students, we will establish an ELAC. This committee will be comprised of parents of ELs, parents of non-ELs, and school staff.<sup>105</sup> The ELAC will serve in an advisory capacity to provide both school leadership and the School Site Council with input on school practices and expenditures pertaining to ELs. The ELAC shall:

- Advise the Executive Director and staff on programs and services for EL’s
- Advise the School Site Council on the development of a Single Plan for Student Achievement (“SPSA”)

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<sup>105</sup> CA Ed Code, §§ 35147 (c), 52176 (b), and (c), 62002.5, and 64001 (a).

- Assist the school in the development of the school’s needs assessment and the communication of the importance of student attendance to parents.

Parent members of the ELAC will be elected annually by parents and guardians of EL’s. The percentage of parents of ELs on the ELAC will be greater than or equal to the percentage of EL students at the school. EL parents must make up at least 51% of those parents serving on the ELAC. Upon formation of an ELAC, appropriate funds will be allocated to support reasonable expenses that parents may incur in carrying out their duties as members of the ELAC. On an annual basis, the school shall provide the ELAC with relevant training that may be needed for members to carry out their duties.

**Reclassification**

In accordance with the reclassification procedures developed by the California Department of Education, as set forth in CA Ed Code § 313(d), Invictus Academy will use multiple measures and assessments to determine whether a student’s English proficiency should be reclassified. Parents will be notified upon reclassification and all student records will be updated to reflect reclassification. After reclassification, students’ academic progress will continue to be monitored for two years by assessing student mastery of ELD standards, to which Invictus Academy curriculum materials will be aligned. The following criteria, outlined in **Figure 31**, will be used to determine reclassification:

**Figure 31. EL Reclassification Requirements**

<b>Type of Evaluation</b>	<b>Requirement for Reclassification</b>
Assessment of English proficiency using an objective assessment instrument, including, but not limited to, the ELD test that is developed or acquired pursuant to EC Section 60810 (i.e., the ELCAP)	Using annual performance on the summative ELCAP, student achieves a level 3 or 4; and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listening is a 3 or higher,</li> <li>• Speaking is a 3 or higher,</li> <li>• Reading is a 3 or higher, and</li> <li>• Writing is a 3 or higher</li> </ul>
Teacher evaluation, including, but not limited to, a review of the student’s mastery of standards	Teachers determine proficiency and readiness for reclassification by examining: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student SBAC performance in ELA;</li> <li>• Student performance of mastery on internally-developed assessments; and</li> <li>• Student normed score on NWEA MAP for ELA.</li> </ul>
Comparison of the performance of the student in basic skills against an empirically established range of performance in basic skills based upon the performance of English proficient students of the same age, which demonstrates whether the student is sufficiently proficient in English to participate	Using SBAC, student achieves marks at or above standard. (School will factor whether performance, if low, was caused by something other than a lack of English proficiency.)

effectively in a curriculum designed for students of the same age whose native language is English	
Parental opinion and consultation	School leadership team and teachers will communicate with parents regarding their rights and the rights of their child regarding reclassification. Prior to reclassification, families will have an in-person meeting with a member of the Invictus Academy leadership team.

**EL Progress Monitoring**

Invictus Academy’s academic program includes multiple embedded supports for EL students, including daily tutorial and extended instruction in ELA in middle school. We will provide direct ESL instruction to students at ELD levels 1 and 2 during tutorial and in small groups during ELA Foundational Skills 7 and 8, and in high school EL students also have the option to take English Extension, an additional ELA support class, as one of their elective periods. Each Spring, Advisors will lead their Advisories in information sessions during the Advisory period to support course selection, which includes the option for English Extension. Parents of all EL students will also be notified of this option during Spring parent conferences.

Invictus Academy’s professional development for teachers includes robust support regarding instruction for EL students. Teachers will be trained to integrate ELD standards into core content, and all teachers will be required to include both an academic and language objective for daily lesson plans.

We will diligently monitor EL student data at both the individual student level and schoolwide. The Executive Director will provide annual data reports and analysis of EL student progress, as measured by academic achievement data, reclassification figures, and NWEA MAP scores. Starting in our second year of operation, the Instructional Leadership Team will monitor EL data monthly, and academic achievement data for EL students will be reported to the Invictus Academy Board of Directors using all relevant metrics. The Executive Director, Academic Achievement Committee of the Board of Directors, and the full Board of Directors will review the degree to which EL students’ progress aligns with the school’s EL progress goals, which will be set at the outset of each school year by the leadership team, and, starting in our second year of operation, by the Instructional Leadership Team.

## Element 2: Measurable Student Outcomes

**“The measurable pupil outcomes identified for use by the charter school. "Pupil outcomes," for purposes of this part, means the extent to which all pupils of the school demonstrate that they have attained the skills, knowledge, and attitudes specified as goals in the school's educational program. Pupil outcomes shall include outcomes that address increases in pupil academic achievement both schoolwide and for all groups of pupils served by the charter school, as that term is defined in subparagraph (B) of paragraph (3) of subdivision (a) of Section 47607. The pupil outcomes shall align with the state priorities, as described in subdivision (d) of Section 52060, that apply for the grade levels served, or the nature of the program operated, by the charter school.” California Education Code Section 47605 (b)(5)(B)**

**Invictus Academy has clearly defined schoolwide outcome goals in compliance with California Education code sections 47605(b)(5)(B) and 52060(d).**

### Schoolwide Outcomes

We utilize our robust assessment system to meticulously track school-wide progress to our academic and organizational goals. This includes analysis of absolute, comparative, and longitudinal measures of student achievement that together serve to demonstrate the added value created by the school. This data will be published on our website and disseminated in annual reports provided to key stakeholders, including families, such that we are accountable to the pledges made in our charter agreement.

Consistent with our mission, students take criterion-based and norm-referenced assessments to gauge their academic progress on both an absolute and a comparative basis locally, regionally, and nationally. Our analysis and reporting will include year-over-year growth, by cohort, to track the school's effectiveness in continually improving. We complete thorough collection, analysis, and reporting of performance on school goals for relevant assessments, including the SBAC Exam, NWEA MAP, and the SAT and ACT.

We have crafted our goals in alignment with our mission, recognizing the reality that many of our students will arrive in 7<sup>th</sup> grade multiple grades behind in reading, math, or both.

### Goal 1: Students Achieve Mastery in English Language Arts

- **Measure 1.1 (Absolute):** At least 50% of students who have attended the school for two years will meet or exceed the ELA college readiness standard on the SBAC Exam.
- **Measure 1.2 (Absolute):** At least 70% of students who have attended the school for five years will meet or exceed the ELA college readiness standard on the SBAC Exam.
- **Measure 1.3 (Comparative):** All students who attend the school, on average, meet or exceed the SBAC ELA college readiness standards at rates that exceed the surrounding district average by 10%.

- **Measure 1.4 (Comparative):** All students who have attended the school for five years, on average, demonstrate proficiency on the English section of the SAT that is 50 points higher than the surrounding district average.
- **Measure 1.5 (Growth):** All students who have attended the school for five years demonstrate, on average, proficiency in reading in the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile as measured by the NWEA MAP.

## Goal 2: Students Achieve Mastery in Writing

- **Measure 2.1 (Absolute):** At least 50% of students who have attended the school for two years will meet or exceed the Writing college readiness standard on the SBAC Exam.
- **Measure 2.2 (Absolute):** At least 70% of students who have attended the school for five years will meet or exceed the Writing college readiness standard on the SBAC Exam.
- **Measure 2.3 (Comparative):** All students who attend Invictus Academy, on average, meet or exceed the SBAC Writing college readiness standards at rates that exceed the surrounding district average by 10%.
- **Measure 2.4 (Comparative):** All students who have attended the school for five years, on average, demonstrate proficiency on the Writing section of the SAT that is 50 points higher than the surrounding district average.

## Goal 3: Students Achieve Mastery in Mathematics

- **Measure 3.1 (Absolute):** At least 50% of students who have attended the school for two years will meet or exceed the Mathematics college readiness standard on the SBAC Exam.
- **Measure 3.2 (Absolute):** At least 70% of students who have attended the school for five years will meet or exceed the Mathematics college readiness standard on the SBAC Exam.
- **Measure 3.3 (Comparative):** All students who attend Invictus Academy, on average, meet or exceed the SBAC Writing college readiness standards at rates that exceed the surrounding district average by 10%.
- **Measure 3.4 (Growth):** All students who have attended the school for five years demonstrate, on average, proficiency in reading in the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile as measured by the NWEA MAP.
- **Measure 3.5 (Comparative):** All students who have attended the school for five years, on average, demonstrate proficiency on the Mathematics section of the SAT that is 50 points higher than the surrounding district average.

## Goal 4: Students Achieve Mastery in Science

- **Measure 4.2 (Absolute):** For students who attend the school for five years, the average SAT II score in Science for those who sit for the exam exceeds a score of 500.
- **Measure 4.3 (Absolute):** For students who elect to take Advanced Placement (AP) science courses in 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade, 100% of students sit for the AP Exam and over 50% of students earn a passing score or above (a 3, 4, or 5).

### **Goal 5: Students Achieve Mastery in Social Studies**

- **Measure 5.1 (Absolute):** For students who attend the school for five years, the average SAT II score in United States or World History for those who sit for the exam exceeds a score of 500.
- **Measure 5.2 (Absolute):** For students who elect to take Advanced Placement World History courses in 10<sup>th</sup> grade, 100% of students sit for the AP Exam and over 50% of students earn a passing score or above.
- **Measure 5.3 (Absolute):** For students who elect to take Advanced Placement U.S. History courses in 11<sup>th</sup> grade, 100% of students sit for the AP Exam and over 50% of students earn a passing score or above.
- **Measure 5.4 (Absolute):** For students who elect to take Advanced Placement Government courses in 12<sup>th</sup> grade, 100% of students sit for the AP Exam and over 50% of students earn a passing score or above.
- **Measure 5.5 (Absolute):** For students who elect to take Advanced Placement Microeconomics courses in 12<sup>th</sup> grade, 100% of students sit for the AP Exam and over 50% of students earn a passing score or above.

### **Goal 6: Invictus Academy Demonstrates Fiduciary and Financial Responsibility**

- **Measure 6.1:** Annual audits conducted by external entities demonstrate the school meets or exceeds financial accounting standards.
- **Measure 6.2:** Annual budgets effectively allocate school resources in alignment with the school mission, evidenced by the creation and maintenance of balanced budgets each year of the school's operation.

### **Goal 7: Board of Directors Provides Effective School Oversight**

- **Measure 7.1:** Board conducts annual formal review of Executive Director.
- **Measure 7.2:** Board conducts annual self-evaluation.
- **Measure 7.3:** Board conducts annual review of by-laws and policies.
- **Measure 7.4:** Board conducts quarterly and annual review of school progress towards its mission.

### **Goal 8: Invictus Academy is fully enrolled, with high levels of attendance and re-enrollment**

- **Measure 8.1:** School waiting list equals or exceeds 25% of seventh and ninth grade classes.
- **Measure 8.2:** At least 90% of students who begin the school year remain throughout the year.
- **Measure 8.3:** At least 90% of students who complete each school year choose to re-enroll the following year.
- **Measure 8.4:** Average daily attendance is at or in excess of 95%.

**Goal 9: Invictus Academy rates highly on survey metrics of parent satisfaction.**

- **Measure 9.1:** At least 80% of parents “agree” or “strongly agree” that they would recommend the school to a friend or family member.
- **Measure 9.2:** At least 80% of parents “agree” or “strongly agree” that they the school communicates with them effectively.
- **Measure 9.3:** At least 80% of parents “agree” or “strongly agree” that they the school communicates with them effectively.
- **Measure 9.4:** The response rate of the parent satisfaction survey is at least 80%.

**Figure 32. LCFF State Priorities**

LCFF STATE PRIORITIES				
TEACHER ASSIGNMENTS AND CREDENTIALING STATE PRIORITY #1: BASIC SERVICES				
ANNUAL GOALS (Identify schoolwide and subgroup goals as applicable)	SPECIFIC ANNUAL ACTIONS	MEASURABLE OUTCOMES Method for Measuring: Annual Review		
		Grades 7-8	Grades 9-12	Oversight
All teachers are required to hold a valid CA Teaching Credential with appropriate English Learner authorization as defined by the CA Commission on Teaching Credentialing and will be appropriately assigned.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. All candidates will for employment as teachers will be required to provide proof of valid CA Teaching Credential with appropriate English Learner authorization.</li> <li>2. Annually audit status of teacher credentials.</li> <li>3. Annually audit school schedule and teacher assignments.</li> </ol>	<p>100% of teachers hold a Commission on Teacher Credentialing certificate, permit, or other document equivalent to that which a teacher in other public schools would be required to hold;</p> <p>100% of teachers hold appropriate English language learner authorization as required</p> <p>100% of teachers are appropriately assigned in accordance with their credential and content area</p>		Executive Director
ACCESS TO INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS STATE PRIORITY #1: BASIC SERVICES				
ANNUAL GOALS (Identify schoolwide and subgroup goals as applicable)	SPECIFIC ANNUAL ACTIONS	MEASURABLE OUTCOMES Method for Measuring: Semi-Annual and Annual Review		
		Grades 7-8	Grades 9-12	Oversight
1. Students will have access to CCSS and California content standards aligned materials, to use in-home and at school,	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Annually audit instructional materials and make purchases as needed.</li> <li>2. Annually audit EL and</li> </ol>	Schoolwide: 100% access to content		Executive Director, SPED Director, Director of

<p>as described in the charter petition.</p> <p>2. ELs will be provided with the supports and accommodations to fully access standards aligned, materials and services to support their mastery of standards, including ELD standards.</p> <p>3. Students with an IEP will be provided with the supports, appropriate modifications and accommodations, in accordance with their IEP, to access standards aligned materials and services to support their mastery of standards, and engage in the program set forth in their IEP.</p>	<p>special education instructional materials and make purchases as needed.</p> <p>3. Weekly review of lesson plan materials to ensure alignment with CCSS and CA content standards.</p>	<p>ELs: 100% access to content</p> <p>Students with IEPs: 100% compliance with IEP program</p>	<p>Curriculum and Instruction</p>
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**FACILITIES MAINTENANCE**  
STATE PRIORITY #1: BASIC SERVICES

ANNUAL GOALS (Identify schoolwide and subgroup goals as applicable)	SPECIFIC ANNUAL ACTIONS	MEASURABLE OUTCOMES Method for Measuring: Monthly Review		
		Grades 7-8	Grades 9-12	Oversight
<p>School facilities shall be maintained in a manner that assures that it is clean, safe, and functional.</p>	<p>1. Review facility and facility repair log on a monthly basis and repair as needed.</p> <p>2. Daily custodial services.</p>	<p>90%+ in compliance.</p> <p>Required corrections made within 3 months: 90%</p> <p>90%+ in compliance.</p> <p>Required corrections made within 3 months: 90%</p>		<p>Executive Director, Director of Operations</p>

**IMPLEMENTATION OF STATE CONTENT AND PERFORMANCE STANDARDS**  
STATE PRIORITY #2

ANNUAL GOALS (Identify schoolwide and subgroup goals as applicable)	SPECIFIC ANNUAL ACTIONS	MEASURABLE OUTCOMES Method for Measuring: Ongoing and Annual Review		
		Grades 7-8	Grades 9-12	Oversight

1. All curriculum plans (scope & sequence, unit plans, and lesson plans) will be aligned to CCSS, NGSS, and/or California State Standards. 2. All students will demonstrate growth in in ELA and Math.	1. Annual professional development for teachers on CCSS. 2. Ongoing and annual review of curriculum materials and student performance data. 3. Weekly review of lesson plan materials.	Curriculum alignment: 100%  Students show 1 year of growth on MAP: 100%	Executive Director, Director of Curriculum and Instruction
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**PARENT INVOLVEMENT**  
STATE PRIORITY #3

ANNUAL GOALS (Identify schoolwide and subgroup goals as applicable)	SPECIFIC ANNUAL ACTIONS	MEASURABLE OUTCOMES Method for Measuring: Semi-Annual Parent Survey		
		2018-2019 2019-2020	2020-2021 2021-2022	Oversight
1. Parents will demonstrate satisfaction with academic program and school involvement. 2. Parents will maintain membership on School Site Council. 3. Parents attend family orientation and other family events.	1. Host monthly family events. 2. Annual home visits for newly enrolled students. 3. Annual parent satisfaction survey. 4. Monthly School Site Council meetings and annual elections.	Academic Program: Average parent satisfaction exceeds 80%  Involvement: Average parent satisfaction exceeds 80%  80% of families respond to annual and semi-annual survey  School Site Council Parent Members: 3  80% of parents attend orientation and two or more family events.		Executive Director, Dean of Students, Director of Operations

**STATEWIDE ASSESSMENTS**  
STATE PRIORITY #4: STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

ANNUAL GOALS (Identify schoolwide and subgroup goals as applicable)	SPECIFIC ANNUAL ACTIONS	MEASURABLE OUTCOMES Method for Measuring: SBAC score reports		
		Grades 7-8	Grades 9-12	Oversight
1. Students, including subgroups, will demonstrate proficiency in ELA and math. 2. Students, including subgroups, will achieve a higher rate of proficiency in ELA and Math compare to other WCCUSD schools.	1. Ongoing review of curriculum materials and student achievement data. 2. Weekly review of lesson plan materials. 3. Weekly instructional professional development.	At least 50% of students who have attended the school for two years will meet or exceed the ELA college readiness standard on the SBAC Exam.  At least 70% of students who have attended the school for five years will meet or exceed the ELA college readiness standard on the SBAC Exam.		Executive Director, Dean of Curriculum and Instruction, Instructional Leadership Team

		<p>All students who attend the school, on average, meet or exceed the SBAC ELA college readiness standards at rates that exceed the surrounding district average by 10%.</p> <p>All students who have attended the school for five years, on average, demonstrate proficiency on the English section of the SAT that is 50 points higher than the surrounding district average.</p> <p>All students who have attended the school for five years demonstrate, on average, proficiency in reading in the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile as measured by the NWEA MAP.</p> <p>At least 50% of students who have attended the school for two years will meet or exceed the Mathematics college readiness standard on the SBAC Exam.</p> <p>At least 70% of students who have attended the school for five years will meet or exceed the Mathematics college readiness standard on the SBAC Exam.</p> <p>All students who attend Invictus Academy, on average, meet or exceed the SBAC Writing college readiness standards at rates that exceed the surrounding district average by 10%.</p> <p>All students who have attended the school for five years demonstrate, on average, proficiency in reading in the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile as measured by the NWEA MAP.</p> <p>All students who have attended the school for five years, on average, demonstrate proficiency on the</p>	
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		Mathematics section of the SAT that is 50 points higher than the surrounding district average.	
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**ENGLISH LEARNER ADEQUATE PROGRESS RATE**  
STATE PRIORITY #4: STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

ANNUAL GOALS (Identify schoolwide and subgroup goals as applicable)	SPECIFIC ANNUAL ACTIONS	MEASURABLE OUTCOMES Method for Measuring: Internal Assessments		
		Grades 7-8	Grades 9-12	Oversight
All graduates successfully complete A-G requirements.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Implement and annually review required course of study.</li> <li>2. Provide credit recovery opportunities.</li> <li>3. Annually review student schedules to ensure proper time to meet A-G requirements.</li> </ol>	100% of 7 <sup>th</sup> and 8 <sup>th</sup> grade students pass all core classes.	100% of students on track to complete A-G requirements.	Executive Director, Dean of Curriculum and Instruction, Instructional Leadership Team

**ENGLISH LEARNER ADEQUATE PROGRESS RATE**  
STATE PRIORITY #4: STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

ANNUAL GOALS (Identify schoolwide and subgroup goals as applicable)	SPECIFIC ANNUAL ACTIONS	MEASURABLE OUTCOMES Method for Measuring: CELDT/ELPAC scores		
		Grades 7-8	Grades 9-12	Oversight
ELs will show growth in English proficiency	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ongoing review of curriculum and instructional materials, including daily lesson plans, to ensure support for ELs and alignment with ELD standards.</li> <li>2. Annual instructional training for EL support.</li> <li>3. Ongoing monitoring of EL academic achievement data.</li> <li>4. Small group instruction in all courses, focusing on ELA and math.</li> </ol>	100% of EL students advance at least one performance level on the CELDT/ELPAC per year.		Executive Director, Dean of Curriculum and Instruction, Instructional Leadership Team

**ENGLISH LEARNER RECLASSIFICATION RATE**  
STATE PRIORITY #4: STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

ANNUAL GOALS (Identify schoolwide and subgroup goals as applicable)	SPECIFIC ANNUAL ACTIONS	MEASURABLE OUTCOMES Method for Measuring: CELDT/ELPAC scores, reclassification rate
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applicable)		Grades 7-8	Grades 9-12	Oversight
ELs will show growth in English proficiency and progress towards reclassification.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing review of curriculum and instructional materials, including daily lesson plans, to ensure support for ELs and alignment with ELD standards.</li> <li>Annual instructional training for EL support.</li> <li>Ongoing monitoring of EL academic achievement data.</li> <li>Small group instruction in all courses, focusing on ELA and math.</li> </ol>	<p>Schoolwide EL reclassification rate will exceed district average.</p> <p>80% of LTELs who have attended the school for two years, on average, will reclassify as RFEP.</p>	<p>80% of ELs who have attended the school for three years, on average, will reclassify as RFEP.</p> <p>80% of LTELs who have attended the school for two years, on average, will reclassify as RFEP.</p> <p>Schoolwide EL reclassification rate will exceed district average.</p>	Executive Director, Dean of Curriculum and Instruction, Instructional Leadership Team

**COLLEGE PREPAREDNESS RATE**  
STATE PRIORITY #4: STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

ANNUAL GOALS (Identify schoolwide and subgroup goals as applicable)	SPECIFIC ANNUAL ACTIONS	MEASURABLE OUTCOMES Method for Measuring: NWEA MAP		
		Grades 7-8	Grades 9-12	Oversight
Students will demonstrate academic achievement and growth on track for college access and success.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing review of curriculum materials and student achievement data.</li> <li>Weekly review of lesson plan materials.</li> <li>Weekly instructional professional development.</li> <li>Provide for SAT/ACT preparation.</li> </ol>	<p>For grades 7-12, in a cohort analysis of longitudinal growth, the annual increase of percentiles among students in reading comprehension on the MAP will average 1/6 of the difference between the average student diagnostic percentile score and a score of 75 until the average percentile score reaches 75.</p> <p>For grades 7-12, in a cohort analysis of longitudinal growth, the annual increase of percentiles among students in math on the MAP will average 1/6 of the difference between the average student diagnostic percentile score and a score of 75 until the average percentile score reaches 75.</p>		Executive Director, Dean of Curriculum and Instruction, Instructional Leadership Team

**AP EXAMINATION PASSAGE RATE [HIGH SCHOOLS ONLY]**  
STATE PRIORITY #4: STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

ANNUAL GOALS (Identify schoolwide and subgroup goals as applicable)	SPECIFIC ANNUAL ACTIONS	MEASURABLE OUTCOMES Method for Measuring: College Board AP Score Reports, AP Potential PSAT 8/9 Assessment; Student Transcripts		
		Grades 7-8	Grades 9-12	Oversight
Students will earn a 3 or higher on at least 1 AP exam prior to graduation.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Offer varied AP courses in high school to meet student interests.</li> <li>2. Provide robust intervention support in grades 7-8 so that students enter high school at or above grade level.</li> <li>3. Provide financial support for students taking AP exams.</li> </ol>	<p>100% of students complete 9<sup>th</sup> grade at or above grade level in reading and mathematics, such that they have access to AP level course content.</p> <p>60% of 9<sup>th</sup> grade students identified as “AP” ready on PSAT 8/9</p> <p>100% of high school students enroll in at least one AP course.</p> <p>100% of students who enroll in an AP course sit for the AP Exam in that course subject.</p> <p>100% of high school students earn a “3” or higher on at least one AP Exam.</p>		Executive Director, Dean of Curriculum and Instruction, Instructional Leadership Team

**EAP COLLEGE PREPAREDNESS RATE [HIGH SCHOOLS ONLY]  
STATE PRIORITY #4: STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT**

ANNUAL GOALS (Identify schoolwide and subgroup goals as applicable)	SPECIFIC ANNUAL ACTIONS	MEASURABLE OUTCOMES Method for Measuring: PSAT 8/9, PSAT, NWEA MAP		
		Grades 7-8	Grades 9-12	Oversight
Students will demonstrate academic achievement and growth on track for college access and success.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ongoing review of curriculum materials and student achievement data.</li> <li>2. Weekly review of lesson plan materials.</li> <li>3. Weekly instructional professional development.</li> <li>4. Provide for SAT prep in grade 11</li> </ol>	<p>For grades 7-12, in a cohort analysis of longitudinal growth, the annual increase of percentiles among students in reading comprehension on the MAP will average 1/6 of the difference between the average student diagnostic percentile score and a score of 75 until the average percentile score reaches 75.</p> <p>For grades 7-12, in a cohort analysis of longitudinal growth, the annual increase of percentiles among students in math on the MAP will average 1/6 of the difference between the average student diagnostic percentile score and a score of 75 until the average percentile score reaches 75.</p> <p>35% of students on track for college readiness as measured by PSAT 8/9.</p>		Executive Director, Dean of Curriculum and Instruction, Instructional Leadership Team

		65% of students on track to for college readiness as measured by PSAT.	
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**SCHOOL ATTENDANCE RATE**  
STATE PRIORITY #5: STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

ANNUAL GOALS (Identify schoolwide and subgroup goals as applicable)	SPECIFIC ANNUAL ACTIONS	MEASURABLE OUTCOMES Method for Measuring: Average Daily Attendance Rate		
		Grades 7-8	Grades 9-12	Oversight
The school will be fully enrolled, with high levels of daily attendance.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Daily phone calls to parents of students marked absent.</li> <li>2. Phone calls to parents of students tardy more than once per week.</li> <li>3. Parent conferences with students absent more than 3 times in a semester.</li> <li>4. Reward programs for students with 100% attendance.</li> </ol>	<p>The school will meet 100% of projected enrollment.</p> <p>Annual average of 95% daily attendance or higher.</p> <p>Less than 3% of students chronically absent.</p>		Director of Operations, Office Clerk

**CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM RATE**  
STATE PRIORITY #5: STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

ANNUAL GOALS (Identify schoolwide and subgroup goals as applicable)	SPECIFIC ANNUAL ACTIONS	MEASURABLE OUTCOMES Method for Measuring: Attendance Rate		
		Grades 7-8	Grades 9-12	Oversight
Students will regularly attend school.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Daily phone calls to parents of students marked absent.</li> <li>2. Phone calls to parents of students tardy more than once per week.</li> <li>3. Parent conferences with students absent more than 7 times in a semester.</li> <li>4. Reward programs for students with 100% attendance.</li> </ol>	Less than 3% of students chronically absent.		Director of Operations, Office Clerk

**DROPOUT RATE [Middle and High Schools Only]**  
STATE PRIORITY #5: STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

ANNUAL GOALS (Identify schoolwide and subgroup goals as applicable)	SPECIFIC ANNUAL ACTIONS	MEASURABLE OUTCOMES Method for Measuring: MiSIS		
		Grades 7-8	Grades 9-12	Oversight
Students will persist through high school and middle school.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide credit recovery opportunities.</li> <li>2. Maintain communication with families through conferences, phone calls, and reports.</li> <li>3. Provide engaging academic program with supports needed for all learners.</li> </ol>	<p>Middle school dropout rate: 0%</p> <p>93% of students completing the year will re-enroll with Invictus Academy the following year.</p> <p>100% of promoting 8<sup>th</sup> grade students will matriculate to high school.</p>	<p>High school dropout rate: 0%</p> <p>93% of students completing the year will re-enroll the following year.</p>	Director of Operations, Office Clerk

**GRADUATION RATE [High Schools Only]**  
STATE PRIORITY #5: STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

ANNUAL GOALS (Identify schoolwide and subgroup goals as applicable)	SPECIFIC ANNUAL ACTIONS	MEASURABLE OUTCOMES Method for Measuring: MiSIS, Student Transcripts		
		Grades 7-8	Grades 9-12	Oversight
Students will graduate from high school within 5 years of entering 9 <sup>th</sup> grade.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Provide credit recovery opportunities.</li> <li>5. Maintain communication with families through conferences, phone calls, and reports.</li> <li>6. Provide engaging academic program with supports needed for all learners.</li> </ol>	<p>Middle school dropout rate: 0%</p> <p>90% of students achieve a C or better in core classes.</p>	<p>High school dropout rate: 0%</p> <p>90% students achieve a C or better in core classes.</p>	Director of Operations, Office Clerk, Instructional Leadership Team

**STUDENT SUSPENSION RATE**  
STATE PRIORITY #6: SCHOOL CLIMATE

ANNUAL GOALS (Identify schoolwide and subgroup goals as applicable)	SPECIFIC ANNUAL ACTIONS	MEASURABLE OUTCOMES Method for Measuring: Suspension Rate		
		Grades 7-8	Grades 9-12	Oversight
Students will remain in good behavioral standing with the school.	1. Ongoing professional development regarding classroom management and student behavioral and emotional support.	Suspension rate: 5% or less		Dean of Students

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Ongoing communication with parents.</li> <li>3. Hold weekly town hall meetings regarding school culture and school values.</li> <li>4. Provide individualized behavior plans for struggling students.</li> </ol>		
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**STUDENT EXPULSION RATE**  
STATE PRIORITY #6: SCHOOL CLIMATE

ANNUAL GOALS (Identify schoolwide and subgroup goals as applicable)	SPECIFIC ANNUAL ACTIONS	MEASURABLE OUTCOMES Method for Measuring: Expulsion Rate		
		Grades 7-8	Grades 9-12	Oversight
Students will remain in good behavioral standing with the school.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ongoing professional development regarding classroom management and student behavioral and emotional support.</li> <li>2. Ongoing communication with parents.</li> <li>3. Hold weekly town hall meetings regarding school culture and school values.</li> <li>4. Provide individualized behavior plans for struggling students.</li> </ol>	Expulsion rate: 1% or less		Executive Director, Dean of Students

**OTHER LOCAL MEASURE(S) OF SCHOOL CLIMATE**  
STATE PRIORITY #6: SCHOOL CLIMATE

ANNUAL GOALS (Identify schoolwide and subgroup goals as applicable)	SPECIFIC ANNUAL ACTIONS	MEASURABLE OUTCOMES Method for Measuring: Annual & Semiannual Surveys		
		Grades 7-8	Grades 9-12	Oversight
Students will demonstrate satisfaction with academic program.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Monthly family events held at school.</li> <li>2. Ongoing communication with families.</li> <li>3. Weekly school cultural events.</li> </ol>	Student approval of academic program: 90%		Dean of Students

**BROAD COURSE OF STUDY**  
STATE PRIORITY #7

ANNUAL GOALS (Identify schoolwide and subgroup goals as applicable)	SPECIFIC ANNUAL ACTIONS	MEASURABLE OUTCOMES Method for Measuring: Student Schedule/Transcripts and School Calendar		
		Grades 7-8	Grades 9-12	Oversight
Students will have access to engaging courses.	1. Annual review of course of student to ensure all students have access to a broad range of courses.	100% of students, including subgroups, will enroll in a course of study that includes the core subjects, speech and debate (middle school), physical education, foreign language (high school), and elective enrichment courses.		Executive Director, Dean of Curriculum and Instruction, Director of Operations

**OTHER STUDENT OUTCOMES**  
STATE PRIORITY #8

ANNUAL GOALS (Identify schoolwide and subgroup goals as applicable)	SPECIFIC ANNUAL ACTIONS	MEASURABLE OUTCOMES Method for Measuring: Internally Developed Assessments		
		Grades 7-8	Grades 9-12	Oversight
Students will be proficient in social studies and science.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing review of curriculum materials and student achievement data.</li> <li>Weekly review of lesson plan materials.</li> <li>Weekly instructional professional development.</li> <li>Scheduled data review days to monitor student progress and effectiveness of instruction.</li> </ol>	<p>For students who attend the school for five years, the average SAT II score in United States or World History for those who sit for the exam exceeds a score of 500.</p> <p>For students who elect to take Advanced Placement World History courses in 10<sup>th</sup> grade, 100% of students sit for the AP Exam and over 50% of students earn a passing score or above.</p> <p>For students who elect to take Advanced Placement U.S. History courses in 11<sup>th</sup> grade, 100% of students sit for the AP Exam and over 50% of students earn a passing score or above.</p> <p>For students who elect to take Advanced Placement Government courses in 12<sup>th</sup> grade, 100% of students sit for the AP Exam and over 50% of students earn a passing score or above.</p> <p>For students who elect to take Advanced Placement Microeconomics courses in 12<sup>th</sup> grade, 100% of students sit for the AP Exam and over 50% of students earn a passing score or above.</p>	<p>Executive Director, Dean of Students, Instructional Leadership Team</p>	

		<p>Student growth averages the difference between the average incoming percentile score and the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile on the NWEA MAP, or a similar nationally norm-referenced test, such that by 11<sup>th</sup> grade students who have attended the school for five years, on average, are in the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile nationally in science.<sup>106</sup></p> <p>For students who attend the school for five years, the average SAT II score in Science for those who sit for the exam exceeds a score of 500.</p> <p>For students who elect to take Advanced Placement (AP) science courses in 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade, 100% of students sit for the AP Exam and over 50% of students earn a passing score or above (a 3, 4, or 5).</p>	
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**OTHER STUDENT OUTCOMES**  
STATE PRIORITY #8

ANNUAL GOALS (Identify schoolwide and subgroup goals as applicable)	SPECIFIC ANNUAL ACTIONS	MEASURABLE OUTCOMES Method for Measuring: Internally Developed Speech and Debate Performance Assessments		
		Grades 7-8	Grades 9-12	Oversight
Students will be proficient in oral and written communication.	5. Ongoing review of curriculum materials and student achievement data. 6. Weekly review of lesson plan materials. 7. Weekly instructional professional development. 8. Scheduled data review days to monitor student progress and effectiveness of instruction.	<p>At least 70% of 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students successfully complete grade level performance objectives in speech and debate, and achieve proficiency on key skills related to such performance objectives.</p> <p>At least 25% of the eligible student population (9<sup>th</sup> grade and above) participates in the Speech and Debate Team in high school.</p> <p>At least 50% of students who have attended the school for two years will meet or exceed the Writing college readiness standard on the SBAC Exam.</p>	Executive Director, Dean of Curriculum and Instruction, Instructional Leadership Team	

<sup>106</sup> Because of uncertainty surrounding the assessment system for science in California, this section will be updated and amended once assessment details are released to include regional metrics on the SBAC or California Standardized Test (CST).

		<p>At least 70% of students who have attended the school for five years will meet or exceed the Writing college readiness standard on the SBAC Exam.</p> <p>All students who attend Invictus Academy, on average, meet or exceed the SBAC Writing college readiness standards at rates that exceed the surrounding district average by 10%.</p> <p>All students who have attended the school for five years, on average, demonstrate proficiency on the Writing section of the SAT that is 50 points higher than the surrounding district average.</p>	
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**Element 3: Methods by Which Pupil Progress Toward Meeting Outcomes Will Be Measured**

**“The method by which pupil progress in meeting those pupil outcomes is to be measured. To the extent practicable, the method for measuring pupil outcomes for state priorities shall be consistent with the way information is reported on a school accountability report card.”**

- **California Education Code Section 47065 (b)(5)(C)**

Invictus Academy of Richmond is committed to ensuring all students are prepared to thrive in college, solve relevant problems, and communicate with confidence. To achieve our mission, we must measure student progress thoughtfully and precisely. We believe that data-driven instruction supports high academic achievement for students, and to that end we are committed to collecting and analyzing student achievement data frequently and systematically. We rely on a variety of types of data including daily and weekly assessments as well as interim and summative assessments. Through rigorous analysis of this data, we triangulate a complete picture of our areas of strength and areas for growth, acting to close gaps whenever and wherever they arise.

Our calendar includes four major internal assessments, three interim assessments and one summative assessment, with all aligned to the CCSS and the SBAC assessment. These will be developed by the Executive Director during the 2017-2018 school year using models from strong schools observed through the BES Fellowship. These assessments will include both multiple choice questions and performance tasks, which are open-ended, non-multiple choice questions in which students must show their thinking or express their answers in writing. Students’ performance tasks are graded according to standards-aligned, centrally created rubrics developed by the Executive Director. Teachers will undergo calibration exercises during professional development time to ensure consistency in grading. The combination of rigorous multiple choice exams and performance tasks aligned to CCSS will provide teachers with informative data to analyze and adjust instruction as needed to improve student achievement. This process will be the focus of professional development following each interim exam, as well as the summative assessment.

The following represent the range of assessments used daily, weekly, monthly, and quarterly to assess student learning and inform instructional practices:

**Figure 33. Assessment System for Middle and High School**

Assessment	Middle School	High School
<b>SBAC Exam</b>	The SBAC Exam, which occurs in May of each academic school year, anchors our interim and summative assessments. It is aligned to CCSS and provides a rigorous metric for evaluating the degree to which we are on track to meet our mission with each cohort of students each year. SBAC Exam data will be utilized (1) at summer professional development the following school year, once results become accessible and (2) as a means of establishing benchmarks for improvement. The data will be used to inform curriculum decisions, teacher professional development foci, and/or modifications to be made to interim assessments. With each passing year,	

	we will set increasingly ambitious goals for student achievement, both with respect to absolute performance and growth.
<b>CELDT/ELPAC</b>	The CELDT/ELPAC IIA indicates whether a student is English proficient as well as the student’s level of English proficiency. Results indicate whether each child qualifies for classification as an English Learner and, if so, the basis for this classification. All students classified as EL’s will be assessed in the Spring of the same school year using the summative ELCAP to determine which EL’s qualify for reclassification as English-proficient and, for those who do not, what progress they have made towards reclassification. This data will be monitored by the Executive Director and, starting in our second year of operation, by our Instructional Leadership Team.
<b>California Science Test (CAST)</b>	The California Science Test (CAST) is an online exam that assesses students’ mastery of the California Next Generation Science Standards. Currently in pilot testing, the CAST will be fully operational in the 2019 school year when Invictus Academy students will be in 8 <sup>th</sup> grade. All 8 <sup>th</sup> grade students will take the exam, unless they qualify to take the California Alternative Assessment in Science (CAA). The CAST and CAA data will indicate the degree to which our students master the content and skills of the NGSS. Interim Assessments in science will be designed in alignment with CAST items. Data from these exams will be analyzed using Invictus data protocols (see <b>Data Analysis</b> below) to inform instructional practices in science.
<b>NWEA MAP</b>	The NWEA MAP Exam will be administered three times each school year, once at the beginning, midpoint, and end of the school year. This is a nationally normed assessment in both math and reading, enabling our team to identify where our students fall in reading and mathematics relative to their peers across the country. This data will be valuable (1) to take stock at the midpoint of the school year regarding the effectiveness of our program in driving student growth in reading and math, and (2) to assess annual growth and inform instructional practices for the following school year. These might include new systems, structures, or practices designed to address any gaps in student achievement. The NWEA MAP measures foundational skills, and as such, it is critical that we measure and respond to this data intentionally and immediately.
<b>Interim Assessments</b>	We view the CCSS as a major asset, in that they enable us to clearly align our instruction to a bar of rigor that will prepare students for success in college and their careers. We align our interim assessments to the CCSS and ensure they are preparing students for the rigor of SBAC. These assessments are designed by the Executive Director and administered each quarter, with the summative assessment administered three weeks prior to the SBAC Exam. They provide a benchmark for students’ progress towards proficiency, as defined in our annual accountability goals.
<b>Weekly quizzes</b>	Weekly quizzes are given in each course to measure student mastery for skills and standards taught that week. Because our curriculum design is vertically aligned, knowledge and skills build on one another over time, so

	it is crucial that systems are in place to support students’ internalization of core content. Quiz data will be analyzed and used to inform adjustments to instruction for the following week, as well as student groupings during our Reading and Math remediation times. We will adjust accordingly to ensure we are on track to meet our accountability goals weekly in each course.	
<b>Daily launches</b>	The first five minutes of every class at Invictus Academy follows a standard format, one component of which is a daily “launch.” Launches are questions posed when students enter class that either (1) assess gateway content for the coming lesson that was previously taught or (2) activate schema for the coming lesson. These formative assessments are crucial, as they provide teachers with in-the-moment data which informs in-class adjustments daily. This can include adjusting pacing during components of the lesson or referencing launch content to build understanding later in lessons.	
<b>Exit tickets</b>	Exit tickets are given daily in each course and measure students’ understanding of key lesson concepts or skills taught in any given lesson. These assessments can take a number of forms, including both multiple choice and free response formats. In certain instances, they might also extend into homework. Exit tickets are critical in our instructional process, as they inform pacing of individual lessons and, as appropriate, re-teaching plans.	
<b>Homework</b>	Homework serves to build upon and reinforce concepts taught in lessons. Students’ homework completion rate also represents one measure of students’ demonstration of school core values. Homework will always be checked for completion and collected using weekly “spot checks” for insertion into gradebooks when appropriate.	By high school, structures compelling students to complete gradually dissipate and it becomes a measure of (1) students’ internalization of school core values and (2) students’ independent mastery of content. Homework will be assigned in alignment with these two aims, preparing students for the rigorous independent work that happens outside of class in college.

In addition to state assessments, the NWEA Map, and our internally created assessments, and in alignment with our mission, all students will take both the SAT and the ACT college entrance exams and a variety of Advanced Placement Exams. An overview of these exams can be found below in **Figure 34**.

**Figure 34: College Admissions Exams**

Exam	Description
<b>Advanced Placement (AP) Exams</b>	Advanced Placement courses are offered in select subjects and culminate in an AP Exam in the Spring. Students who pass these exams are generally eligible for college credit. There is strong evidence that participation in Advanced Placement (AP) courses and passing Advanced Placement

	Exams significantly increases students’ odds of graduating from college. <sup>107</sup> Thus, we will strongly encourage all students to take at least one AP course and exam to graduate. <sup>108</sup> A robust AP program exposes students to college-level rigor, better preparing them to thrive in the college of their choice.
<b>American College Test (ACT) Aspire (grades 7-10)</b>	For students to thrive in the colleges of their choice, they must perform well on college admissions exams. The ACT has been shown to be predictive of college success, and so we will ensure our students are exposed and prepared to the ACT prior to their sitting for the actual exam. The ACT offers assessments that are age-level appropriate for younger students, including middle and early high school. These exams will offer us a strong lens into students’ preparation for the ACT and for college level work in 7 <sup>th</sup> through 10 <sup>th</sup> grade.
<b>PSAT/NMSQT</b>	The PSAT is offered to students in grades 10 and 11. It is a nationally normed exam that provides a valuable indicator of college readiness, practice for the SAT, and access to scholarship opportunities. We will offer the exam to students in both 10 <sup>th</sup> and 11 <sup>th</sup> grade and the Instructional Leadership Team, in consultation with the full staff, will set growth goals for student results.
<b>Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)</b>	For students to have access to a range of high quality college options, they must demonstrate strong performance on the SAT and/or the ACT. Therefore, to achieve our mission, we must integrate SAT and ACT reading, writing, and math problems into our curriculum wherever there is alignment between these exams and the CCSS. In our view, this alignment is strong, and so we believe we can meet students’ needs on both fronts simultaneously.
<b>American College Test (ACT)</b>	

## Data Analysis

We believe that data must drive decisions for Invictus Academy to achieve its mission. Consistent with this belief, we will match our rigorous collection of meaningful data with rigorous processes for data analysis, evaluation, and implementation. As Paul Bambrick-Santoyo writes in *Driven by Data*, “effective data-driven instruction is almost always premised by...assessment, analysis, action, and culture.”<sup>109</sup> At the individual classroom and school level, we will instill practices to quickly process data into concrete, actionable steps to improve teachers’ instructional practices and schoolwide culture and systems.

Diagnostic assessments, including the NWEA MAP, will be administered at the outset of each school year and, as needed, for students admitted off of the waitlist. The MAP Exam is administered three times each year to gauge students’ baseline reading and math levels and track progress over the course of the year. The leadership team and, beginning in year two of operation, the Instructional Leadership Team, will examine MAP data in conjunction with other student

<sup>107</sup> Mattern, Krista D., Jessica P. Marini, and Emily J. Shaw. "Are AP Students More Likely to Graduate from College on Time?" *College Board* (2013): College Board. Web.

<sup>108</sup> Invictus Academy will support the cost of AP Exams as needed.

<sup>109</sup> Bambrick-Santoyo, Paul. *Driven by Data: A Practical Guide to Improve Instruction*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2010.

achievement metrics using the protocol in **Figure 35** below to reflect on instructional practices and/or make adjustments to upcoming weekly professional development agendas to ensure students make adequate academic growth in core content areas, as well as in their reading and math levels.

**Figure 35. Data Analysis Protocol<sup>110</sup>**

	<b>Task</b>	<b>Guiding Questions</b>
<b>Part 1</b>	Examine the data. Make “Page One” Comments (observations and questions only, no interpretation or judgment allowed) on the work. Answer selected guiding questions. (5 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What essential knowledge is assessed by the assignment?</li> <li>• What core tasks (skills) are assessed by the assignment?</li> <li>• What essential understandings or principles are assessed by the task?</li> <li>• What do you notice about the data?</li> <li>• What do you wonder about the data?</li> </ul>
<b>Part 2</b>	Analyze the data. Make inferences and comments (judgments, interpretations, implications, ideas for addressing concerns are fine at this point). Answer guiding questions. (5-10 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does the data tell us about student learning and thinking?</li> <li>• In general, at what stage are students in their understanding and competency with the knowledge, skills, and understandings?</li> <li>• What are next steps for teaching this skill to students? Do they need additional practice? Do they need opportunities to deepen their understanding?</li> <li>• For students at a beginning level of understanding, what re-teaching needs to occur? In what ways can the skill be broken down into smaller parts?</li> <li>• For students at a high level of understanding, what extensions need to be provided for them? How can they be challenged to deepen their thinking and understanding of the knowledge, skills, and understandings?</li> </ul>
<b>Part 3</b>	Discussion of answered questions. Group discussion of implications, ideas, suggestions for the particular classroom, for the classrooms of other participants, and for the school as a whole. (5-10 minutes)	
<b>Part 4</b>	Debrief. Each member of the group has a chance to make final comments about their analysis and the process. (5 minutes)	

Within individual classes, teachers will be trained to implement systems for data collection and analysis to inform their practice during class periods, in response to formative assessments, and upon evaluation of interim and summative assessments.

<sup>110</sup> This data protocol was modeled after Two Rivers Public Charter School in Washington, D.C., which is one of the top performing schools in the region: <https://www.edutopia.org/pdfs/stw/edutopia-stw-two-rivers-das-analyzing-student-work-protocol.pdf>.

Teachers will collect and utilize a variety of data to inform the sequence of their daily lessons. A list of in-class data teachers will collect and a description of the way in which teachers will utilize this data follows in **Figure 36**.

**Figure 36. Teacher Use of In-Class and Formative Assessment Data**

Data	Teacher Use
<b>Daily Launches</b>	Daily launches are a set of teacher designed-questions that students respond to silently and independently at the start of every class period. Teachers will often utilize daily launches to integrate previous content to gauge students' prior knowledge or skills, and on that basis, can make in-the-moment adjustments to extend or reduce time spent on specific content or skills responsively to student understanding. Whenever possible and appropriate, students will complete launches using Instant Response Systems so that teachers have access to accurate whole class data.
<b>Instant Response System (“clicker”) Questions</b>	We have budgeted for every student to have a laptop, with which they can access instant response systems, such as Gooru or Socrativ. These platforms enable students to input their answers digitally as a class, with the platform displaying class-wide response data. Utilizing this data, teachers can utilize data to move on from questions on which the class, as a whole, demonstrates mastery, and use questioning techniques or offer additional explanation for questions on which the data reveal a misconception. This innovative practice enables teachers to provide targeted, responsive, and immediate feedback to students during class.
<b>Written Checks for Understanding</b>	Teachers will be trained to script in check for understanding questions into their lessons, and as appropriate, provide time for students to respond to these questions in writing. These questions may take students 2-4 minutes to compose, during which time teachers will be trained to circulate the classroom to observe student responses and provide quick, immediate feedback, either in writing or verbally.
<b>Verbal Checks for Understanding</b>	In addition to written checks for understanding, teachers will also script verbal checks for understanding into their lessons. These questions will come at key, pre-identified moments as well as in response to student misconceptions in the moment. Depending on students' verbal responses, teachers may utilize questioning techniques to probe for understanding.
<b>Socratic Seminar Responses</b>	In humanities classes, students will regularly engage in Socratic dialogue, during which teachers will evaluate student responses and score them according to an objective rubric. Teachers will be trained to respond to this data as patterns or trends form over the course of a discussion. For example, if multiple students fail to fully explain their evidence, teachers may prompt students to focus on this part of their response and, as appropriate, model by participating in the discussion.
<b>Exit Tickets</b>	Each day across subject areas, teachers will have students complete an exit ticket, which assesses students' understanding of the day's objective. Exit

	tickets can take multiple formats, and the data teachers collect from them will be used to spiral content for the following day’s launch and/or lesson. Teachers may also re-teach content if exit ticket data suggests significant gaps in student understanding.
<b>Weekly Quizzes</b>	Each week, students will take an in-class quiz assessing one week’s worth of objectives. These quizzes will be staggered between humanities and science classes to ensure that quizzes do not all fall on the same day each week. Teachers will reflect on quiz data with their coaches to identify content to be spiraled into the future lessons, which content requires re-teaching, and explore the causes of misconceptions and refine future instruction appropriately.

In addition to in-class and formative assessment data, teachers will assign longer summative assessments, which include:

- Unit Exams
- Performance Tasks (essays, presentations, and longer problem-solving tasks)
- Interim Assessments
- Final Exams

For these assessments, teachers will meet with their coaches and/or content teams to utilize a structured protocol for exploring student work. This protocol requires teachers and coaches to identify misconceptions in whole-class data and investigate specific misconceptions using a representative sample of student work. The final steps of this protocol guides teachers to identify concrete action steps they can take to close gaps in student knowledge and/or skills. This structured protocol is shown below in **Figure 37**.

**Figure 37. Student Work Data Reflection Protocol<sup>111</sup>**

Protocol Step	Teacher and Coach Actions
<b>Before Meeting or Do First</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher and/or coach selects one worthy task (exit ticket, written response, independent practice, etc.).</li> <li>• Teacher shares lesson plan aligned to the worthy task. Participants read the lesson plan in advance of the meeting.</li> <li>• Team completes the task for the purpose of identifying what insights/strategies/skills would indicate student mastery. Note: fully completing task may not always be feasible for some extensive tasks.</li> <li>• Team compares student work to exemplar. If no exemplar exists, teacher/group should create before completing task.</li> <li>• Gather and copy at least 6 samples of student work (2 mastered, 2 approaching, 2 not yet mastered) for each participant.</li> </ul>

<sup>111</sup> Student work data reflection protocol was adapted from the one used in the Republic Schools Network.

<b>Step 1: Norm on the criteria for success for the task. (5 minutes)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The group listens to the teacher’s stated criteria for success, then accepts or revises them.</li> </ul>
<b>Step 2: Analyze &amp; sort student work. (8 mins)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independently identify one student who best demonstrated mastery then discuss why you selected this student.</li> <li>• Collaboratively sort the student work into mastered, approaching, and not yet (or other categories based on your rubric). Collaborate to ensure that coach and teacher are operating from a common lens.</li> <li>• As coach and teacher sort, they should think about and discuss the following questions: (1) “What patterns (both successes and struggles) exist across student work samples?” and (2) “What differentiates those who mastered the task from those who didn’t?”</li> </ul>
<b>Step 3: Group discussion and calibration. (8 minutes)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the one or two things that are most holding students back?</li> <li>• Work toward agreement on the 1-2 highest impact analysis statements using the analysis sentence starter: “Students’ work would improve the most if students…”</li> </ul>
<b>Step 4: Determine action steps for the whole class and/or sub-groups. (8 minutes)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Based on the analysis above, what whole-class or sub-group instructional adjustments will the teacher make?</li> <li>• Is there a teaching point that needs to be mastered by the whole class or a sub-group?</li> <li>• Complete action step sentence starter: “Students’ work would improve the most if the teacher…”</li> </ul>
<b>Step 5: Teacher re-states 1-2 concrete action steps that they are committing to in the next week. (1 minute)</b>	
<b>Step 6: All teachers share a transferable takeaway for their instruction (3 minutes)</b>	

## Data-Oriented Culture

At Invictus Academy, we will create a culture in which data drives decisions. To accomplish this, we will develop school-wide structures and systems for rigorous, regular analysis of data at all levels of our organization, ranging from school leadership to students and families. The following represent key ways in which data will permeate our identity as an organization:

- **Mastery-based Grading:** Invictus Academy will use a mastery-based grading approach utilizing a grading tool such as JumpRope. In this grading system, teachers organize their gradebook by mastery strands, which encompass knowledge and skills students must master in their respective courses. Assessments are then linked to each knowledge/skill strand. For example, in 8<sup>th</sup> grade U.S. History, a mastery strand may state, “Students are able to analyze Japanese internment in modern context.” Assessments of this skill may

include a Socratic seminar and/or a Document Based Question essay. Teachers are able to adjust the weight of mastery strands in each unit of their course to ensure students' grades reflect students' mastery of the most important knowledge and skills encompassed in their courses.

Through its transparent representation of student data, mastery-based grading empowers teachers to communicate clearly the precise knowledge and skills students are expected to master in each course. This format also enables clearer communication to parents, as grade reports show which content students are grasping and where they may need more support. Using this information, teachers, in partnership with students and parents, can develop plans to support students towards content mastery.

- **Instructional Leadership Team (ILT):** Starting in our second year of operation, we will create an ILT composed of school leadership, department leads, and/or Master Teachers. This group constitutes a representative body of staff leaders who will meet weekly to analyze school-wide data and design action steps based on data-driven insights, including input on and planning of weekly teacher professional development. The ILT will collect and analyze a variety of data, including, but not limited to:
  - NWEA MAP Results
  - Grade Data
  - Interim Assessments
  - Final Exams/Summative Assessments
  - College Admissions Assessments
  - Classroom Observations (conducted by ILT members)
  - Research on Instructional Best Practices

The ILT will be responsible for ensuring Invictus Academy teachers and coaches are continuously improving instruction responsively to student achievement data. It also provides an opportunity for teacher leadership and unique professional development.

- **School Culture Leadership Team (SCLT):** Starting in our second year of operation, we will create a SCLT led by our Dean of Students and composed of teachers and students, both of whom will apply for seats on the SCLT. The SCLT will meet every other week and will be tasked with monitoring and strengthening school culture in response to the following data:
  - Student surveys
  - Student focus groups
  - Classroom observations
  - Community meeting observations

Like the ILT, the SCLT will be responsible for monitoring and strengthening school culture in response to data-driven insights. It provides a unique opportunity for students, staff, and school leadership to share diverse perspectives on school policies and practices to ensure a positive working and learning environment for all members of the Invictus community.

- **Data Days:** Of our 24 days of teacher professional development, four are specifically focused on data analysis. These days are calendared to follow major assessments so that teachers can delve deeply into their classes' student achievement data, identify misconceptions, root causes of those misconceptions, and create re-teaching plans. Teachers will look closely at their instruction in relation to student outcomes, and select an instructional area of focus on this basis for future units. By allocating time and space for teachers to closely explore and respond to student data, we seek to build our teachers' knowledge, skills, and habits regarding analysis of data, such that these practices become deeply rooted in our culture.

#### **Element 4: Governance Structure**

**“The governance structure of the school, including but not limited to, the process to be followed by the school to ensure parental involvement.”**

- **California Education Code Section 47605 (b)(5)(D)**

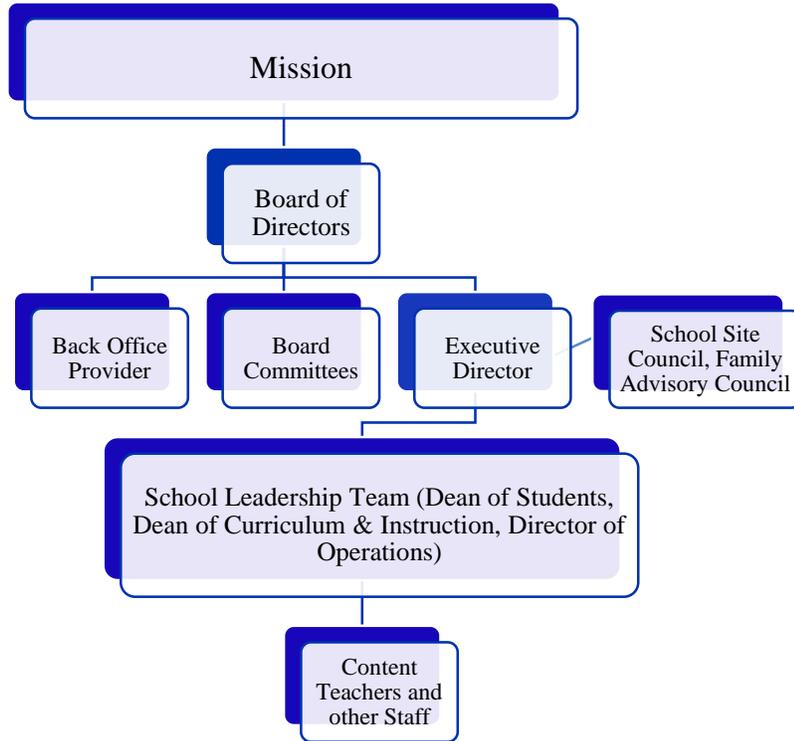
#### **Governance Structure**

Invictus Academy’s founding team consists of eight individuals who will serve on the Founding Board of Directors and Lead Founder and proposed Executive Director Gautam Thapar. The founding team’s expertise is both broad and deep, including expertise in education, finance, facilities, community outreach, marketing, fundraising, legal and regulatory issues, and technology. This team is uniquely equipped with the knowledge, skills, and understandings needed to execute upon the program we have outlined in this charter:

- All nine founding team members have relevant professional expertise in education
- Six of the nine founding team members work and/or live in Richmond
- Seven of the nine founding team members are people of color
- Three of the nine founding team members have prior experience as classroom teachers
- Three founding team members have Master’s degrees in Business Administration, one in Educational Studies, one in Accounting, and one in Law.

The organizational structure of the Charter School is designed to ensure the fulfillment of its mission. Broadly, there are four levels to this structure: the mission, governance (the Board), management (the Executive Director and leadership team), and staff. This structure is demonstrated below in **Figure 38**.

**Figure 38. Board Organizational Chart**



### **Governance and Management**

The Board is responsible for hiring and evaluating the Executive Director and setting policies to secure the current and future fiscal, operational, and legal health of the Charter School, and ensure adequate resources are in place. Through these responsibilities, the Board provides oversight and accountability to management. The Board is responsible for approving the annual budget as well as staff and student handbooks, which codify and communicate school policies. The Board is also responsible for ensuring the school has sufficient resources to fulfill its mission, while management is responsible for allocating those resources to fulfill the mission. The Board sets personnel policies, within which management hires and retains staff.

Management is responsible for the day-to-day execution at the school site level to ensure the fulfillment of the school’s mission. Some of these duties include making hiring decisions for school staff, selecting and implementing curricula, and implementing personnel policies. Management communicates frequently with the Board Chair as well as Committees to ensure cohesion across the organization.

Our Board of Directors will include the following the following roles and responsibilities:

**Figure 39. Officer Titles and Responsibilities**

Officer Title	Proposed Officer	Responsibilities
<b>Board Chair</b>	<b>Julia Wasserman</b>	The Board Chair will preside at meetings of the Board and be responsible for the supervision and administration of all governance related matters and business of the school. The Board Chair will serve on designated committees and complete any other duties as prescribed by the board.
<b>Board Vice-Chair</b>	<b>Charles Oshinuga</b>	The Board Vice-Chair will perform all duties and responsibilities of the Board Chair in the event that the Board Chair is absent or unable to perform his/her duties, as well as other duties prescribed by the Board or the Board Chair.
<b>Board Secretary</b>	<b>Karen Norwood</b>	The Board Secretary will ensure accurate record keeping of all Board meeting minutes, in accordance with the Brown Act, as well as any committees to which the Secretary is appointed. The Secretary will be the keeper of the school's non-financial records, and be responsible for any other duties prescribed by the Board.
<b>Board Treasurer</b>	<b>Ashwin Ravi</b>	The Board Treasurer will keep complete and accurate accounts of all receipts and disbursements of the school. He/she will also be responsible for depositing all money of the school in banks and depositories, as designated by the Board. The Treasurer will maintain accurate financial recordkeeping and ensure transparency, both for the Board and the public. The Treasurer will submit a report on the financial viability of Invictus Academy of Richmond annually, and as requested.

### Committees

The Board of Directors includes the following committees, which will meet monthly and report minutes to the Board at full board meetings. The Board of Directors has the discretion to add or remove committees, change meeting schedules, or make other adjustments to committee structure as allowed by the Board's bylaws.

- Governance Committee:** The Board Chair heads the Governance Committee, which manages the recruitment, selection, and onboarding of new Board members. The Governance Committee is also responsible for providing for the ongoing training for the Board on matters of governance. The Governance Committee will manage recruitment of new members each year and will nominate prospective new Board members at least once, annually. A 2/3 vote is required for a prospective member to be selected to the Board, per Invictus Academy's governing bylaws. Upon selection, the Governing Committee is responsible for providing relevant training and onboarding support to new members. It is also responsible for facilitating the Board's annual self-evaluation. Founding Board members will serve staggered terms of one, two, or three years, and all members who join thereafter will serve three year terms. No board member can serve more than two

consecutive terms. Details on governance procedures are available in our draft bylaws, **Appendix 5: Board Bylaws.**

- **Finance Committee:** The Finance Committee is responsible for ensuring the school's mission, vision, and policies are reflected in the annual budget and closely monitors actual versus budgeted expenditures. Chaired by the Board Treasurer, the Finance Committee reports on the viability of the school's finances and provides requisite training to the Board regarding the interpretation of financial statements, including the school's income and cash flow statements, as well as our balance sheet. The Treasurer and the Finance Committee will work closely with our back office provider to ensure accurately, timely, and thorough reporting of financial matters to the Board at each meeting. Finally, the Finance Committee will ensure compliance with all local, state, and federal regulations, oversee audits, and review financial policies, as necessary.
- **Academic Performance Committee:** The Academic Performance Committee meets monthly to review student achievement data, collaborates with the Executive Director to ensure reporting to the full Board is thorough and in accordance with the school's mission, and evaluates assessment policy to advise the full Board. This Committee will also oversee an annual survey to staff and parents, and report on the findings to the Board.
- **Development Committee:** The Development Committee is responsible for fundraising, building relationships in the community, and supporting facility needs. This Committee drafts annual fundraising goals, and meets monthly to strategize and review progress towards annual fundraising goals, which it reports to the board on a quarterly basis. Members will set ambitious fundraising goals and create a development plan to ensure benchmarks are met and additional funds are secured to support the achievement of the mission of the school.

## Legal Status

The Charter School shall be operated as a California non-profit public benefit corporation formed and organized pursuant to California Nonprofit Public Benefit Corporation Law. The Charter School will be governed by the Board of Directors pursuant to its corporate bylaws, which shall be consistent with this charter.

The Charter School will operate autonomously from the Authorizer, with the exception of the supervisory oversight as required by statute and other contracted services. Pursuant to California Education Code Section 47604(c), the Authorizer shall not be liable for the debts and obligations of the Charter School or for claims arising from the performance of acts, errors, or omissions by the charter school as long as the Authorizer has complied with all oversight responsibilities required by law. All staff are employees of the Charter School. All duties herein applying to the Charter School shall ultimately rest with the Charter School operating as a non-profit public benefit corporation. See **Appendix 4: Conflict of Interest Policy, Appendix 5: Board Bylaws, and Appendix 6: Articles of Incorporation.**

## Board of Directors

The Charter School Board is a policy-making Board which oversees the fundamental aspects of the School. The Board shall be composed of at least seven (7) and no more than fifteen (15) directors, including community members, with expertise in finance, law, non-profit governance, fundraising, school leadership, and academic program development. In addition, in accordance with Education Code Section 47604(b), the authority that grants the charter to a charter school to be operated by a nonprofit public benefit corporation shall be entitled to a single representative on the Board of Directors of the nonprofit public benefit corporation.

As of May of 2017, the Founding Team includes the proposed Executive Director and eight proposed Board of Directors:

**Gautam Thapar, proposed Executive Director** and Richmond resident, is currently a Fellow with Building Excellent Schools, through which he has studied nearly 40 high-performing charter schools across the country to learn best practices. Mr. Thapar joined Teach For America in 2010 and taught for four years, most recently as a U.S. History and Advanced Placement U.S. History teacher at Leadership Public Schools-Richmond. At LPS-Richmond, Mr. Thapar's 11<sup>th</sup> grade U.S. History students had the highest proficiency rates of any open-enrollment school in the district. He graduated with honors from Stanford University with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Political Science and earned a Master's in Business Administration from the University of Michigan.

**Jessica Covarrubias, a proposed Board member**, leads strategy and marketing for YouTube Kids, a Google platform designed for young people to discover and learn from video content. Prior to Google, she worked in marketing and strategy roles for PepsiCo on its Gatorade and Quaker brands. A native of the south side of Chicago and an alumna of Chicago Public Schools, Ms. Covarrubias is passionate about providing an equitable education and resources for all students to ensure that they live up to their full potential. She has served on the board for Chicago Run, a nonprofit organization that promotes the health and wellness of Chicago children through innovative, engaging, and sustainable youth running programs. Ms. Covarrubias also served as a fellow for the Revive the Dream Institute, a nonprofit organization that grows emerging community leaders by developing them into enthusiasts for education reform to improve the life prospects of underserved children. Additionally, she has dedicated time to do pro-bono work for public schools in Chicago and Detroit. Ms. Covarrubias graduated from Stanford University with both a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and Communication and holds a Master of Business Administration and a Master of Arts in Education Leadership & Policy from the University of Michigan.

**Jesse Madway, a proposed Board member**, is in his 25th year working in urban public schools. He is currently the Head of Operations and Facilities, as well as the Testing Coordinator at Leadership Public Schools-Richmond, in Richmond California. From 2007-2016, Mr. Madway was the Dean of Students at LPS-Richmond, and prior to that he was an English teacher at the school. LPS-Richmond is one of the highest performing schools in the nation, having been ranked in the top 1% of all public schools for the past three years in a row according to *US News and World Report*. Mr. Madway has worked extensively in several middle schools and high schools as

both a teacher and an administrator. Mr. Madway grew up in the Bay Area and attended the University of California, Santa Cruz where he earned his Bachelor of Arts in American Studies.

**Tana Monteiro, a proposed Board member**, is a Richmond resident, and is currently the Parent Engagement Coordinator at Richmond College Preparatory School, where she builds and maintains connections with parents and families, involving them in the broader school community. Ms. Monteiro loves working with families and strives to make their voices heard as they work together to make a safer, healthier, and happier community. Ms. Monteiro has lived in Richmond and nearby San Pablo for the past 19 years and is raising four sons, all of whom have attended public schools. Previously, Ms. Monteiro served as the Community Wellness Coordinator at YES Families from 2013 to 2016 after serving as a parent organizer and community liaison at Richmond College Preparatory School for seven years. Ms. Monteiro led YES's Wellness Program and coordinated 15-20 adult Wellness Navigators annually to advocate for health and wellness in their communities. Ms. Monteiro received professional certifications in Healthcare Administration and Culinary Arts from Chabot College and Contra Costa Community College, respectively. As evidenced by her extensive professional experience, Ms. Monteiro is committed to working with families and strives to make their voices heard as they work together to make a stronger community.

**Karen Norwood, a proposed Board member**, currently serves as the Facilities Services Manager for Kaiser Permanente School of Allied Health Sciences in Richmond, CA. She is responsible for providing daily leadership in facility operations for the school. Ms. Norwood has always had a passion for working in healthcare to eliminate health disparities in California, and has been active in the community to create positive change. She serves on the Board of Directors for Rubicon Programs, Inc. and the Hercules Academic Athletic Board. Ms. Norwood is also a member of the Kaiser Permanente African American Professional Association, and is a Kaiser Permanente Care Volunteer. She graduated from the University of Central Arkansas with a Bachelor of Science degree in Health Education and earned a Master's in Business Administration from Aspen University.

**Charles Oshinuga, a proposed Board member**, is a Richmond resident, and was born in Louisiana to Nigerian immigrant parents and raised primarily in the Mojave Desert. After graduating from UC Berkeley with a double major in Molecular Cell Biology and Legal Studies, he worked with youth, including teaching for a year at a charter school in Southern California. Mr. Oshinuga then went on to the UC Davis King Hall Law School where he focused on public interest law. After graduation, Mr. Oshinuga applied his skills at the Mendocino Public Defender's Office where he realized that many clients were in the system due to unstable housing situations. As a result, Mr. Oshinuga decided to work on housing issues, joining the Eviction Defense Collaborative and later Bay Area Legal Aid. Both jobs have allowed him to keep finger on the pulse of pertinent housing issues and to advocate for low-income, disabled tenants, as well as tenants in Public Housing, and to educate the general public about landlord/tenant issues.

**Mitzi Perez, a proposed Board member**, is a Richmond resident and alumnus of West Contra Costa Unified public schools. She is currently the communications specialist for Students For Education Reform (SFER). In 2015, Ms. Perez co-founded the SFER chapter at the University of California, Berkeley campus. As part of SFER, Ms. Perez has engaged in community organizing

in advocacy of reforms that would benefit students in the District. In addition to her role with SFER, Ms. Perez is a reporter and photographer for the *Richmond Pulse*. She is deeply invested in ensuring that students in Richmond and the community at large thrive. Ms. Perez graduated from UC Berkeley with a Bachelor of Arts in Media Studies.

**Ashwin Ravi, a proposed Board member,** is an experienced technology leader and financial analyst, with a commitment to improving educational opportunity and outcomes at a community level. A Detroit native, Mr. Ravi managed growth at Lumosity, the leading online program to train core cognitive abilities, helping reach over 75 million users. He previously worked as an investor at Norwest Venture Partners with a focus on supporting high-potential education services companies. Mr. Ravi has held several roles on the leadership team of Minds Matter of San Francisco, a volunteer-run mentorship organization helping low-income, high-achieving students in the Bay Area reach college success. Mr. Ravi graduated from the Honors College at the University of Michigan with a Bachelor of Arts in Economics.

**Julia Wasserman, a proposed Board member,** is a Berkeley native and works with the Google for Education Solutions Team, driven by a commitment to improving educational outcomes for students everywhere. In the two years before Ms. Wasserman joined Google for Education, she worked to shift her focus from a career in finance where she was a Senior Portfolio Management Analyst at a fund of hedge funds towards a career in education due to her deeply held belief that a great education is a most fundamental human right. During that time, she worked as a Summer Associate and Education Pioneers Summer Fellow for AltSchool in San Francisco, helping them develop their micro-schools model. She has held volunteer positions with Junior Achievement and spent a semester helping loveLife, a South African youth organization develop online, skills-based, certificate-granting programs for young people across South Africa. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics from the University of Virginia and a Master's in Business Administration from Berkeley-Haas Business School.

## Open Meetings

The Board of Directors of the Charter School will meet regularly, at least every month, and in accordance with the Brown Act. The Board of Directors is fully responsible for the operation and fiscal affairs of the school, including but not limited to: approval of all budget-related and financial activities connected to the school; communication, negotiation and collaboration with the authorizer; hiring/termination of the Executive Director; evaluation of school programs; participation in independent fiscal and programmatic audit; and long-term strategic planning.

Invictus Academy is committed to adhering to the letter and spirit of the Brown Act and open meeting laws. A Board meeting will be defined as “Any gathering of a quorum of a legislative body to discuss or transact business under the body’s jurisdiction.”<sup>112</sup> To ensure transparency with the public and accountability to stakeholders in Richmond, our Board is committed to abiding by the tenets of the Brown Act, including but not limited to:

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<sup>112</sup> Lockyer, Bill. "Books and Pamphlets." *The American Journal of Nursing* 79.4 (1979): n. pag. The Brown Act. The Attorney General of California. Web. [http://ag.ca.gov/publications/2003\\_Intro\\_BrownAct.pdf](http://ag.ca.gov/publications/2003_Intro_BrownAct.pdf).

1. **Location:** Board meetings will be held within the territorial boundaries of the District to ensure public access for local stakeholders.
2. **Public Testimony:** Meeting agendas will include time for public comment for consideration by the Board.
3. **Facilities:** Meetings cannot occur in places that discriminate upon the basis of race, religion, color, nationality, sex, or where disabled people do not have access. Meetings must be free.
4. **Public Votes:** All votes other than those cast during closed session must be made in public.
5. **Public Records and Record-Keeping:** All materials, excluding those made exempt under the Public Records Act, must be provided to the public. A recording of meetings will be made available to the public.

All Board members will receive an annual training on the Brown Act led by the Governance Committee. Moreover, all new Board members will undergo an orientation that is in accordance with and trains them on the Brown Act. Our Board Secretary will ensure that all meeting announcements, locations, agendas, and minutes are posted in accordance to each specific type of meeting and as required by the Brown Act. These meetings include:

1. **Regular Meetings:** Agendas will be provided at least 72 hours prior to the meeting.
2. **Special Meetings:** 24-hour notice will be provided to the Board and media outlets.
3. **Emergency Meetings:** One-hour notice will be provided in the case of a dire emergency.

We also understand that there are times in which we must conduct closed session meetings. For closed session meetings, agenda items must be described in the agenda and notice for the meeting. Prior to the closed session, the Board must orally announce the subject of the session. If action is taken in the session, the Board must report the action at the close end of the session. The following are reasons to have a closed session:

1. **Personnel Exemption:** Generally held to consider appointment, employment, and evaluation of an employee.
2. **Public Security:** Generally held to meet with law enforcement or security concerning safety and services.
3. **Pending Litigation:** Generally held when receiving advise from legal counsel in situations that require litigation.
4. **Labor Negotiations:** Generally held to discuss salary of employees and the budget. Decisions must be made public
5. **Real Property Negotiations:** Generally held to negotiate or consider the terms of payment or purchase in exchange of real property.

## Board Training

The Board will be supported by Building Excellent Schools governance staff through direct training, which will occur annually. This can include observations of high performing charter schools, attending these schools' board meetings, and workshops led by BES governance staff on

issues pertinent to the work of the Board. In addition, the Governance Committee facilitates ongoing professional development for the Board pertaining to matters of governance. This includes onboarding training for new board members.

Postings will occur by email to those who have requested it and in a location that is publicly available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week in both English and Spanish. Invictus Academy will maintain for its Board a record book of meeting agendas and minutes. Agendas and minutes will be provided in English and Spanish. For ease of access, Invictus Academy will post the agendas and minutes on its website. The law requires no less than one meeting annually; however, the Board will meet at least ten times annually to conduct business plus special meetings. All meetings of the Board will be open to the public, excluding closed sessions as permitted by the Brown Act.

The Board may elect to use teleconferencing in connection with any meeting of the Board. If the Board elects to use teleconferencing, it shall post agendas at all teleconference locations and conduct teleconference meetings in full compliance with the Brown Act and in a manner that protects the statutory and constitutional rights of the parties or the public appearing before the Board. Each teleconference location shall be identified in the notice and agenda of the meeting or proceeding, and each teleconference location shall be accessible to the public. The agenda shall provide an opportunity for members of the public to address the Board directly at each teleconference location. During the teleconference, at least a quorum of the members of the Board shall participate from locations within the boundaries of the territorial boundaries of WCCUSD. Participation in a meeting through use of teleconferencing constitutes presence in person at that meeting as long as all members participating in the meeting are able to hear one another. All votes taken during a teleconferenced meeting shall be by roll call. "Teleconference" means a meeting of the Board, the members of which are in different locations, connected by electronic means, through either audio or video, or both. Nothing stated here shall prohibit the corporation from providing the public with additional teleconference locations.

## **Role of the Board**

The Board of Directors is responsible for oversight and accountability for the Charter School. Its roles and responsibilities include:

- Hiring and annually evaluating the Executive Director
- Ensuring effective planning and adequate financial resources
- Protecting assets and providing adequate financial oversight
- Maintaining and building effective capacity for the Board
- Ensuring legal and ethical integrity
- Approving key policies including, but not limited to, budget, personnel, and Board bylaws
- Complying with open meeting law in accordance with the Brown Act
- Abiding by all internal Board bylaws, including the Board's Conflict of Interest policy
- Conducting an annual self-evaluation according to Board's self-evaluation protocol
- Building Board capacity by rotating and adding members, as needed

## Role of the Executive Director

The Executive Director communicates and executes on the Charter School's mission. The Executive Director's roles and responsibilities are bulleted below:

- Develop and communicate the mission, academic program, and culture of Invictus Academy of Richmond to key stakeholders, including students, families, and staff
- Design and implement fundraising initiatives in concert with the Board to ensure the long-term fiscal health and viability of the Charter School
- Ensure complete and thorough reporting to the Board, including key measures of student achievement, financial indicators, and other operational issues as needed for the Board to fulfill its oversight and accountability duties
- Serve as a liaison between the Authorizer and the Charter School Board of Directors.
- Develop and implement the budget of the Charter School in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles
- Manage (with the school's Operations Director) the efficient and effective planning and implementation of back-office tasks for the Charter School, including but not limited to budget development, financial reporting, audits, and fundraising
- Contract with and evaluate third-party support providers to provide payroll, bookkeeping, budgeting, and other back-office services
- Ensure that the Authorizer and the State of California receive all necessary and mandated reports and data
- Negotiate Memoranda of Understanding and other contracts with charter Authorizer, and other community partners
- Ensure all state and federal required reports are completed and filed (i.e. CBEPS, R30; quarterly and annual financial reporting)

## Family and Stakeholder Involvement

Invictus Academy believes in cultivating strong partnerships with families. The following represent key ways in which we will engage families in the education of their children.

### Family Engagement

We believe a strong partnership between Invictus Academy and our students' families is vital to the achievement of our collective mission. We have intentionally designed structures and systems to make time and space to foster these partnerships, starting before students ever set foot on campus. These structures and systems are detailed below.

- **Home Visits:** During summer professional development, staff will visit every incoming seventh grader's home to meet with incoming students and families.<sup>113</sup> These meetings will enable us to learn more about students' and families' experiences in school thus far, set clear expectations and goals for the coming school year, and clearly communicate our commitment to being the best partner possible with families. These visits will support the

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<sup>113</sup> Home visits will be conducted for students who join Invictus Academy in later grades.

development of close relationships between Invictus Academy and its students' and families.

- **Parent University:** We recognize that our school provides a different school day than that to which students and families are accustomed. To ensure this transition is smooth and to maximize time spent pushing towards our mission, we will host two Parent University days before the start of the school year. These sessions will highlight expectations for students and cover key school policies in detail as well as relevant information regarding parent involvement. We believe that these orientations will be instrumental to establishing a strong culture starting on day one.
- **Weekly Communication:** Through numerous conversations with parents, we have found that families sincerely appreciate when schools communicate their child's progress clearly and frequently. This communication also serves as a vehicle to motivate students, and as a result, we will systematically communicate with parents. During the first week of school, we will come together as a staff after school each day to send positive communication to families. We believe it is *even more* important to communicate positively about students with families than it is to highlight areas of growth. Following the first week, we allocate time at our weekly staff meeting for teachers to make phone calls and send texts or emails to update families about students' progress. We will err on the side of over-communicating with families, understanding that they are one of the most critical stakeholders in our school.
- **Monthly Family Events:** To maintain and develop relationships established at the outset of the school year, we will host monthly family events, such as barbeques, student performance nights, and, most commonly, college information sessions. These events will be the main medium through which college information regarding required courses, the college application process, and financial aid will be disseminated. These events create settings in which students, parents, and staff can meet face-to-face, have authentic conversations, and build trust with families while simultaneously providing relevant and detailed information regarding their child's education. They also align to our mission by strengthening the connection between home and school to support student achievement.
- **Monthly Coffee and Pastries with Families:** It is crucial that parents feel welcome on campus and have opportunities to interface with school leadership. This builds trust and relationships, and provides parents with information to better support students towards our common mission. As a result, once per month, we will host a coffee and pastries event with families on campus. This will occur during the school day during second period, with the school leader presenting updates on the school and sharing video of highlights from classes. Parents will then have an opportunity to bring forth questions and engage in dialogue with the school leader regarding any topics they feel relevant.
- **Family-Teacher Conferences:** Once per semester, following interim assessments, students and families will come to school to discuss student academic performance as well as their growth in non-academic habits with their Advisors. These sessions will be largely led by students, who will complete a reflection form in preparation for these meetings in

Advisory. Teachers act as facilitators and offer additional insights on student strengths and areas for growth. This is an opportunity for parents to gain additional insight into students' progress during that semester, which can inform their messaging at home. Family-teacher conferences are critical to keeping families informed and aware of their students' path to college.

- **Annualized Surveys:** At the midpoint of each school year, we will send home a survey for parents to complete. These surveys will include items questions regarding family communication and work with the school. Submission of the survey will be a homework requirement for students, such that we collect representative data to analyze. School leadership and, in Year 2 and thereafter, the SCLT will undergo a data analysis protocol during January professional development to uncover insights from the surveys and inform adjustments to close any gaps that manifest themselves.
- **School Site Council:** Invictus Academy will have an advisory council, the School Site Council (SSC), consisting of the Executive Director, teachers, students, and parents, as well as possible inclusion of classified staff, and community representatives. Half of the SSC will be made up of school staff, the majority of which must be teachers, and half will be made up of parents and students. Members of the SSC will be elected by their constituent group (teachers elect teachers, parents elect parents, and so on). The School Site Council will typically meet monthly to provide suggestions and recommendations, advising the Executive Director on day-to-day operations and issues, including but not limited to, budgeting, curriculum, school policies, school/community participation, and the general direction of the school. The SSC will meet at the school site. If requested by the Executive Director and if the subject(s) to be discussed warrant it, members of the Invictus Academy Board will attend School Site Council meetings.
- **Family Advisory Council:** The Family Advisory Council (FAC) is a partnership between parents and school leaders, allowing families to highlight successes, share challenges, and contribute to the school community through fundraising, organizing parent volunteers, and developing or requesting specific workshops for parents and community members. It is a voluntary group that is open to all parents who are interested in taking part. The Executive Director, along with the elected parent liaison, will lead the Family Advisory Council and clearly outline the expectations for parental involvement. The Executive Director will work closely with the FAC parent representative to organize monthly meetings. During the monthly meetings, parents are invited to attend and participate in conversations with the Executive Director about the overall success of the school as well as any challenges they may be facing or improvements they would encourage. The FAC will report on its work to the Invictus Academy Board on a quarterly basis, or as agreed upon by the Board Chair, the Executive Director, and the FAC parent representative.

## Element 5: Qualifications to be Met by Individuals Employed by the School

“The qualifications to be met by individuals to be employed by the school.”

- California Education Code Sections 47605 (b)(5)(E)

### Statement of Non-Discrimination

The Charter School shall be nonsectarian in its employment practices and all other operations. The Charter School shall not discriminate against any individual (employee or pupil) on the basis of ethnicity, national origin, gender, gender expression, gender identity, or disability or any of the characteristics listed in Education Code Section 220.

### Organizational Structure

The organizational structure of the school will develop and grow annually with our slow-growth model, until we reach full capacity in the fall of 2023. Above all else, Invictus Academy of Richmond (“Invictus Academy”) and any employees operating under the name adhere first and foremost to the mission of the school, ensuring students are able to thrive in college, solve relevant problems, and communicate with confidence. Our organizational chart reflects our slow growth model as well as our budgeting in a fiscally conservative way, as financial viability is key to the success of the school.

In order to be competitive within the educational market, Invictus Academy adequately compensates staff as we know that attracting, hiring, training and retaining top talent will drive student achievement. **Figure 40** outlines our staffing plan for the first five years of operations.

**Figure 40: Invictus Academy of Richmond 5 Year Staffing Plan<sup>114</sup>**

Year	Positions
2018-2019	Executive Director, Dean of Students, Director of Operations, Office Clerk, Content Teachers (7)
2019-2020	Executive Director, Dean of Students, Dean of Curriculum and Instruction, Director of Operations, Operations Fellow, Office Clerk, content teachers (14),
2020-2021	Executive Director, Deans of Students (2), Dean of Curriculum and Instruction (2), Director of Operations, Operations Fellow (2), Office Clerk (2), Counselor (1), Content Teachers (21)
2021-2022	Executive Director, Dean of Students (2), Dean of Curriculum and Instruction (3), Director of Operations, Operations Fellow (3), Office Clerk (2), Content Teachers (28), College/Social Emotional Counselor
2022-2023	Executive Director, Dean of Students (2), Dean of Curriculum and Instruction (3), Director of Operations (2), Operations Fellow (4), Office Clerk (2), Content Teachers (35), College/Social Emotional Counselor (2)

<sup>114</sup> This staffing plan assumes Invictus Academy is a “school of the District” for special education purposes.

## General Qualifications

All employees at the Charter School will be required to demonstrate alignment with the Charter School’s mission, vision, and educational philosophy. It is the responsibility of management to ascertain this commitment in a rigorous interview process for each applicant. Regardless of the role for which an applicant is applying, the following attributes will be sought in all personnel to be employed by the Charter School:

- The applicant is in alignment with the Charter School’s mission and vision.
- The applicant believes that all students, regardless of race, class, family background, or other demographic factors, can achieve at the highest level.
- The applicant seeks to work with a student and family population reflective of the Richmond community, including students who fit the typical student profile of Invictus Academy of Richmond.
- The applicant seeks to be part of a team-oriented culture that holds all stakeholders, including staff, to high expectations.
- The applicant demonstrates attributes that are highly predictive of professional success, including the Charter School’s ten core values.

Beyond the general filters above, key roles at the Charter School require more specialized knowledge, skills, and abilities. These are outlined for selected roles below in **Figure 41**.

**Figure 41. Leadership Team Roles and Qualifications**

Position	Certificated	Qualifications	Expectations
<b>Executive Director</b>	N	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commitment to school’s mission</li> <li>• Four years teaching and/or school leadership experience</li> <li>• Bachelor’s degree required; Master’s or advanced degree preferred</li> <li>• Experience in education strategic planning</li> <li>• Record of high student and professional achievement with quantifiable success</li> <li>• TB Clearance</li> <li>• Background check clearance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oversee the day to day management of school instructional program and operations</li> <li>• Strengthen school culture and maintain focus on school mission</li> <li>• Strategically plan to ensure all students meet achievement goals</li> <li>• Lead professional development of instructional staff, including direct coaching and supporting the creating of curriculum materials</li> <li>• Select and evaluate teachers and other staff</li> <li>• Regularly communicate with the Board of Directors regarding the performance and health of the school</li> <li>• Oversee annual budgeting</li> <li>• Manage vendor relationships and contracting</li> <li>• Oversee implantation of programs to support students with special needs and ELs</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience with budgeting and contracting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regularly communicate with school stakeholders, including families and parents, regarding school performance and health</li> <li>• Ensure that operational health of the school, including responsible management of the school budget</li> <li>• Serve as primary school disciplinarian for student misbehavior</li> <li>• Lead WASC accreditation process</li> <li>• Serve as liaison to authorizing entity</li> </ul>
<b>Director of Operations</b>	N	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commitment to school’s mission</li> <li>• At least 2 years’ experience with operations/systems management (preferably within the education field)</li> <li>• Experience with reading and reviewing annual budgets</li> <li>• Experience with data organization and analysis</li> <li>• Bachelor’s degree</li> <li>• TB clearance</li> <li>• Background check clearance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist Executive Director in the day to day management of the school</li> <li>• Communicate with school’s back office provider regarding financial and HR matters</li> <li>• Oversee maintenance and creations and federal and state required documents and reports</li> <li>• Manage student data and school information systems (both digital and physical)</li> <li>• Assist Executive Director in the management of vendor relationships</li> <li>• Coordinate school vendors</li> <li>• Manage school front office staff</li> <li>• Manage financial reports</li> <li>• Manage and oversee facilities issues</li> <li>• Manage audit processes</li> <li>• Serve as testing coordinator</li> </ul>
<b>Dean of Students</b>	Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commitment to school’s mission</li> <li>• CA teaching credential highly qualified</li> <li>• At least 2 years’ teaching experience</li> <li>• Record of high student achievement with quantifiable success</li> <li>• Strong classroom management and instruction skills</li> <li>• Bachelor’s degree</li> <li>• TB clearance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead school culture initiatives, including weekly community meetings, student discipline systems, and core values character development</li> <li>• Regularly communicate with parents and families regarding student behavior</li> <li>• Support the Executive Director in maintaining and developing positive school culture and in implementing school wide discipline and cultural systems</li> <li>• Provide coaching and professional development to classroom teachers regarding classroom management, family</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Background check clearance</li> </ul>	<p>communications, and community building within the classroom</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor student discipline records (including attendance and homework) and strategize ways to address individual issues and schoolwide trends</li> <li>• Assist Executive Director with instructional support as requested</li> </ul>
<b>Dean of Curriculum and Instruction</b>	Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commitment to school's mission</li> <li>• CA teaching credential highly qualified</li> <li>• At least 2 years' teaching experience</li> <li>• Record of high student and professional achievement with quantifiable success</li> <li>• Strong classroom management and instruction skills</li> <li>• Experience coaching instruction and writing curriculum</li> <li>• Bachelor's degree</li> <li>• TB clearance</li> <li>• Background check clearance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate with Executive Director to strategize instructional goals and strategies</li> <li>• Coordinate with Executive Director regarding instructional professional development for teaching staff</li> <li>• Support classroom teachers in developing instructional materials</li> <li>• Provide professional development and coaching to classroom teachers re. classroom management and content instruction</li> <li>• Assist Executive Director with instructional support as requested</li> </ul>
<b>Special Education Director</b>	Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commitment to school's mission</li> <li>• At least one year prior teaching experience preferred</li> <li>• Certified Special Education Teacher highly qualified</li> <li>• Experience working with students with special needs</li> <li>• Knowledge of special education rights of students and responsibilities of schools, including the IEP process (testing and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage school matters involving special education</li> <li>• Maintain records regarding students with special needs and the education services provided to them</li> <li>• Work with content area teachers to support students with special needs, including implementation of IEPs</li> <li>• Facilitate review of intake assessments for new students</li> <li>• Facilitate evaluation/reevaluation process</li> <li>• Ensure school compliance with state and federal special education laws and regulations</li> </ul>

		implementation of accommodations and modifications) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bachelor’s degree</li> <li>• TB clearance</li> <li>• Background check clearance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided direct special education services to students in one-on-one setting sand through push-in/pull-out instruction</li> </ul>
<b>Office Clerk</b>	N	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commitment to school’s mission</li> <li>• Experience with Microsoft office</li> <li>• Fluent in written and spoken Spanish</li> <li>• High school diploma</li> <li>• TB clearance</li> <li>• Background check clearance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain a calm and welcoming front office environment</li> <li>• Assist Director of Operations in coordination of school systems and operations</li> <li>• Monitor front desk and school phone</li> <li>• Assist with parent communication as requested</li> <li>• Maintain and organize school supplies (not including SPED supplies)</li> </ul>
<b>Teachers</b>	Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commitment to school’s mission</li> <li>• At least one year prior teaching experience preferred</li> <li>• CA teaching credential highly qualified</li> <li>• Bachelor’s degree</li> <li>• TB clearance</li> <li>• Background check clearance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan and execute effective and engaging lessons, aligned to CCSS and scaffolded to meet the needs of all learners</li> <li>• Work with Executive Director, dean of curriculum and instruction, and other members of the content team to develop curriculum and assessments</li> <li>• Participate in practice based professional development</li> <li>• Serve as primary classroom disciplinarian enforcing school discipline system</li> <li>• Regularly communicate with parents regarding student performance</li> </ul>

The Charter School shall comply with all relevant credentialing regulations. Currently, Education Code Section 47605(1), states in pertinent part:

“Teachers in charter schools shall be required to hold a Commission on Teacher Credentialing certificate, permit or other document equivalent to that which a teacher in other public schools would be required to hold. These documents shall be maintained on file at the charter school and shall be subject to periodic inspection by chartering authority. It is the intent of the Legislature that charter schools be given flexibility with regard to non-core, non-college preparatory courses.”

The Charter School teachers at all levels shall meet or exceed all “highly qualified requirements” under the Every Student Succeeds Act (“ESSA”). Accordingly, a teacher of core academic subjects (i.e. English-Language Arts, History-Social Science, Math and Science) must have:

- Bachelor’s degree
- State credential
- Demonstrated core academic subject matter competence

### Qualifications of School Support Staff

Invictus Academy of Richmond (“Invictus Academy”) reserves the right to hire or retain non-credentialed school support staff for noncore, non-college preparatory subjects (core is defined as English, math, social studies, and science), as per Education Code Section 47605(1), if that prospective staff person has an appropriate mix of subject matter expertise, professional experience, and demonstrated capacity to work successfully in such capacity. All non-instructional support staff will possess experience and expertise appropriate for their position.

Invictus Academy may also hire or retain non-credentialed instructional support staff (Associate Teachers) to support core or college prep subjects. In such instances, the instructional support staff will meet one of the following qualifications: two years of higher education study, an associate degree or higher, or a passing score on a formal state or local academic assessment that demonstrates the ability to assist in teaching reading, writing, and mathematics.

### Hiring of Teachers

The Executive Director will recruit highly qualified staff through multiple sources, including but not limited to university credentialing programs (e.g. Stanford Teacher Education Program), Teach For America, postings to EdJoin, pre-existing contacts within the Charter School’s professional network, and referrals.

Invictus Academy of Richmond will consider applicants through a transparent, three-stage interview process:

- **Cover letter/resume screening:** Following a candidate’s initial submission of a cover letter and resume, the Executive Director will screen materials for mission alignment and credentialing requirements. Candidates who meet these requirements will be contacted for a phone interview.
- **Phone interview:** Candidates who advance to a phone interview will be asked a series of questions to illuminate the degree to which they are aligned with the Invictus Academy’s mission and vision. Questions during this stage will probe the candidate’s background, experience, and instructional approach. Candidates who demonstrate high qualifications on the basis of the phone interview will be selected for in-person interviews.
- **In-person interview and demonstration lesson:** The final stage of the interview process is the most rigorous. Candidates interview in-person with the Executive Director, members of the leadership team, and students (starting in Year 1). Candidates also meet with current teachers (starting in Year 1). This stage of the interview also entails a demonstration lesson, after which members of the leadership team provide feedback. In select cases, candidates will be asked to teach a second lesson to ascertain the degree to which the candidate was

able to swiftly implement feedback. The Executive Director and leadership team then meet to discuss the candidate, with the decision being communicated to the candidate within a week of the final interview. While multiple constituents may be involved in the hiring process, the Executive Director will make all final hiring decisions.

The selection procedures shall not discriminate on the basis of ethnicity, national origin, religion, gender, gender identity, age, disability, or any other protected classifications. Invictus Academy employees will be held accountable by the Executive Director.

All faculty and staff undergo a criminal background check and fingerprinting to be conducted by the Department of Justice and the FBI, as well a child abuse registry check. The applicants are required to provide a full disclosure statement regarding prior criminal records. All staff are required to produce documents for U.S. employment authorization and a Mantoux tuberculosis (TB) test.

We will comply with all federal laws regarding maintenance and disclosure of employee records. Invictus Academy is a School of Choice and no employees will be forced to work there.

## Element 6: Health and Safety Procedures

**“The procedures that the school will follow to ensure the health and safety of pupils and staff. These procedures shall include the requirement that each employee of the school furnish the school with a criminal record summary as described in Section 44237.”**

- **California Education Code Sections 47605 (b)(5)(F)**

Invictus Academy will implement a comprehensive set of health, safety, and risk management policies, which will be reviewed with the staff, students, parents, and governing board. These will also be reviewed and discussed with the school's insurance carriers and include the following items:

- Policies and procedures for response to natural disasters and emergencies, including fires and earthquakes.
- A policy requiring that instructional and administrative staff receive training in emergency response, including appropriate “first responder” training or its equivalent.
- Policies relating to the administration of prescription drugs and other medicines.
- A policy establishing that the school functions as a drug, alcohol, and tobacco free workplace.
- A policy for reporting child abuse, acts of violence, and other improprieties as mandated by federal, state, and local agencies. Child abuse will be reported immediately by the individual discovering or being informed of the alleged child abuse/neglect. In accordance with the requirements of AB 1432, annual reporter training will be provided within the first six weeks of school or the first six weeks of that person’s employment, and proof of that training will be provided to the president of the school’s governing board.

A draft of the school’s health and safety procedures can be found in the Invictus Academy draft Student and Parent Handbook, which can be found in **Appendix 15: Draft Student and Family Handbook** as well as in our Health and Safety Plan, which can be found in **Appendix 16: Health and Safety Plan**. A full draft of these policies will be submitted to the District for review at least 30 days prior to Invictus Academy’s first day of operation.

Invictus Academy will comply with all health and safety laws and regulations that apply to non-charter public schools, including those regarding auxiliary services (food services, transportation, custodial services, hazardous materials, pest management, etc.) and those required by CAL/OSHA, the California Health and Safety Code, and EPA.

The Director of Operations will serve as Custodian of Records per Department of Justice Requirements.

Invictus Academy will participate in the National School Lunch Program (“NSLP”), which is a federally assisted meal program operating in public and nonprofit private schools and residential child care institutions. NSLP provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free lunches to children each school day. Invictus Academy and its food vendors comply with all federal and state regulations of the program, including, but not limited to, the nutritional requirements of food served that promote a healthy growth in physique and the stimulation of the mind. Additionally,

food of little nutritional value, or “junk food,” will not be served or distributed on campus, and students are further discouraged from obtaining and bringing such items onto campus.

### **Protection Against Sexual Harassment**

Invictus Academy of Richmond is committed to providing a school that is free from sexual harassment, as well as any harassment based upon such factors as race, religion, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, age, gender, medical condition, marital status, sexual orientation, or disability. Invictus Academy will develop and maintain comprehensive policies and procedures to prevent and immediately remediate any concerns about sexual discrimination or harassment at the Charter School (including employee to employee, employee to student, and student to employee misconduct). Misconduct of this nature is very serious and will be addressed in accordance with the school policy.

### **Criminal Record Summary**

Employees and contractors of Invictus Academy will be required to submit to a criminal background check and to furnish a criminal record summary as required by Education Code Sections 44237 and 45125.1. New employees not possessing a valid California Teaching Credential must submit two sets of fingerprints to the California Department of Justice for the purpose of obtaining a criminal record summary. The Executive Director of Invictus Academy shall monitor compliance with this policy and report to the Board of Directors on a quarterly basis. The Board Chair shall monitor the fingerprinting and background clearance of the Executive Director. Volunteers who will volunteer outside of the direct supervision of a credentialed employee shall be fingerprinted and receive background clearance prior to volunteering without the direct supervision of a credentialed employee. Registered sex offenders under Penal Code Section 290 may not serve as volunteers on campus or anywhere or at any time students are present.

It is the responsibility of the Director of Operations to provide new employees with the necessary forms for the background check. It is also the Director of Operations responsibility to verify the results, and to notify the employee of the results of the criminal background check contain a “knockout” conviction that prevents the employee from being hired.

### **Mandated Reporting of Child Abuse**

All classified and certificated staff (including teachers in any non-core, non-college preparatory courses), as well as short-term employees and independent contractors, will be mandated child abuse reporters and will follow all applicable reporting laws, the same policies and procedures used by the Authorizer. Training on child abuse reporting shall be provided to all employees.

### **Drug Free/Alcohol Free/Smoke Free Environment**

Invictus Academy shall maintain a drug and alcohol and tobacco free environment.

### **CPR/First Aid**

At least one person on site will be CPR and First Aid trained.

## **TB Testing**

Faculty and staff will be tested for tuberculosis prior to commencing employment and working with students as required by Education Code Section 49406.

## **Immunizations**

All students enrolled and staff will be required to provide records documenting immunizations as is required at public schools pursuant to Health and Safety Code Sections 120325-120375, and Title 17, California Code of Regulations Sections 6000-6075. All incoming 7<sup>th</sup> graders must be immunized with a pertussis (whooping cough) vaccine booster.

## **Medication in School**

Invictus Academy will adhere to Education Code Section 49423 regarding administration of medication in school.

## **Vision, Hearing, and Scoliosis**

Students will be screened for vision, hearing and scoliosis. The Charter School will adhere to Education Code Section 49450, *et seq.*, as applicable to the grade levels served by the Charter School.

## **Diabetes**

Invictus Academy will provide an information sheet regarding type 2 diabetes to the parent or guardian of incoming 7<sup>th</sup> grade students, pursuant to Education Code Section 49452.7. The information sheet shall include, but shall not be limited to, all of the following:

1. A description of type 2 diabetes.
2. A description of the risk factors and warning signs associated with type 2 diabetes.
3. A recommendation that students displaying or possibly suffering from risk factors or warning signs associated with type 2 diabetes should be screened for type 2 diabetes.
4. A description of treatments and prevention of methods of type 2 diabetes.
5. A description of the different types of diabetes screening tests available.

## **Blood-borne Pathogens**

The Charter School shall meet state and federal standards for dealing with blood borne pathogens and other potentially infectious materials in the work place. The Board shall establish a written infectious control plan designed to protect employees and students from possible infection due to contact with blood borne viruses, including human immunodeficiency virus (“HIV”) and hepatitis B virus (“HBV”).

Whenever exposed to blood or other bodily fluids through injury or accident, staff and students shall follow the latest medical protocol for disinfecting procedures.

## **Facilities**

### **Facilities Compliance**

Invictus Academy shall use facilities that are compliant with the Field Act or facilities that are compliant with the California Building Standards Code. The Charter School agrees to test sprinkler systems, fire extinguishers, and fire alarms annually at its facilities to ensure that they are maintained in an operable condition at all times. The Charter School will maintain on file records documenting such compliance. The Charter School shall conduct fire drills as required under Education Code Section 32001 and in conjunction with the District (if at District facilities).

### **Safety & Disaster Plans**

Invictus Academy will create a complete guide of health and safety and emergency procedures in case of fire, bomb threat, earthquake, flooding, crash, intrusion, or any other disaster which will be fully in place by the time the school opens. A full draft of the Charter School's health and safety policies and procedures shall be provided to the authorizer for review and approval by June 30th of each year prior to operation.

Please see **Appendix 16: Health and Safety Plan** for the complete school site safety plan.

### **Suicide Prevention Policy**

Invictus Academy will adopt a policy on student suicide prevention in accordance with Education Code Section 215.

## **Element 7: Means to Achieve Racial/Ethnic Balance Reflective of the District**

**“The means by which the school will achieve a racial and ethnic balance among its pupils that is reflective of the general population residing within the territorial jurisdiction of the school district to which the charter petition is submitted.”**

- **California Education Code Section 47605 (b)(5)(G)**

Invictus Academy of Richmond (“Invictus Academy”) will strive, through recruitment, to achieve a racial and ethnic balance among its pupils that is reflective of the general population residing within the territorial jurisdiction of the District.

### **Recruitment Strategy**

Invictus Academy will monitor the racial and ethnic balance among its students on an annual basis and, as appropriate in response to the data, modify its community outreach plan to achieve a racially and ethnically diverse student population. Our team has developed relationship with local community organizations, churches, and families, as well as grown an online presence on key social media and created an easily accessible website with enrollment information. Through these means, we expect to recruit a student population generally reflective of the community we seek to serve in South and Central Richmond.

Invictus Academy has and will continue to use a variety of strategies to ensure our student body’s diversity reflects that of the community. These strategies include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Adopting an open enrollment timeline that allots ample opportunity for outreach to students and families, information sessions, and parents to submit required enrollment materials.
- Distributing brochures, flyers, and other marketing materials in neighborhoods, local grocery stores and coffee shops, and community organizations.
- Conducting outreach to a broad base of culturally diverse community organizations including churches, youth centers, local sports leagues, neighborhood groups, and other leadership organizations.
- Translating all enrollment materials, information sessions, and parent meetings in both English and Spanish.
- Hosting information sessions to provide information about Invictus Academy’s mission, educational program, and curriculum.
- Communicating clearly in all outreach efforts and marketing materials that Invictus Academy is open to all student populations, including academically low-achieving and low-income students.
- Utilizing social media and other online means to increase awareness of Invictus Academy.
- Empowering parent leaders to leverage their networks to recruit families.

We are committed to ensuring that all outreach efforts are accessible and welcoming to students and families from all backgrounds. Invictus Academy shall not discriminate on the basis of the characteristics listed in Section 220 (actual or perceived disability, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic

that is contained in the definition of hate crimes set forth in Section 422.55 of the Penal Code or association with an individual who has any of the aforementioned characteristics).

## **Element 8: Admissions Requirements**

### **“Admission requirements, if applicable.”**

- **California Education Code Section 47605 (b)(5)(H)**

### **Non-Discriminatory Admission Procedures**

Although Invictus Academy of Richmond (“Invictus Academy”) targets underserved students, the Charter School is a free public school open to all California residents without regard to prior academic achievement or the residence of the pupil or his or her parents in the State of California except as is required by Education Code Section 47605(d)(2)(B). Students shall be considered for admission without regard to ethnicity, national origin, gender, gender expression, gender identity, disability or sexual orientation or any other characteristic described in Education Code Section 220. With the exception of proof of immunizations (or acceptable legal alternative), an enrollment application, and birth certificate, no requirements for admission exist. There will be no test or interview as a condition to enrollment in the Charter School and we will adhere to all state and federal laws regarding the minimum age of students.

Students already enrolled at Invictus Academy will be exempt from the application and lottery process. During any period of discretionary grant funding from the U.S. Department of Education, Invictus Academy will comply with the Charter Schools Program Non-Regulatory Guidance (“CSP NRG”) regarding lotteries. In the event any provisions included here are deemed to conflict with the CSP NRG, Invictus Academy will modify its lottery procedures to ensure compliance and eligibility for federal funding.

The application process consists of completion and submission of a Student Interest Form for each child who is interested in attending the school.

An open application period will be publicly advertised by Invictus Academy. During this period, applications will be accepted for enrollment for the following school year. At the close of the open enrollment period, applications shall be counted to determine whether any grade level has received more applications than its maximum capacity. Should this occur, Invictus Academy will hold a public random drawing to determine enrollment for the grade level(s) in question, with the exception of existing Invictus Academy students who are guaranteed enrollment for the following school year. This exception will take effect following the first year operation. Enrollment preferences in the case of a public random drawing shall be as follows:

1. Siblings of students already admitted to Invictus Academy, provided siblings would attend the school concurrently
2. Children of founding families of Invictus Academy and children of Invictus Academy regular, full-time employees, not to exceed 10% of the total enrollment
3. Children residing within the District
4. All other students who reside in the state of California

## **Founding Parent Designation**

Invictus Academy is committed to ensuring a close partnership with parents and families to support our mission. Our founding team has begun the work of cultivating these partnerships in our founding stages, with some parents leading and/or contributing to our community outreach efforts. In recognition of these efforts, we will provide the opportunity for these parents to be designated as “Founding Parents.” To qualify for this designation, a parent must contribute significant personal time in founding efforts, including but not limited to, holding events with other parents, tabling, collecting petition signatures, and disseminating flyers prior to the holding of a lottery, if necessary. Parents shall not be required to make any financial contribution to earn designation as a Founding Parent, and Invictus Academy will comply with all oversight requirements related to designation of Founding Parents.

## **Lottery and Waitlist Procedures**

In the event that a lottery becomes necessary, lottery rules will be communicated to all parties present at the lottery, orally and in writing in both English and Spanish, including applicable enrollment preferences. Prior to any student names being drawn from the lottery, students who are given preference will be identified. Student names will be pulled from the lottery by an uninterested third party selected by the Executive Director.

To ensure the fairness and propriety of the enrollment lottery, the following process shall be followed:

- Student names will be printed on slips of paper and placed into a box, with enrollment preferences identified by visible mark.
- Lottery will be conducted by grade level.
- Upon being drawn, student names will be read aloud twice and recorded in chronological order, to include student name, an assigned number corresponding to the order they were drawn, student contact information, and any preference identifiers.
- The recording and review lottery results will be conducted by an uninterested third party different from and unrelated to the individual who conducted the public lottery. A final review of lottery results, including a review of appropriate distribution of seats to students with preferences, will be completed prior to an announcement of final lottery results.

Student names will be drawn until all open seats are filled. Remaining names will be pulled and placed in chronological order to populate the waitlist. Students applying for enrollment after the lottery will be added to the waitlist in the chronological order in which they apply. At any time, a family may request to be removed from the waitlist, with any such requests being granted immediately. Waitlists shall be valid for the duration of the applicable school year for which the lottery populating the waitlist took place.

Families of students included in the lottery will be notified of enrollment and waitlist status by phone and/or mail within two weeks of the lottery. Students offered an open seat for the upcoming school year will be required to complete enrollment documents within four weeks of notification of an offer for an open seat. Following the lottery, and within two weeks of distributing initial notification enrollment status based on the lottery, the school will hold an information session for

families to have outstanding questions answered prior to the deadline for submitting enrollment documents.

If a seat becomes available for students on the waitlist, families will be notified and offered an open seat in chronological order, as identified on the waitlist. Families notified of an open seat from the waitlist up until two weeks prior to the start of the school year must confirm enrollment and complete enrollment documents within ten (10) business days of notification. Families notified of an open seat from the waitlist less than two weeks prior to the start of the school year or during the course of the school year must confirm enrollment and complete enrollment documents within seventy-two (72) hours of notification. In the event a family declines an offer for a seat, the next student in chronological order on the waitlist shall be offered a seat until the seat is filled. In no event shall a waitlist be applicable for more than one school year. Students on a waitlist who are not offered a seat prior to the conclusion of a given school year must apply for enrollment the following year.

Invictus Academy shall maintain records of applications, lottery, waitlists, enrollment, and notifications related thereto. Policies related to enrollment and lottery shall be available at the school site. Records of lottery, enrollment, and waitlists shall be made available, upon request, for public viewing, provided, however, that student identification information, including identification numbers, shall not be included in such records.

Following the public random drawing, students who could not be granted admission shall be given the option to put their name on a waitlist according to their place in the lottery draw. In the case of an opening prior to or during the upcoming school year, students on the waitlist will have the option of enrolling. Waitlists will not carry over to the following school year.

Parents must submit a completed Student Registration Form for all students who secure a seat at The Charter School.

Invictus Academy and the District mutually agree that the preferences in the public random drawing as listed above are consistent with Education Code Section 47605(d)(2) and applicable federal law and non-regulatory guidance; however, should the preferences require modification in order to meet requirements of the Public Charter Schools Grant Program (PCSGP), such modifications may be made at school's discretion without any need to materially revise the charter as long as such modifications are consistent with the law and written notice is provided by the Charter School to the District.

### **Admissions and Enrollment Timeline**

The following represents Invictus Academy's projected application, public random drawing, and admissions timeline. If necessary and appropriate, this timeline may be amended without any need to formally materially revise the charter as long as changes are communicated to the Authorizer and are posted on the Charter School's website.

- **December-February:** Multi-lingual information sessions will be held in large and small group settings with community partners including, but not limited to, community organizations, churches, and individual families.

- **January-March:** Application materials will be sent to target students/families in their preferred language. Re-enrollment forms sent to existing students (starting in Year 2). Application deadline occurs and public random drawing is held.
- **March-May:** Acceptance letters, enrollment materials, and orientation/onboarding information distributed to families of students accepted in the public random drawing. Waitlist letters distributed to families of students not granted admission through the public random drawing.

Students who are offered enrollment after the public random drawing will be required to provide registration information to Invictus Academy, including student academic history, a release of records, student health, and emergency information to ensure that Invictus Academy is prepared to serve the student.

## **Element 9: Financial Audit – Reporting and Accountability**

**“The manner in which an annual, independent financial audit shall be conducted, which shall employ generally accepted accounting principles, and the manner in which audit exceptions and deficiencies shall be resolved to the satisfaction of the chartering authority.”**

**- California Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(I)**

### **Fiscal Audit**

The Charter School Board will appoint an Audit Committee, which will select an independent financial auditor from the State Controller’s list of approved education auditors and oversee audit requirements.

An annual independent fiscal audit of the books and records of the Charter School will be conducted as required under the Charter Schools Act, section 47605(b)(5)(I) and 47605(m). The books and records of the Charter School will be kept in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, and as required by applicable law and the audit will employ generally accepted accounting procedures. The audit shall be conducted in accordance with applicable provisions within the California Code of Regulations governing audits of charter schools as published in the State Controller’s K-12 Audit Guide.

The Audit Committee will select an independent auditor through a request for proposal format. The auditor will have, at a minimum, a CPA and educational institution audit experience and approved by the State Controller on its published list as an educational audit provider. To the extent required under applicable federal law, the audit scope will be expanded to include items and processes specified in applicable Office of Management and Budget Circulars.

It is anticipated that the annual audit will be completed within four months of the close of the fiscal year and that a copy of the auditor's findings will be forwarded to the Authorizer, the Contra Costa County Superintendent of Schools, the State Controller, and to the CDE by the 15th of December of each year. Invictus Academy’s Executive Director, along with the Audit Committee, will review any audit exceptions or deficiencies and report to the Invictus Academy Charter School Board with recommendations on how to resolve them. The Invictus Academy Charter School Board will submit a report to the Authorizer describing how the exceptions and deficiencies have been or will be resolved to the satisfaction of the Authorizer along with an anticipated timeline for the same. The anticipated timeline will incorporate any recommendations from the auditor and shall reflect discussions with the Authorizer as to a reasonable timeline for resolution. Any disputes regarding the resolution of audit exceptions and deficiencies will be referred to the dispute resolution process contained in the dispute resolution process outlined in this charter. There is money allocated in our budget under the line-item “Accounting Fees” for this purpose. Our complete budget can be found in **Appendix 7: Budget Base Case-School of the District**.

Audit appeals or requests for summary review shall be submitted to the Education Audit Appeals Panel (“EAAP”) in accordance with applicable law.

The independent financial audit of the Charter School is public record to be provided to the public upon request.

## Programmatic Audit

The Charter School will provide to the Authorizer an annual performance report. This report will include at least the following information:

- Summary data showing student progress toward the goals and outcomes listed above
- A summary of major decisions and policies set forth by the Invictus Academy Charter School Board of Directors during the year
- Data on the parent involvement in the School's governance (and other facets of the school) and summary data from the Annual Community Survey
- Data regarding the number of staff working at the school and their qualifications
- A copy of the school's health and safety policies and any major changes to those policies during the year
- Data showing whether Charter School implemented the means listed in the charter to strive to achieve racially and ethnically diverse student population reflective of the territorial jurisdiction of the District
- A comprehensive view of Charter School's admissions practices during the year, including information regarding the numbers of students enrolled, children on waiting lists and the students expelled and/or suspended
- Analyses of the effectiveness of Charter School's internal dispute mechanisms and information regarding the number and resolutions of disputes and complaints
- Parent/Teacher satisfaction results from the Annual Community Survey
- Any other information regarding the educational program, the administrative, legal and governance operations of the Charter School relative to compliance with the terms of the charter generally

The Charter School and the Authorizer will jointly develop any additional content, evaluation criteria, timelines and process for the annual performance report. The Charter School will use the data in the performance report to assess and improve upon its educational programming on an on-going basis.

The above-referenced annual performance report and the State-mandated School Accountability Report Card will be submitted to the Authorizer within the timelines agreed upon by the Authorizer and the Charter School and made available to the public.

The Charter School and the Authorizer will jointly develop a visitation process to enable the Authorizer to gather information needed to validate the school's performance and compliance with the terms of this charter. However, the Charter School agrees to and submits to the right of the Authorizer to make random visits and inspections in order to carry out its statutorily required oversight in accordance with Education Code Section 47607.

Pursuant to Education Code Section 47604.3 the Charter School shall promptly respond to all reasonable inquiries including, but not limited to inquiries regarding its financial records from the Authorizer and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

## **Element 10: Pupil Suspension and Expulsion**

**“The procedures by which pupils can be suspended or expelled.”**

**- California Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(J)**

### **School Culture**

Invictus Academy will foster a positive school culture in which students and staff are valued and expectations are made clear. We believe that this culture is achievable by communicating expectations clearly, making time and space to celebrate students and staff in both large and small ways, and administering consequences, when appropriate, fairly, calmly, and objectively. Our discipline system is not rooted in punishment, but rather, restorative justice, in which transgressions that affect our school community are explored and attempts at redemption made. Through our approach, we will establish a level of consistency with respect to discipline and consequences that sets all students up for success.

### **Individual and Whole Class Positive Reinforcement**

We strongly believe in a culture of positivity, and so we create time and space for praise and celebration of student achievement. There are several structures that will support this, including (1) positive phone calls and notes home weekly, (2) nominations for and winners of student of the week awards, (3) displays of individual students’ academic success in public spaces, and (4) public praise delivered to students in class. We will intentionally use these structures to cultivate intrinsic motivation for students.

In addition to individual opportunities for praise and recognition, grade levels will be able to earn tangible rewards for their achievements. During and by the end of each class period, teachers will lead students through a reflection protocol about the class’s success in demonstrating the school’s ten core values. This involves a one-minute verbal reflection in student pairs followed by a whole class share out of reflections on the class’s performance in each core value, with students using evidence or examples from class to explain their view and teachers facilitating the conversation. This system has been successful at numerous high performing schools, including Excel Academy in Boston as well as Valor Academy in Los Angeles. Classes that record the strongest achievement in these reflections will be eligible for rewards such as free dress days. These reflections and rewards are designed to acknowledge classes that show exceptional levels of teamwork in pursuit of our collective mission.

### **Behavior Infractions**

We will implement *The Behavior Management Cycle*, developed by Lee Canter, which has earned national acclaim for its effectiveness and been implemented in some of the strongest schools in the country.<sup>115</sup> This system rests on three main steps, executed sequentially: (1) teachers clearly and specifically communicate directions, (2) teachers positively narrate students on task to reinforce expectations, and (3) teachers administer consequences from a pre-established

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<sup>115</sup> Canter, L. (2010). *Assertive discipline, positive behavior management for today's classroom* (4th ed.). Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press.

consequence ladder for those students still not complying with directions. The sequence of these steps is critical, because teachers who give clear directions and positively narrate and reinforce expectations often will, often, not need to administer consequences, as students overwhelmingly meet behavioral expectations that are clearly communicated.

When corrective action is needed, teachers will be trained to administer the correction (1) calmly and unemotionally and (2) with the use of an established consequence ladder. It is crucial that teachers use a neutral tone with students to avoid communicating frustration with students, as this action on the part of the teacher results in escalation and negativity. In addition, consequences must be set in advance to avoid the administration of arbitrary penalties. If one student is given a detention for inappropriate language while another receives a verbal warning for the same misbehavior, this quickly creates a culture of inconsistency and bias, which causes culture to unravel. Instead, teachers assign consequences from a ladder that has been communicated in advance to students. At Invictus Academy, this ladder is as follows:

**Figure 42. Invictus Academy Consequence Ladder**

Step	Consequence
1 <sup>st</sup> Consequence	Verbal Warning
2 <sup>nd</sup> Consequence	Conversation During/After Class
3 <sup>rd</sup> Consequence	Conversation After Class, Lunch Reflection Room, Phone Call Home
4 <sup>th</sup> Consequence <sup>116</sup>	Sent Out of Class for Restorative Conversation with Dean of Students, Restorative Conversation with Teacher, Reflection Room at Lunch

The system above is rooted in restorative justice practices. After two behavioral infractions, a student is assured a restorative conversation with the teacher to get the student back on track. This conversation can happen during class, if the teacher can find a moment in the midst of instruction, or after class. Teachers reserve the right to skip down the consequence ladder for severe misbehaviors. For example, if a child physically hits another child, a teacher may immediately send the student out of class, triggering the consequences associated with step four in our consequence ladder.

**Figure 43. Restorative Principles and Sample Teacher Statements**

Restorative Principle	Sample Teacher Statements
Assume Best Intentions	“Sarah, you are a fantastic student, but I can tell your focus is off right now.”
Address the Specific Behavior/Avoid Generalizations	“I’ve had to ask you to keep your head up twice, so it’s important for us to check-in.”
Seek to Understand, Seek to Support	“What is causing you to lose focus, and how can I help you get back on track?”
Validate	“I completely understand that you’re tired and it’s almost lunch, and those things are affecting your energy. That’s valid.”
Refocus	“I know you want to succeed in this class, and for that to happen you need to persevere in these moments when you’re tired.”

<sup>116</sup> Triggers restorative justice protocol.

Explain the “why”	“I want you to be successful today and in this class so you can go on to Santa Clara University, which is where I know you and your family want to be.”
Commit	“I’m committed to checking in with you to make sure you’re grasping the material, but I also need you to commit to keeping your head up and doing your best to focus. Can you commit to that?”
Hold Firm (If Student Refuses to Commit/Refocus)	“I hear you and understand. Unfortunately, if you won’t commit to refocusing, I have to ask you to go to the Dean’s office. Know that I don’t want that—but if you are in class, you need to give your best. If you do choose to go to the Dean’s office, also know I have to follow up with your parent(s)—not to get you in trouble, but because I know they would want to know about this choice. We all agree that your education matters.”

For students who significantly disrupt class by earning a fourth consequence, a more intensive restorative process is triggered. These students return to the classroom in which the misbehavior occurred to have a restorative conversation with the teacher at lunch, at which the teacher and student agree to steps for the student to amend or take action to redress the community violations that occurred during class. The student then spends lunch in the Reflection Room, during which we encourage students to reflect through mindfulness exercises. Each stage in the process is framed and designed to support students towards demonstrating mindfulness, in which they manage their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors to be their best selves. We reject a more punitive-oriented approach, instead treating misbehaviors as cause for coaching students to manage themselves more effectively. We foster space for redemption and community building. Conversations between students and the Dean of Students are anchored by Kohlberg’s Moral Pyramid, which students immediately reflect upon if sent out of class.

**Figure 44. Modified Kohlberg’s Moral Pyramid**

Kohlberg’s Moral Pyramid Level	Anchor Statements
I follow my ethical code	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “My actions align with my beliefs.”</li> <li>• “I want to make the world better.”</li> <li>• “I am the change I seek in the world.”</li> <li>• “I do what I do because it’s just plain right.”</li> </ul>
I act to better my community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I do what good people do.”</li> <li>• “My actions better my community.”</li> <li>• “I know the effect my actions have on others.”</li> </ul>
I try to follow the rules	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I do what I do to follow the rules.”</li> <li>• “If there were no rules, there would be chaos.”</li> </ul>
I want to please others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I do what I do to please somebody.”</li> <li>• “I try to have the right intent.”</li> </ul>
I seek rewards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I act to earn a reward.”</li> <li>• “I act to get something in return.”</li> </ul>
I want to avoid punishment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I do what I do to avoid getting in trouble.”</li> <li>• “Somebody told me it was right.”</li> </ul>

Invictus Academy is committed to ensuring a positive, physically and emotionally safe learning environment. We believe that through clear setting of expectations, positive reinforcement, and frequent conversations with students, most behaviors that erode the learning environment we seek can be corrected. However, those behaviors outlined above threaten the physical and emotional safety of the school community and can warrant temporary or permanent removal from Invictus Academy. The process for handling suspensions and/or expulsions is detailed below.

### Trauma Informed Practices

Our founding team is keenly aware and attentive to the growing importance of trauma informed practices given recent revelations regarding the pervasiveness of childhood trauma. A recent study by the Center for Youth Wellness found that 62% of California youth have experienced at least one Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE), such as abuse, neglect, or household dysfunction.<sup>117</sup> One in six of those surveyed had experienced four or more such experiences.<sup>118</sup> The pervasiveness of childhood trauma is deeply troubling. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), “The ACE score, a total sum of the different categories of ACEs reported by participants, is used to assess cumulative childhood stress. Study findings repeatedly reveal a graded dose-response relationship<sup>119</sup> between ACEs and negative health and well-being outcomes across the life course.”<sup>120</sup> These negative health and well-being outcomes include, but are not limited to alcoholism and alcohol abuse, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, depression, fetal death, illicit drug use, liver disease, poor work performance, financial stress, sexually transmitted diseases, smoking, suicide attempts, adolescent pregnancy, and poor academic performance. Given the severe consequences of trauma on a child’s life trajectory, it is incumbent upon schools to incorporate trauma informed practices, particularly in their discipline systems.

Invictus Academy has designed its model to support the pervasive use of research-based, trauma informed practices. Our practices were designed consistent with the policy agenda drafted in Massachusetts, *Helping Traumatized Children Learn*, designed by Massachusetts Advocates for Children, Harvard Law School, and the Task Force on Children Affected by Domestic Violence.<sup>121</sup> The policy framework was adopted in 2005 and codified best-practices in supporting trauma affected youth. The policy advocated for a “flexible framework” for trauma sensitive practices, which are documented in **Figure 45** below.

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<sup>117</sup> <http://www.centerforyouthwellness.org/about/our-news/details/?id=337>.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> A graded dose-response means that as the dose of the stressor increases the intensity of the outcome also increases.

<sup>120</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/cestudy/about.html>.

<sup>121</sup> Cole, S.F., et al.(2005). *Helping Traumatized Children Learn: Supportive School Environments for Children Traumatized by Family Violence*. Boston, MA: Massachusetts Advocates for Children. Retrieved from [http://www.massadvocates.org/documents/HTCL\\_9-09.pdf](http://www.massadvocates.org/documents/HTCL_9-09.pdf).

**Figure 45. Trauma-Sensitive Practices<sup>122</sup>**

Domain	Specific Strategies	Invictus Academy Practices
School Culture and Infrastructure	<p>School administration should support and promote trauma-sensitive approaches school-wide through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic planning</li> <li>• Assess staff training needs</li> <li>• Confidentially review and plan for individual cases</li> <li>• Review policies (e.g., school discipline policies) to ensure they reflect an understanding of the role of trauma in student behaviors</li> <li>• Develop community partnerships</li> <li>• Evaluate these efforts on an ongoing basis</li> </ul>	<p>School leadership will promote trauma-sensitive approaches school wide by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessing and strategically planning staff professional development around training needs, including both summer and in-year professional development</li> <li>• Planning and reviewing individual cases before and during the school year in collaboration with teachers</li> <li>• Ensuring ample professional development for staff regarding school discipline policies and restorative practices</li> <li>• Develop partnerships in the Richmond area to offer trauma-sensitive support</li> <li>• Evaluate trauma-sensitive practices with respect to instruction and school culture in the ILT and SCLT, respectively</li> </ul>
Staff Training	<p>Incorporate staff training on trauma that addresses how to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen the relationships between staff, children who have experienced trauma, and their caregivers</li> <li>• Identify and access outside supports</li> <li>• Help traumatized children regulate their emotions to ensure academic and social success</li> </ul>	<p>Integrate staff professional development on trauma-sensitive practices, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role playing critical conversations with students to support staff towards building strong relationships with students.</li> <li>• Providing staff with supports available in school and in the community.</li> <li>• Partnering with the Mindful Life Project to offer training to</li> </ul>

<sup>122</sup>Ibid.

		staff and direct support to students to help students gain awareness of and regulate their emotions.
Link to Mental Health Professionals	<p>Schools should create links to mental health consultation and services for staff, students, and families.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For staff, clinical supports include the opportunity to participate in sessions with their peers and a clinician to confidentially discuss specific cases, reflect on experiences of secondary trauma, and learn and practice strategies for working with children and families.</li> <li>• For students and families, school staff should refer families to appropriate mental health resources and following up on referrals. Trusting relationships between parents/caregivers, school staff, and mental health providers can help to ensure success. Be sure to secure the necessary authorization for release of information between parties to facilitate communication and collaboration.</li> </ul>	<p>Invictus Academy will establish links to mental health consultation services for staff, students, and families by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refer staff to relevant local mental health professional support centers to confidentially discuss specific cases, reflect on experiences of secondary trauma, and learn and practice strategies for working with children and families.</li> <li>• Referring students and families to appropriate mental health resources and following up on referrals. Invictus Academy will secure the necessary authorization for release of information between parties to facilitate communication and collaboration.</li> </ul>
Academic Instruction for Students Who Have Experienced Trauma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific strategies can be used to support the learning needs of students who have experienced trauma, including discovering and building on the student’s individual interests and competencies; maintaining predictable routines and expectations; maintaining expectations for the student that are consistent with those of</li> </ul>	<p>Invictus Academy will utilize multiple teaching methods that are shown to be best-practices in trauma-sensitive instruction, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Culturally relevant pedagogy</li> <li>• Culturally relevant curriculum</li> <li>• Activating schema/building on student interests and background knowledge</li> </ul>

	<p>his/her peers; and providing positive behavioral supports.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language-based teaching approaches can help students process information and alleviate their fears. Students who have experienced trauma often pay more attention to nonverbal cues than verbal communication, so using multiple forms of communicating information and helping students identify and verbally express their feelings are important strategies to support learning.</li> <li>• School evaluations, including psychological, speech and language, functional behavioral, and occupational therapy evaluations, should assess the role of trauma and identify needed supports.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintaining predictable routines, including those for entry of the school and classroom, the Launch, daily practice of core values, and daily classroom procedures (e.g. passing in papers, quiz protocol, etc.)</li> <li>• A behavior management system focused on clear and consistent expectations, positive reinforcement, and restorative justice practices.</li> <li>• Explicit teacher training on use of non-verbal cues including tone, voice, facial expression, and physical proximity. Teachers will communicate information through verbal and written cues.</li> <li>• Attentiveness to the role of trauma in all psychological, speech and language, functional behavioral, and occupational therapy evaluations.</li> </ul>
<p>Nonacademic Strategies</p>	<p>School discipline policies are trauma-informed when they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Balance accountability with an understanding of traumatic behavior;</li> <li>• Teach students the school and classroom rules while reinforcing that school is not a violent place and abusive discipline (which students who have experienced trauma may be accustomed to) is not allowed at school;</li> <li>• Minimize disruptions to education with an emphasis on positive behavioral supports and behavioral intervention plans;</li> </ul>	<p>Invictus Academy’s discipline policies are trauma-informed in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our consequence ladder is consistent and holds students accountable to high behavioral standards, but builds in conversations between teachers and students to ensure mutual understanding.</li> <li>• Our discipline policies and practices are rooted in restorative justice, not punishment.</li> <li>• We utilize a system of recognitions and corrections,</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create consistent rules and consequences;</li> <li>• Model respectful, nonviolent relationships. Communication procedures and protocols are trauma-informed when they:</li> <li>• Respect confidentiality;</li> <li>• Involve open communication and relationship-building with families;</li> <li>• Ensure ongoing monitoring of new policies, practices and training.</li> </ul>	<p>monitoring data closely to ensure a minimum of a 3:1 recognition to correction ratio. We strive for a 4:1 recognition to correction ratio.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rules, expectations, and consequences are consistent across classrooms.</li> <li>• Teachers receive explicit training, including role plays, of modeling respectful communication. Seeking to understand is an explicit step in our communication protocol.</li> <li>• We have a robust plan for frequent communication with families.</li> <li>• Our ILT and SCLT consistently monitor academic and school culture data to ensure policies, practices, and training for staff are effective and responsive.</li> </ul>
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**Suspension and Expulsion Policy**

The school culture of Invictus Academy is a key driver of student behavior. The policy detailed in the following sections shall serve as the Charter School’s policy and procedures for student suspension and expulsion and it may be amended from time to time without the need to amend the charter so long as the amendments comport with legal requirements. Charter School staff shall enforce disciplinary rules and procedures fairly and consistently among all students. Policy and procedures will be distributed as part of the Student and Family Handbook and will clearly describe discipline expectations, including a description on how it will be updated and maintained. Corporal punishment shall not be used as a disciplinary measure against any student. For purposes of the Policy, corporal punishment does not include an employee’s use of force that is reasonable and necessary to protect the employee, students, staff or other persons or to prevent damage to school property.

**Grounds for Suspension and Expulsion**

Behavior matters that are persistent and/or outside of the bounds of lunch detention will be handled by the Dean of Students. If a student is persistently disruptive to the learning process of other students, the Dean of Students will intervene to conference with the disruptive student in order to calm the situation and return the student to class as soon as possible, as a productive and contributing community member. Any breaches of community that are so egregious that they

might warrant suspension or expulsion will be handled by both the Executive Director and Dean of Students. No student will be suspended or expelled from school without the approval of the Executive Director, which shall occur after conference with student, advisory teacher, and Dean of Students.

A suspension means that a student is not allowed on school campus for a given number of days. The length of suspensions ranges from one to five days. A student who is suspended will be required to complete any assignments missed when out of school and provided with tutorial support upon return.

An expulsion means that a student is no longer allowed to attend the school. A student who is expelled has the right to due process. The Executive Director and Dean of Students will complete any necessary fact-finding and communicate with parents throughout the expulsion determination process.

The Invictus Academy discipline policy, including policy related to suspension and expulsion, may be applied to student actions that occur:

- on school grounds
- going to or coming from school
- during lunch or break periods (whether on or off school grounds)
- during, going to, or returning from school sponsored activities.

In accordance with CA Ed Code § 48900, a student may be recommended for suspension or expulsion if it is determined by the Executive Director or the Executive Director's designee that the student committed one or more of the acts listed below.<sup>123,124</sup> In most instances, suspension may only be imposed for a first offense when other means of discipline fail to bring about proper conduct. However, in certain circumstances, specifically identified below, students may be suspended for a first offense. In such cases, expulsion shall be decided by the Board if it finds that either: (i) other means of correction are not feasible or have repeatedly failed to bring about proper conduct; or (ii) due to the nature of the act, the presence of the student causes continuing danger. (CA. Ed Code § 48900 (b))

- Caused, attempted to cause, or threatened to cause physical injury to another person. (CA Ed Code § 48900 (a)(1)) (subject to first offense suspension)
- Willfully used force or violence upon the person of another, except in self-defense. (CA Ed Code § 48900 (a)(2)) (subject to first offense suspension)
- Possessed, sold, or otherwise furnished a firearm, knife, explosive, or other dangerous object, unless, in the case of possession of an object of this type, the pupil had obtained written permission to possess the item from a certificated school employee, which is concurred in by the Executive Director or the designee of the Executive Director. (CA Ed Code § 48900 (b)) (subject to first offense suspension)

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<sup>123</sup> Enumerated acts are copied from CA. Ed Code § 48900.

<sup>124</sup> We recognize that the California legislature regularly updates and amends laws and regulations governing student suspension and expulsion. We will regularly update our suspension and expulsion policies to reflect legal and regulatory changes.

- Unlawfully possessed, used, sold, or otherwise furnished, or been under the influence of, a controlled substance listed in Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 11053) of Division 10 of the Health and Safety Code, an alcoholic beverage, or an intoxicant of any kind. (CA Ed Code § 48900 (c)) (subject to first offense suspension) (subject to first offense suspension)
- Unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell a controlled substance listed in Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 11053) of Division 10 of the Health and Safety Code, an alcoholic beverage, or an intoxicant of any kind, and either sold, delivered, or otherwise furnished to a person another liquid, substance, or material and represented the liquid, substance, or material as a controlled substance, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant. (CA Ed Code § 48900 (d)) (subject to first offense suspension)
- Committed or attempted to commit robbery or extortion. (CA Ed Code § 48900 (e)) (subject to first offense suspension)
- Caused or attempted to cause damage to school property or private property. (CA Ed Code § 48900 (f))
- Stole or attempted to steal school property or private property. (CA Ed Code § 48900 (g))
- Possessed or used tobacco, or products containing tobacco or nicotine products, including, but not limited to, cigarettes, cigars, miniature cigars, clove cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chew packets, and betel. However, this section does not prohibit the use or possession by a pupil of his or her own prescription products. (CA Ed Code § 48900 (h))
- Committed an obscene act or engaged in habitual profanity or vulgarity. (CA. Ed Code § 48900 (i))
- Unlawfully possessed or unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell drug paraphernalia, as defined in Section 11014.5 of the Health and Safety Code. (CA Ed Code § 48900 (j))
- Disrupted school activities or otherwise willfully defied the valid authority of supervisors, teachers, administrators, school officials, or other school personnel engaged in the performance of their duties. (CA Ed Code § 48900 (k)(1)) (suspension only)
- Knowingly received stolen school property or private property. (CA Ed Code § 48900 (l))
- Possessed an imitation firearm. As used in this section, “imitation firearm” means a replica of a firearm that is so substantially similar in physical properties to an existing firearm as to lead a reasonable person to conclude that the replica is a firearm. (CA Ed Code § 48900 (m))
- Committed or attempted to commit a sexual assault as defined in Section 261, 266c, 286, 288, 288a, or 289 of the Penal Code or committed a sexual battery as defined in Section 243.4 of the Penal Code. (CA Ed Code § 48900 (n))
- Harassed, threatened, or intimidated a pupil who is a complaining witness or a witness in a school disciplinary proceeding for purposes of either preventing that pupil from being a witness or retaliating against that pupil for being a witness, or both. (CA Ed Code § 48900 (o))
- Unlawfully offered, arranged to sell, negotiated to sell, or sold the prescription drug Soma. (CA Ed Code § 48900 (p))
- Engaged in, or attempted to engage in, hazing. For purposes of this subdivision, “hazing” means a method of initiation or preinitiation into a pupil organization or body, whether or not the organization or body is officially recognized by an educational institution, that is likely to cause serious bodily injury or personal degradation or disgrace resulting in physical or mental harm to a former, current, or prospective pupil. For purposes of this

subdivision, “hazing” does not include athletic events or school-sanctioned events. (CA Ed Code § 48900 (q))

- Engaged in an act of bullying, as defined by the CA Ed Code. (CA Ed Code § 48900 (r))
- Committed sexual harassment as defined in Section 212.5 (CA Ed Code § 48900.2)
- Caused, attempted to cause, threatened to cause, or participated in an act of, hate violence, as defined in subdivision (e) of Section 233 (CA Ed Code § 48900.3)
- Intentionally engaged in harassment, threats, or intimidation, directed against school district personnel or pupils, that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to have the actual and reasonably expected effect of materially disrupting classwork, creating substantial disorder, and invading the rights of either school personnel or pupils by creating an intimidating or hostile educational environment (CA Ed Code § 48900.4)
- Made terroristic threats against school officials or school property, or both (CA Ed Code § 48900.7 (a))

In accordance with CA Ed Code § 48915, unless the Executive Director or the Executive Director’s designee determines that expulsion should not be recommended under the circumstances or that an alternative means of correction would address the conduct, a student will be recommended for expulsion if it is determined by the Executive Director or the Executive Director’s designee that the student committed one or more of the following acts at school or at a school activity on or off school grounds:<sup>125</sup> In such cases, expulsion shall be decided by the Board if it finds that either (i) other means of correction are not feasible or have repeatedly failed to bring about proper conduct; or (ii) due to the nature of the act, the presence of the student causes continuing danger. (CA Ed Code § 48915 (b))

- Causing serious physical injury to another person, except in self-defense (CA Ed Code § 48915 (a)(1)(A))
- Possession of any knife or other dangerous object of no reasonable use to the pupil (CA Ed Code § 48915 (a)(1)(B))
- Unlawful possession of any controlled substance listed in Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 11053) of Division 10 of the Health and Safety Code, except for either of the following:
  - (i) The first offense for the possession of not more than one avoirdupois ounce of marijuana, other than concentrated cannabis
  - (ii) The possession of over-the-counter medication for use by the pupil for medical purposes or medication prescribed for the pupil by a physician (CA Ed Code § 48915 (a)(1)(C))
- Robbery or extortion (CA Ed Code § 48915 (a)(1)(D))
- Assault or battery, as defined in Sections 240 and 242 of the Penal Code, upon any school employee (CA Ed Code § 48915 (a)(1)(E))

A student shall be immediately suspended and thereafter recommended for expulsion, upon a finding by the Executive Director or the Executive Director’s designee that such student has committed any of the following acts at school or at a school activity off school grounds:<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Enumerated acts are copied from CA. Ed Code § 48915(a).

<sup>126</sup> Enumerated acts are copied from CA. Ed Code § 48915(c).

- Possessing, selling, or otherwise furnishing a firearm. This subdivision does not apply to an act of possessing a firearm if the pupil had obtained prior written permission to possess the firearm from a certificated school employee, which is concurred in by the Executive Director or the designee of the Executive Director's designee. This subdivision applies to an act of possessing a firearm only if the possession is verified by an employee of a school district. The act of possessing an imitation firearm, as defined in subdivision (m) of Section 48900, is not an offense for which suspension or expulsion is mandatory pursuant to this subdivision and subdivision (d), but it is an offense for which suspension, or expulsion pursuant to subdivision (e), may be imposed. (CA Ed Code § 48915 (c)(1))
- Brandishing a knife at another person. (CA Ed Code § 48915 (c)(2))
- Unlawfully selling a controlled substance listed in Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 11053) of Division 10 of the Health and Safety Code (CA Ed Code § 48915 (c)(3))
- Committing or attempting to commit a sexual assault as defined in subdivision (n) of Section 48900 or committing a sexual battery as defined in subdivision (n) of Section 48900 (CA Ed Code § 48915 (c)(4))
- Possession of an explosive (CA Ed Code § 48915 (c)(5))

Students committing an act listed immediately above, requiring mandatory expulsion recommendation by law, shall be referred to a program of study that meets all of the following conditions:

- Is appropriately prepared to accommodate pupils who exhibit discipline problems
- Is not provided at a comprehensive middle, junior, or senior high school, or at any elementary school
- Is not housed at the school site attended by the pupil at the time of suspension (CA Ed Code § 48915 (d))

## Suspension Procedures

Unless otherwise specified by law, the Executive Director or the Executive Director's designee shall have the discretion to suspend students in violation of the enumerated acts listed above. Prior to the effectiveness of an expulsion or suspension, a student's parents will be notified. Parents shall have the opportunity to appeal suspensions and expulsions. Suspended students, whether in-school or out of school, will be provided with instructional materials missed while serving a suspension. In order to provide adequate notice and consultation with parents, suspension determinations will proceed under the following three step protocol.

1. **Parent Conference:** Prior to a student's suspension, the Executive Director shall confer with the student's parents to discuss the student behavior leading to suspension. The Executive Director may suspend students prior to a parent conference if such student poses and clear and present danger to the lives, safety or health of the student, other students, or school personnel. In such case, parents shall be notified as soon and a conference will be held as soon as practicable.
2. **Determination of Suspension Length and Placement:** The Executive Director or the Executive Director's designee shall have the discretion to determine the length and

placement of suspensions based on the circumstances surrounded the student act triggering suspension consideration. Severity of the offense, impact on school community, and student behavioral history will be considered when determining the length and location of suspension. In order to support student learning and maintain student's connection to the school community, every effort will be made to provide for in-school suspension rather than at home suspension. In school suspension may be served within a student's general classroom or, if the general classroom setting is not appropriate under the circumstances, in a separate space with constant supervision and support from a member of the instructional team.

3. **Notice of Suspension:** Upon a determination of suspension by the Executive Director or the Executive Director's designee, a student's parents shall be notified of the suspension decision and its terms either in-person or via telephone, with translation to home language if needed. Formal written notice of the suspension will follow initial in-person or telephone notice. Formal notice will include the reason for suspension, length of suspension, and the date and time at which student may return to school.

Except in the case of a suspension that is extended pending an expulsion, a student shall not be suspended for more than twenty school days in a school year. In the case of an extended suspension due to expulsion recommendation, Invictus Academy will be responsible for student's interim school placement pending the completion of expulsion proceedings.

### **Expulsion Procedures**

A student whose actions are subject to suspension will be recommended for extension to expulsion if the Executive Director determines that:

- Other means of correction are not feasible, or have repeatedly failed to bring about proper student conduct; and/or
- Due to the nature of the violation, the presence of the student causes a continuing danger to the physical safety of the student or others.

Students recommend for expulsion are entitled to a hearing within thirty days of an expulsion recommendation. The Board ultimately determines whether expulsion is appropriate in light of a student's action and recommendation from the Executive Director. The Board will preside over expulsion hearings. Unless requested by the student subject to expulsion, expulsion hearings shall be conducted in closed session meetings of the Board. Students and their parents will be provided written notice at least ten calendar days prior to any expulsion hearing. Such notice of expulsion hearing shall include the following:

- Date, time and location of hearing
- Statement of specific facts, charges and offense upon which the proposed expulsion is based
- Copy of disciplinary rules that relate to the alleged violation;
- Opportunity for the student and student's parents to appear in person at the hearing
- Opportunity for the student to be represented by legal counsel

- Right of the student to examine and acquire documents to be used by the Board at the hearing
- Opportunity to cross-examine all witnesses that testify at the hearing
- Opportunity to present evidence and witnesses on student's behalf.

Upon determination of expulsion by the Board, within 24 hours, written notice will be provided to the parents of an expelled student. Such notice will include:

- Statement of specific offense committed by the student for any acts listed in "Reasons for Suspension and/or Expulsion"
- Reinstatement eligibility review date
- Type of educational placement during period of expulsion
- Notice of appeal rights and procedures

The school will coordinate with an expelled student's district of residence, county and/or private schools to assist with appropriate educational placement. Incidences of violent and/or serious student behavior will be communicated to the district/school to which the student matriculates post-expulsion.

In the event that the Board rejects the recommendation of expulsion, the student will remain enrolled in and return to regular classes at Invictus Academy.

### **Appeal of Suspension or Expulsion**

Students have the right to appeal suspension and expulsion decisions made by the school.

Parents will be notified prior to the enactment of a suspension. Thereafter, within the term of suspension, parents may request an appeal to the Executive Director, which such appeal shall be heard within five (5) days of notification of suspension. Following due consideration, the Executive Director's decision will be considered final. Appealing parents will be notified of final decisions.

Expulsion appeals must be made within fifteen (15) business days of the Board's written decision to expel. Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Executive Director and sent via U.S. Postal Service or delivered by hand to the school. Appeal hearings will be convened within 20 business days of the school's receipt of an appeal request, until which time students shall be considered suspended. Parents must be present at appeal hearings to present the student's appeal. The student may be represented by legal counsel or a non-attorney advisor.

Expulsion appeals will be heard by an expulsion appeal panel, consisting of three (3) certificated members who will not be employees of Invictus Academy or members of the Board. Panel members shall be impartial and not have participated in the original expulsion decision. The panel will be chosen by the Chair of the Board.

Review during appeal hearings shall be limited to a determination of whether the student was provided due process throughout the expulsion process. A student who successfully appeals an

expulsion decision will be immediately reinstated as student at Invictus Academy. Within three (3) days of an appeal decision, written notice will be sent to the parents of a student who is unsuccessful in appealing an expulsion decision, including reasons for denial.

Decisions made by the appeal panel are final.

The Charter School shall maintain records of all student suspensions and expulsions at the Charter School. Such records shall be made available to the authorizer upon request.

### **Suspension and Expulsion of Students with Disabilities**

Invictus Academy would immediately notify the SELPA upon suspension or expulsion for a student with an identified disability. The student's service during the suspension, should they be suspended for more than ten school days in a school year shall continue to receive services. Within ten (10) school days of a recommendation for expulsion, the Charter School, the parent, and relevant members of the IEP/504 Team shall review all relevant information in the student's file, including the child's IEP/504 Plan, any teacher observations, and any relevant information provided by the parents to determine: (1) If the conduct in question was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to, the child's disability; (2) If the conduct in question was the direct result of the local educational agency's failure to implement the IEP/504 Plan. If either is applicable, the conduct shall be determined to be a manifestation of the child's disability. If determined that the conduct was a manifestation of the child's disability, the IEP/504 Team shall: assess, implement a behavioral intervention plan, OR review the existing behavioral intervention plan and modify it.

If determined that the behavior was not a manifestation of the student's disability and that the conduct in question was not a result of the failure to implement the IEP/504 Plan, then the Charter School may apply the relevant disciplinary procedures to children with disabilities in the same manner and for the same duration as the procedures would be applied to students without disabilities.

### **Due Process Appeals**

A parent may request an expedited administrative hearing by utilizing the dispute provisions of the 504 Policy and Procedures during which the student shall remain in the interim alternative educational setting pending the decision of the hearing officer or forty-five days, whichever occurs first, unless agreed otherwise.

### **Special Circumstances**

A student can be moved to an interim alternative educational setting (but not more than forty-five days) regardless of whether the student is charged with any of the following: a weapon at school, possesses/used/sold illegal drugs, or has inflicted serious bodily injury.

## **Interim Alternative Educational Setting**

The student's interim alternative educational setting shall be determined by the student's IEP/504 team.

## **Procedures for Students Not Yet Eligible for Special Education Services**

A student who has not been identified to be eligible for special education and related services and who has violated a code of student conduct may assert the procedural safeguards if the Charter School had knowledge that the student was disabled before the behavior occurred. Knowledge on the part of the Charter School includes:

1. The parent/guardian has expressed concern in writing, or orally, to supervisory or administrative personnel of the Charter School that the child is in need of special education and related services.
2. The parent/guardian has requested a special education evaluation of the child.
3. The student is in the process of being assessed for special education.
4. The student has a section 504 plan.
5. A teacher of the student, or other personnel of the LEA, expressed specific concerns about a pattern of behavior demonstrated by the child to the director of special education of the Charter School or to other supervisory personnel of the Charter School.

The Charter School shall not be deemed to have knowledge that the student had a disability if the parent/guardian has not allowed an evaluation, refused services, or if the student has been evaluated and determined to not be eligible.

## **Element 11: Employee Benefit**

**“The manner by which staff members of the charter schools will be covered by the State Teachers' Retirement System, the Public Employees' Retirement System, or federal social security.”**

- **California Education Code Section 47605 (b)(5)(K)**

All employees of Invictus Academy of Richmond (“Invictus Academy”) will be eligible for a 403b account. Employees will contribute at any rate and the school will match up to 6% in Year 1 and 8% thereafter. The Director of Operations, with the support of a back office provider, will ensure that appropriate arrangements for the coverage have been made. Invictus Academy will make all employer contributions as required. Invictus Academy will also make contributions for workers' compensation insurance, unemployment insurance and any other payroll obligations of an employer.

Invictus Academy will not participate in STRS or PERS.

### **Certificated Staff Members**

All full-time certificated staff members will be covered by Social Security and the 403b plan described above.

### **Classified Staff Members**

All full-time classified staff members will be covered by Social Security and the 403b plan described above.

### **Other Staff Members**

All other full-time staff members will be covered by Social Security and the 403b plan described above.

## **Element 12: Pupil School Attendance Alternatives**

**“The public school attendance alternatives for pupils residing within The Charter School district who choose not to attend charter schools.”**

**-California Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(L)**

Invictus Academy of Richmond (“Invictus Academy”) is a "school of choice," and The Charter School recognizes that pupil attendance is voluntary and no pupil shall be required to attend Invictus Academy. Students who opt not to attend The Charter School may attend other district schools in accordance with existing enrollment and transfer policies of their district or county of residence. The parent or guardian of each student enrolled in The Charter School will be notified that their student shall have no right to admission in a particular school of any local educational agency (or program of any local educational agency) as a consequence of enrollment in The Charter School, except to the extent that such a right is extended by the local educational agency.

### **Element 13: Rights of District Employees**

**“A description of the rights of any employee of The Charter School district upon leaving the employment of The Charter School district to work in a charter school, and of any rights of return to The Charter School district after employment at a charter school.”**

**- California Education Code Section 47605(b) (5) (M)**

No employee shall be required to work at Invictus Academy of Richmond; the Charter School is a school of choice for employment. Employees of the District who choose to leave the employment of the District to work at Charter School shall have no automatic rights of return to the District after employment at Charter School unless specifically granted by the District through a leave of absence or other agreement or policy of the District as aligned with the collective bargaining agreements of the District. Leave and return rights for District union-represented employees and former employees who accept employment with Charter School will be administered in accordance with applicable collective bargaining agreements and any applicable judicial rulings.

## **Element 14: Mandatory Dispute Resolution**

**The procedures to be followed by the charter school and the entity granting the charter to resolve disputes relating to provisions of the charter.**

**- California Education Code Section 47605(b) (5) (N)**

Invictus Academy of Richmond (“Invictus Academy”) is committed to working with the District in a spirit of cooperation. Matters unable to be resolved by the District Superintendent or designee and Invictus Academy will be referred to a mutually agreed upon legally licensed mediator at standard cost. Any costs and fees other than attorney fees associated with the mediation shall be shared equally by the parties.

The staff and Governing Board members of Invictus Academy agree to attempt to resolve all disputes between the District and Invictus Academy regarding this charter pursuant to the terms of this section. Both will refrain from public commentary regarding any disputes until the matter has progressed through the dispute resolution process.

Any controversy or claim arising out of or relating to the charter agreement between the District and Invictus Academy, except any controversy or claim that in any way related to revocation of this charter, shall be handled first through an informal process in accordance with the procedures set forth below.

(1) Any controversy or claim arising out of or relating to the charter agreement, except any controversy or claim that in any way related to revocation of this charter, must be put in writing ("Written Notification") by the party asserting the existence of such dispute. The Written Notification must identify the nature of the dispute and all supporting facts known to the party giving the Written Notification. The Written Notification may be tendered by personal delivery, by facsimile, or by certified mail. The Written Notification shall be deemed received (a) if personally delivered, upon date of delivery to the address of the person to receive such notice if delivered by 5:00 PM or otherwise on the business day following personal delivery; (b) if by facsimile, upon electronic confirmation of receipt; or (c) if by mail, two (2) business days after deposit in the U.S. Mail. All written notices shall be addressed as follows:

To School, c/ o Executive Director:  
Invictus Academy  
141 Bayside Ct.  
Richmond, CA 94804

Mr. Matt Duffy  
1108 Bissell Ave.  
Richmond, CA 94801

(2) A written response ("Written Response") shall be tendered to the party providing the Written Notification within twenty (20) business days from the date of receipt of the Written Notification. The Written Response shall state the responding party's position on all issues stated in the Written Notification and set forth all fact which the responding party believes supports its position. The

Written Response may be tendered by personal delivery, by facsimile, or by certified mail. The Written Response shall be deemed received (a) if personally delivered, upon date of delivery to the address of the person to receive such notice if delivered by 5:00pm, or otherwise on the business day following personal delivery; (b) if by facsimile, upon electronic confirmation of receipt; or (c) if by mail, two (2) business days after deposit in the U.S. Mail. The parties agree to schedule a conference to discuss the claim or controversy ("Issue Conference"). The Issue Conference shall take place within fifteen (15) business days from the date the Written Response is received by the other party.

(3) If the controversy, claim, or dispute is not resolved by mutual agreement at the Issue Conference, then either party may request that the matter be resolved by mediation. Each party shall bear its own costs and expenses associated with the mediation. The mediator's fees and the administrative fees of the mediation shall be shared equally among the parties. Mediation proceedings shall commence within 60 days from the date of the Issue Conference. The parties shall mutually agree upon the selection of a mediator to resolve the controversy or claim at dispute. If no agreement on a mediator is reached within 30 days after a request to mediate, the parties will use the processes and procedures of the American Arbitration Association ("AAA") to have a mediator appointed.

(4) If the mediation is not successful, the parties agree that each party has exhausted its administrative remedies and shall have any such recourse available by law.

## **Element 15: Closure Procedures**

**A description of the procedures to be used if the charter school closes. The procedures shall ensure a final audit of The Charter School to determine the disposition of all assets and liabilities of the charter school, including plans for disposing of any net assets and for the maintenance and transfer of pupil records.**

**- California Education Code Section 47604(b) (5) (P)**

In the event that The Charter School closes and does not continue operating under this charter or a different charter, the following procedures, which are adapted from the procedures recommended by the California Department of Education ("CDE"), shall be utilized to ensure a final audit of The Charter School to determine the disposition of all assets and liabilities of The Charter School, including plans for disposing any net assets and for the maintenance and transfer of pupil records.

### **Documentation of Closure Action**

The decision to close The Charter School for any reason will be documented by an official action of the Invictus Academy Board of Directors. The action will identify the reason for The Charter School's closure (i.e. whether the charter was revoked, not renewed or closed voluntarily) and the effective date of the closure, and an entity and person or persons responsible for closure-related activities.

### **Notification to the California Department of Education**

Notification will be given to the Charter Schools Unit at the CDE and to the County Office of Education. The notification will include the following information: pupils' school districts of residence; and the manner in which parents/guardians may obtain copies of pupil records, including specific information on completed courses and credits that meet graduation requirements.

The Board will ensure that the notification to the parents and students of The Charter Schools of the closure provides information to assist parents and students in locating suitable alternative programs. This notice will be provided promptly following the Board's decision to close the charter.

The Board will also develop a list of pupils in each grade level and the classes they have completed, together with information on the pupils' districts of residence, which they will provide to the entity responsible for closure-related activities.

### **Notification to Receiving Districts**

In the event that any students reside outside the District, The Charter School will notify each school district that is responsible for providing education services so that the receiving district may assist in facilitating student transfers.

## **Student and School Records Transfer**

The Charter School will facilitate the timely transfer of student records to each student's district of eligibility or school to which the student will transfer. All transfers of student records will be made in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERP A") 20 U.S.C. § 1232g. The Charter School will ask the District to store original records of The Charter School's students. All records of The Charter School shall be transferred to the District upon School closure. The Charter School and the District will assist parents in the transfer of their students to other appropriate schools. In the event that The Charter School is unable to transfer student records for any reason, The Charter School will maintain them in a safe and secure location and will provide authorized District employees with access to these records. The Charter School will maintain all school records, including financial and attendance records, for a reasonable period after The Charter School closure.

All state assessment results, special education records, and personnel records will be transferred to and maintained by the entity responsible for closure-related activities in accordance with applicable law.

## **Financial Close Out**

Invictus Academy of Richmond ("Invictus Academy") will have an independent audit completed within six months after the closure of The Charter School. This may coincide with the regular annual audit of Invictus Academy. The purpose of the audit is to determine the net assets or net liabilities of The Charter School. The final audit will include an accounting of all The Charter School's financial assets, including cash and accounts receivable and an inventory of property, equipment, and other items of material value, an accounting of the liabilities, including accounts payable and any reduction in apportionments as a result of audit findings or other investigations, loans, and unpaid staff compensation, and an assessment of the disposition of any restricted funds received by or due to The Charter School. The cost of the audit will be considered a liability of The Charter School.

In addition to this final audit, The Charter School will also submit any required year-end financial reports to the CDE and the District in the form and time frame required, pursuant to Education Code section 47604.33. These reports will be submitted as soon as possible after the closure action, but no later than the required deadline for reporting for the fiscal year.

## **Dissolution of Assets**

On closure of The Charter School, all assets of The Charter School, including but not limited to all leaseholds, personal property, intellectual property and all ADA apportionments and other revenues generated by students attending The Charter School, remain the sole property of Aspire and upon the dissolution of the non-profit public benefit corporation shall be distributed in accordance with the Articles of Incorporation. The distribution shall include return of any grant funds and restricted categorical funds to their source in accordance with the terms of the grant or state and federal law, as appropriate, which may include submission of final expenditure reports for entitlement grants and the filing of any required Final Expenditure Reports and Final

Performance Reports, as well as the return of any donated materials and property in accordance with any conditions established when the donation of such materials or property was accepted. On closure, Invictus Academy shall remain solely responsible for all liabilities arising from the operation of The Charter School.

As The Charter School is operated by a non-profit public benefit corporation, should the corporation dissolve, the Board will follow the procedures set forth in the California Corporations Code for the dissolution of a non-profit public benefit corporation and file all necessary filings with the appropriate state and federal agencies.

Invictus Academy will utilize The Charter School's reserve fund to undertake any expenses associated with the closure procedures identified above.

## Miscellaneous Elements

### Budget and Financial Reporting

**“The petitioner or petitioners shall also be required to provide financial statements that include a proposed first year operational budget, including startup costs, and cash flow and financial projections for the first three years of operation.” - California Education Code §47605 (g)**

### Budget Narrative

The attached budget and cash flow projections are based on estimates of the actual revenue and costs to implement Invictus Academy of Richmond (“Invictus Academy” or the Charter School) as described in this Petition. Invictus Academy engaged EdTec to advise and consult in the development of accurately projected Revenues, Expenses, and Cash Flow.

EdTec is a social venture founded in 2001 to develop, support and advance quality charter schools. EdTec has built an excellent reputation throughout California with charter schools and their authorizers for providing the highest quality business services and operations support. EdTec’s team provides expertise and support to over 350 charter schools across a comprehensive range of services.

The narrative describes the assumptions on which this budget is based. The budget reflects a positive operating income in all years, with a fund balance of at least 5% in all years, growing to 16% of expenses by year five.

### Demographics

Invictus Academy will open in the 2018-19 school year with 128 students in 7<sup>th</sup> grade, growing one grade per year until reaching scale when grades 7-12 are filled in 2023-24. While Invictus Academy plans to backfill enrollment to maintain class size, for conservative budgeting, attrition is built in for the matriculating grades within the middle school and high school levels, as shown in **Figure 46** below.

**Figure 46. Invictus Academy Enrollment by Grade, with Attrition**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Enrollment</b>
7 <sup>th</sup>	128
8 <sup>th</sup>	126
9 <sup>th</sup>	128
10 <sup>th</sup>	124
11 <sup>th</sup>	120
12 <sup>th</sup>	116
<b>Total Enrolled</b>	<b>742</b>

The attendance rate is assumed to be 95%.

Based on the demographics of schools in Invictus Academy’s target neighborhood, we assume the following demographics.

- 35% English Learner
- 80% Free & Reduced Lunch qualifying
- 85% Unduplicated Percentage

## Revenues

Local Control Funding has been calculated using the FCMAT calculator released after the Governor’s January 2017 Budget. The calculator file is available on request. Major assumptions include:

- Enrollment and ADA as outlined above.
- 74.33% unduplicated in all years assumed for Concentration Grant, based on West Contra Costa Unified demographics.
- In order to calculate the floor rate, data was used from West Contra Costa Unified School District.
- COLA percentages for 2017-18 through 2019-20 are based on the Governor’s Budget and the most recently released FCMAT calculator. LCFF would be fully completed as planned in 2020-21. After 2020-21, funding rates assume a 1% annual increase.

Because Invictus Academy’s unduplicated percentage is projected to be above the district average, the LCFF rates for comparable grade levels are projected to be the above the district.

Given the above assumptions, the funding rates used for each year are as follows:

**Figure 47. Funding Rates**

	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
COLA	2.40%	2.53%	2.66%	1.00%	1.00%
Funding Rate	9,654	9,887	10,907	11,016	11,126
Implementation	53.85%	68.94%	100.00%	--	--

Of the above LCFF rate, 29.79% of the revenues would come from In-Lieu of Property Tax, based on Invictus Academy’s projected ratio of Target Base to Target Entitlement. Invictus Academy’s calculation is based on West Contra Costa Unified District’s In-Lieu of Property Tax rate. Invictus Academy would also receive \$200 per ADA of funding through the Education Protection Account and the remaining LCFF funds would come from State Aid.

Invictus Academy has budgeted for Child Nutrition using 2016-17 reimbursement rates and 2% inflation. To be conservative, Invictus Academy is assuming that 13% of prepared meals are unconsumed, resulting in a 6% overall loss on the food service program.

Invictus Academy expects to receive Title I funding at a rate of \$445 per eligible student and Title II funding at \$17 per eligible student. The budget includes Title III funding beginning in year four, when Invictus Academy's English Learner population would enable the school to qualify for funding on its own without joining a consortium. The expected funding rate for Title III is \$100 per eligible student.

Invictus Academy will not receive facilities funding, as the school plans to locate in a Prop 39 facility.

The Charter School also has budgeted for state lottery revenue. These funds do not begin to arrive until year 2 (year 1 funds are accrued). This has been budgeted at \$189/ADA in 2018-19, which is based on the 2016-17 School Fiscal Services rates.

Invictus Academy has secured \$200,000 in grant money from Silicon Schools Fund (See **Appendix 3: Letters of Support**). This is reflected as \$150,000 in the startup period and \$50,000 in year one. Invictus Academy is evaluating other grant opportunities, none of which are currently included in the budget. Should additional grants materialize, Invictus Academy would add additional expenses associated with the grants. Additionally, Invictus Academy would qualify for the Charter School Startup Grant program, but it is not included in the petition budget.

## **Expenses**

### **Staffing and Benefits**

Staffing – All salaries grow at 3% per year. All salaries listed in this section are in real 2018 dollars.

#### **Certificated**

Invictus Academy will open with seven core teachers in year one, adding seven teachers each year until reaching scale. In addition, a part-time debate teacher is added in year three, transitioning to a full-time debate teacher in year four. The average salary for teachers is \$54,000.

Invictus Academy will open with one Dean of Students (\$60,000). In year two, a Dean of Curriculum and Instruction (\$60,000) is added. In year three, a second Dean of Students and second Dean of Curriculum and Instruction are added. In year four, a third Dean of Curriculum and Instruction is added.

The Charter School will open with one Executive Director. The salary for this position is set at \$51,999 in year one, such that the Executive Director is making less than the lowest paid teacher. This rate reflects Invictus Academy's prioritization of recruitment of strong teachers in startup and mutual agreement between the proposed Board of Directors and proposed Executive Director. The salary for this position increases to \$110,000 in year three.

### **Classified**

Invictus Academy will open with one Director of Operations (\$55,000) and one Office Clerk (\$45,000). A second Director of Operations is added in year five, and a second Office Clerk is added in year three. Additional operational support positions are added as the school scales to ensure staffing to support lunch, security, and other campus operations.

A College and Social Emotional Counselor (\$54,000) is added in year three. A second Counselor is added in year five. A Parent Liaison (\$20,000) is added in year two.

### **Benefits**

It is assumed that all eligible employees will participate in a 403B Plan and pay into social security. Employer contribution is set at 6% in year one, increasing to 8% after the first year.

Invictus Academy will offer health insurance to all full time employees. Assumed rate is \$8,000 in 2018-19 for each employee participating and increasing by 9.5% annually thereafter. This amount would include health, dental, and vision.

Invictus Academy has also included employer contributions for Medicare, State Unemployment Insurance and Worker's Compensation.

### **Books and Supplies**

Unless otherwise noted, costs increase at 3% inflation.

The budget includes an allocation for approved textbooks and core curricula materials beginning at \$50/student, with the per student rate increasing annually. This assumes a mix of teacher-developed curriculum and consultant-developed curriculum. In year one, \$180 per student is budgeted for books and software, decreasing to \$125 per student in year two. This number is higher than the average spent by year one EdTec charter schools to include extra budget for software. An additional \$128 per student is included for other instructional materials and supplies.

The budget includes \$23 per student in custodial supplies, \$51 per student in office supplies, and \$87 per teacher in teacher supplies.

For classroom furniture, equipment, and supplies, the budget includes \$185 per new student with per student costs increasing at a rate exceeding inflation to account for more expensive furniture and equipment needs in the upper grades. Administrative furniture is budgeted at \$250 per full-time employee. For student computers, \$220 per new student is budgeted. For staff computers, \$668 per new teacher is budgeted, which will cover admin team computers as well. For document cameras and projectors, \$4,000 is budgeted annually.

The Charter School will arrange for an outside vendor to provide food service. Rates are based on Revolution Foods invoices plus inflation. The budget includes both revenues and expenses for these services at a small net cost to Invictus Academy, resulting in a 6% loss, as mentioned previously. An additional \$10 per student in other food, outside of the National School Lunch Program, is included.

### **Services and Operating Expenses**

Many of the Services and Operating expenses and cost rates were estimated by EdTec based on its experience doing back office services for over 350 California charter schools. As much as possible the rationale for the expenses is indicated in the notes column in the budget detail. Most expenses grow at 3% per year to account for inflation, while also increasing relative to the additional number of students and staff as the school grows.

### **Facilities**

Invictus Academy is planning to utilize a Prop 39 facility. Based on the Prop 39 rate of a current EdTec client in Richmond, plus 3% annual inflation, rent is assumed to be \$322 per student, or \$41,248 in year one.

The Charter School is separately budgeting for other facilities costs, including \$51 per student for utilities, \$41 per month for fire alarm monitoring, \$90 per student for building repairs and maintenance, \$306 per month for internet, \$42 per full-time employee for phone, and \$150 per student for contracted janitorial services, including grounds maintenance, pest control, and unscheduled maintenance.

### **Special Education**

The budget assumes that Invictus Academy operates as a School of the District with a Fair Share Contribution of \$822 per current year ADA, consistent with other schools in Richmond. Invictus Academy also ran a scenario in which the Charter School joined a SELPA and provided Special Education services through a mix of contracted employees and in-house staff. In this scenario, the revenue and fees associated with joining a SELPA are modeled based on the El Dorado County SELPA website. The operating budget remained solvent with a fund balance exceeding 5% in all years in this scenario. A copy of this budget can be found in **Appendix 8: Budget—Independent LEA**.

## Other

Invictus Academy will contract out with back office provider, such as EdTec, for support with budget development, financial management, accounting, payroll, accounts payable and attendance and board support. Fees are estimated based on a sliding scale percentage of revenue and are projected at \$60,250 in year one and gradually increasing to \$175,000 by year five. Invictus Academy has separately budgeted for its annual non-profit audit and tax filings, with a lower cost of \$5,000 in year one as the first audit will not occur until year two.

The Charter School has included the required 1% oversight payment to its charter authorizer and the interest payments associated with the CSFA Revolving Loan and potential receivable sales (see Cash Flow section).

The budget includes \$12,000 in year one and \$10,000 in years two and three for Building Excellent Schools Follow-On Support, and \$4,000 in year one for Mindful Life professional development, increasing at a rate exceeding inflation to account for staffing increases. An additional \$964 per full-time employee is allocated for other professional development opportunities, and \$60 per full-time employee is set aside for staff appreciation. For other consulting, \$204 per month is allocated. Contracted technology support is budgeted at \$153 per month. A copy machine lease is estimated at \$369 per full-time employee plus printing and reproduction costs of roughly \$340 per month. The student recruitment and marketing budget is set at \$5,000 in years one and two, increasing to \$10,000 in year three. In addition, \$2,040 is budgeted for other community engagement or marketing events.

For field trips, \$50 per student is allocated in year one, increasing to \$104 per student in year two. For student assessment (including NWEA MAP and SBAC), \$31 per student is budgeted. Student health services is budgeted at \$10 per month. Student Information System costs are estimated at \$11 per student.

The budget also includes \$5,100 for dues and licenses, \$8 per student for insurance, \$77 per month for banking fees, \$63 per full-time employee for fingerprinting, \$10,000 for legal fees, \$145 per full-time employee for payroll fees, and \$20 per student for postage and delivery.

In addition, Invictus Academy has included a Director's Contingency to be used for unanticipated expenses, such unanticipated facilities, Special Education, or legal costs. This is budgeted at \$20,000 in year one, growing proportionally as the school scales up employees.

## Start Up Expenses

The budget assumes \$90,492 for salaries and benefits for school leadership in the startup year. Additional expenses include \$1,500 for accounting and banking fees, \$3,000 for legal, \$2,000 for marketing, \$12,000 for BES Follow-on support, and \$210 in payroll fees.

## Cash Flow

The cash flow projection assumes that Property Tax payments are paid each month by the district, aside from the first two payments which would come in October 2018 and January 2019 through the special advance apportionment. Education Protection Account payments are disbursed quarterly.

Once authorized, Invictus Academy will apply for the California School Finance Authority Charter School Revolving Loan Fund. The Charter School has forecasted receipt of \$250,000 in principal in July 2018, and assumes a four-year payback period. In addition, due to unfavorable timing of revenues relative to expenses, receivable sales have been modeled in September 2019 and September 2020. September is a particularly challenging month for cash flow because all the start-up expenses for the upcoming school year have been incurred while the first major State Aid payment does not come until October. The Charter School has also budgeted interest expense for the loan and receivable sales. The interest expense was calculated based on current expectations for Revolving Loan Fund terms and the most recent receivable sales terms. In the unlikely case that the Charter School does not receive the Revolving Loan, the Charter School could sell additional receivables to finance operations.

Expenses have been allocated based on the experience of similar charter schools. Spending for books and supplies is heavier in July and August as the school purchases curriculum, technology and furniture.

## Facilities

**“The facilities to be utilized by the school. The description of the facilities to be used by WCCUSD shall specify where the school intends to locate.”**

**- California Education Code §47605 (g).**

Invictus Academy intends to locate within either the 94804 or 94801 zip code in West Contra Costa Unified School district, as detailed in **Element 1: Target Student Population**.

## Proposition 39 Facilities

Invictus Academy may seek the support of the West Contra Costa Unified School District in securing a district-owned facility through the annual presentation of a Proposition 39 request and/or under a separately negotiated long-term lease arrangement. It shall utilize California Building Standards Code compliant facilities in accordance with the Education Code Section 47610.

## Alternative Facilities

If Invictus Academy is not able to acquire a suitable facility through Proposition 39, Invictus Academy may seek to rent or purchase a facility. The Invictus Academy Board of Directors will seat a Facilities Search Team to evaluate options. Invictus Academy will draw upon the experience

of the team. Please see **Founding Team** for information on Board Member expertise in Facility Acquisition and Financing. Invictus Academy may apply for facilities financing assistance under the state’s Charter School Facilities Grant Program and/or state-administered Charter School Facilities Incentive Grants such as SB740, dependent upon eligibility determined by the school’s percentage of socio-economically disadvantaged students.

### Facility Requirements

Invictus Academy seeks to locate a facility that will maximize its mission and vision, providing a safe and nurturing learning environment for its students. Invictus Academy will require a single campus located within the boundaries of the District.

In it’s opening year, Invictus Academy’s facilities requirements include, but are not limited to, those shown below in **Figure 48**.

**Figure 48. Invictus Academy Facilities Needs**

Category	Space (square feet)
4 classrooms	10,240
3 offices	300
Bathrooms for boys, girls, and staff	600
Multi-purpose room	2,500
Staff room	750
<b>Total indoor space</b>	<b>14,390</b>
Outdoor space	One acre

### Facility Safety

As outlined in **Element 6: Health and Safety Procedures**, the charter shall comply with Education Code Section 47610 by either utilizing facilities that are compliant with the Field Act or facilities that are compliant with the State Building Code, including provisions for seismic safety. Please see **Element 6: Health and Safety Procedures** for all applicable assurances. In the event Invictus Academy does not secure a facility from WCCUSD, it shall secure a site and shall provide WCCUSD a Certificate of Occupancy and proper clearances, as applicable to Invictus Academy, no later than 30 days prior to the school’s opening date or by a date otherwise agreed to between the parties.

### Attendance Accounting

Invictus Academy will implement an attendance recording and accounting system to ensure contemporaneous record keeping that complies with state law.

### Reporting

Invictus Academy will provide reporting to WCCUSD as required by law including but not limited to the following: California Basic Educational Data System (CBEDS), actual Average Daily

Attendance reports, all financial reports required by Education Code Sections 47604.33 and 47605(m) and the School Accountability Report Card (SARC).

### **Potential Civil Liabilities**

**“Potential civil liability effects, if any, upon the school and upon the district.” - California Education Code Section 47605(g).**

Invictus Academy agrees to permit the district to inspect and receive copies of all records relating to the operation of the school, including financial, personnel, and pupil records. Pursuant to Education Code Section 47604.3, Invictus Academy shall promptly comply with all such reasonable written requests. The records of the School are public records under shall comply with the California Public Records Act. Invictus Academy agrees to and submit to the right of WCCUSD to make random visits and inspections in order to carry out its statutorily required oversight in accordance with Education Code Sections 47604.32 and 47607.

Invictus Academy shall be operated Invictus Academy Inc., a California nonprofit public benefit corporation. This corporation is organized and operated exclusively for charitable purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and California Revenue and Taxation Code Section 23701(d). Pursuant to Education Code Section 47604(c), an entity that grants a charter to Invictus Academy operated by a non-profit public benefit corporation shall not be liable for the debts or obligations of Invictus Academy or for claims arising from the performance of acts, errors or omissions by Invictus Academy if the authority has complied with all oversight responsibilities required by law. Invictus Academy shall work diligently to assist WCCUSD in meeting any and all oversight obligations under the law, including monthly meetings, reporting, or other District-requested protocol to ensure WCCUSD shall not be liable for the operation of Invictus Academy. The corporate bylaws of Invictus Academy shall provide for indemnification of Invictus Academy’s Board, officers, agents, and employees, and Invictus Academy will purchase general liability insurance, Board Members’ and Officer’s insurance, and fidelity bonding to secure against financial risks. As stated above, insurance amounts will be determined by recommendation of WCCUSD and Invictus Academy’s insurance company for schools of similar size, location, and student population. WCCUSD shall be named an additional insured on the general liability insurance of Invictus Academy. The Invictus Academy Board will institute appropriate risk management practices as discussed herein, including screening of employees, establishing codes of conduct for students, and dispute resolution.

### **Charter Term**

The term of this charter shall begin July 1, 2018 and expire five years thereafter on June 30, 2023, in accordance with WCCUSD policies. Renewal of the charter shall be in accordance with the standards set forth in the Education Code Section 47605. Invictus Academy must submit its renewal petition to the District no earlier than 270 days before the charter is due to expire unless otherwise agreed by the Office of Charter Schools.

## **Amendments**

Any amendments to this charter shall be made by mutual agreement of the Invictus Academy Board of Directors and the West Contra Costa Unified School District. Material revisions and amendments shall be made pursuant to the standards, criteria, and timelines in Education Code Section 47605.

## **Severability**

The terms of this charter are severable. In the event that any of the provisions are determined to be unenforceable or invalid for any reason, the remainder of the charter shall remain in effect, unless mutually agreed otherwise by the West Contra Costa Unified School District and the Invictus Academy Board of Directors. The District and Invictus Academy agree to meet to discuss and resolve any issues or differences relating to invalidated provisions in a timely, good faith fashion.