



North County Innovative High School

Re-Imagining Alternative Education

**North County Innovative High School
Charter School Prospectus**

Mission- With an emphasis on entrepreneurial skills, North County Innovative (NCI) will provide a highly personalized educational experience for non-traditional students in grades 9-12. With the expectation of excellence at every level, NCI boasts a caring and supportive school culture, rigorous academic discipline, high expectations, and personalized schedules and learning plans. NCI will equip students with the requisite academic, social emotional and life skills to be successful in college, career and life.

Vision- The vision of NCI is to provide a personalized learning experience that affords each and every student the opportunity to achieve their academic goals regardless of their previous preparation and background. To this end, NCI seeks to develop educators that are trained and skilled in best practices that enhance achievement for all students, especially those who have been traditionally underserved. NCI seeks to open a second location in North St. Louis City, North City Innovative (NCI-II), in the Greater Ville area either simultaneously, or no later than the 2023-2024 school year. NCI-II will service students in the 6th-12th grades.

Educational Philosophy- NCI is intent on implementing an academic program like no other in St. Louis. While remaining committed to serving non-traditional students who have historically attended C.A.S.A., NCI is also excited to recruit rising 9th grade students to a stimulating community that builds students' entrepreneurial mindsets, exposes them to diverse career experiences, and ultimately supports each student in finding a future path tailored to his/her interests and skills. NCI plans to fight against the idea that the school is a last resort, alternative school. This change requires a change in mindset that realizes all youths deserve a robust academic experience and real-world opportunities.

North County Innovative High School (NCI) is classified as an alternative school not because it is a discipline or last chance center, but because it provides another option for students for whom the traditional education system is not working. It is our belief that students should not be forced into a diminished school program because they are in need of a different school environment in order to succeed. This application proposes an alternative charter boarding school where non-traditional students in grades 9-12 make up a learning community that is fully functional, and eliminates the less than or the that'll do model. NCI reimagines, or dare we say, redefines alternative education. Students will participate in a method of learning and autonomy not traditionally seen in alternative schools. Students will not only have access to individualized instruction to ensure mastery and eliminate academic deficits, but will also access real world experiences through project based learning, service learning opportunities and internships that lead to certification upon graduation.

Our school will serve students within the boundaries of the Normandy Schools Collaborative. The residents of this area experience multiple challenges that impact students' educational experiences, with over 40% of children under the age of 18 living in poverty. Recent data indicates a 59% mobility rate, a statistic especially alarming when we remember that high mobility is the number one detriment to student learning (Hatti 2008). Educationally, the 2019 APR scores for Normandy Schools indicate only 15% of the district's students are proficient in reading and only 7% of students are proficient in math. More specifically, of the middle grade students (7th & 8th), 11% of students were proficient in reading, and



Re-Imagining Alternative Education

only 1.9% proficient in math. This means students are beginning their high school career several grade levels behind their peers in other districts.

Educational Program Overview

Innovative Program: With a foundation in entrepreneurship, the emphasis is on developing critical skills for success in many contexts, not simply starting a business. The Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship defines the entrepreneurial mindset as the set of attitudes, skills and behaviors that students need to succeed academically, personally and professionally. These include initiative and self-direction, risk taking, flexibility and adaptability, creativity and innovation, critical thinking and problem solving. To best prepare students for the changing modern day and future world, cultivation in these entrepreneurial skills is essential.

The following elements are central to the design of our program:

- We value **diversity** in our student body. We believe that one of the most powerful schooling options for all students is in diverse schools with a rich mixture of student backgrounds, cultures, languages and living experiences.
- We are a **small and safe school** with a strong community that knows and respects each other. Every student has meaningful relationships with their classmates as well as their teachers. Our teachers and school leaders take time to build authentic relationships with each of our students so that they are connected to the community.
- We create a **personalized experience** for our students. From the time they arrive at NCI, we start understanding their goals, aspirations, and dreams. We discuss with them what goals they have and then create a personalized learning plan (PLP) based on those goals. Their daily actions all drive towards getting them from where they are, to where they want to be. In the PLP, students, with guidance from their coaches and parents, set learning and personal growth goals, track progress, receive immediate feedback and are able to access all learning resources at any time. The PLP is designed to be a dynamic tool that students, families and teachers alike interact with on a daily basis to a student's progress towards his or her goals. With that information, students can focus their learning efforts every single day, taking personal responsibility for their own learning and success, and parents and teachers can offer support and coaching in the most appropriate ways.
- At NCI, students drive their own learning and develop habits of **"Self-Directed Learners"** ("SDL"), following an SDL cycle as they tackle the challenges they face in school every day. The SDL cycle that students learn and practice is based on these principles. It requires students to set learning goals (with their coach), create a plan for achieving those goals, execute against that plan, show what was learned, and finally reflect on the entire process to understand how it can be done better in the future.
- We are a **1:1 school**, and thoughtfully use computers and technology as tools that can support personalization, engagement with the world and information beyond the walls of our school.
- Our faculty serve as **mentors/coaches** who have a cohort of students with whom they meet weekly and individually, providing the support students need to achieve their goals. Mentors



Re-Imagining Alternative Education

serve as college counselors, coaches, family liaisons and advocates, ensuring our students are excelling inside and outside of the classroom every day.

- We have a **rigorous curriculum** that prepares our students with **the life skills, habits and character** to thrive at college and career. Our students are innovators, creators and problem-solvers.
- Recognizing that there is no single pedagogical strategy that will work best for a diverse range of learners, we employ a **range of instructional methods** that are considered best practices in the field and provide opportunities for all students to learn academic content at high levels of conceptual understanding.
- We use an **assessment system** that accurately measures students' knowledge or skills relative to standards and provides immediate, actionable feedback to teachers, students, and families, always with an eye towards where students are and where they need to go.
- We ensure there are **high-performing teachers** in every classroom, every day who deeply care about, and believe in, our students. Faculty receive extensive training, including training in cultural competence.

Year-Round Cycles: Crime increases and the achievement gap widens during the summer months (June-September.) During this time, young people are often unsupervised during the day, and many students receive no educational programming for months at a time. To combat this issue, NCI runs year-round, with 7 cycles of alternating school (~5 weeks) and intersession break (~2 weeks). NCI's winter and spring breaks align directly to those of the Normandy Schools (NSC), and both of our summer intersession breaks occur during NSC's traditional summer vacation.

Boarding: In collaboration with St. Vincent's Home for Children, the boarding program provides housing to students in need. The resident staff work hard to nurture students emotionally, socially and academically. While in boarding, youth receive individual, group, and family counseling as well as case management services. NCI envisions providing housing to all students, becoming a fully viable Boarding School.

Sample Student Schedule at Full Choice (11th & 12th grades)

8:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. Lindsey arrives for breakfast, grabs a bagel, and opens *The Great Gatsby*. She wants to annotate a few pages before meeting about feedback on her rhetorical analysis for English.

9:00 a.m. – 9:15 a.m. Lindsey has sent communication that identifies areas in her rhetorical analysis draft to review. Her ELA teacher thinks the quotations are apt, but that Lindsey's essay needs more textual analysis connecting them to her thesis. Together, they review an exemplar analysis from Summit's resources.

9:15 a.m. – 10:15 a.m. Lindsey has learned that she writes best in silence, so she heads to a quiet study area for her essay revisions. Referencing the exemplar resource and her completed paragraph outline (another Summit resource), Lindsey elaborates on her textual analysis.

10:15 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Sitting has made Lindsey antsy so she sends a message in Google Hangouts for class mates who have time to meet her in the Digital Media Lab. There, students explore and create with light, sound and dimensions using music and audiovisual recording and display technologies.



North County Innovative High School

Re-Imagining Alternative Education

11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Lindsey settles in the lounge, plugs in headphones, and begins watching a Brain Genie video on states of matter. She plays a practice game on Science Kids (“Identifying Solids, Liquids, and Gases”), referring to CK-12’s online textbook chapter (“States of Matter”) for help. Finally, she completes Summit’s Check for Understanding on Quizlet. Her progress is automatically shared with the teacher for Particle Behavior & the 3 Phases of Matter and Lindsey’s coach.

12:00 p.m. – 12:30 p.m. Lunch is chicken sandwiches and sweet potato fries.

At 12:25, Lindsey finds her coach in the cafeteria for a scheduled 20-minute check-in. They chat about her progress, especially in her Algebra 2 project where her group just missed a deadline. Her coach notes that Lindsey often saves her hardest subjects for last and warns that another missed deadline will result in a lowered level of choice.

12:45 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. As managing editor of the school’s social media account, Lindsey helps lead the club’s weekly meeting. It’s sunny, so everyone decides to work outside. Reporters pitch topics, and Lindsey helps them think through angles and interviews for the vignette.

1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. Lindsey and her Algebra 2 study group meet in the conference room. The module teacher joins to facilitate as Lindsey and her study group work on the project: How to Stop the Spread of Covid-19. The teacher stays in the conference room, occasionally asking questions that model quantitative thinking. About 30 minutes of this Project facilitation is independent, allowing the teacher time to email data updates to every family in her coaching pod.

2:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Pod Time builds on Lindsey’s holistic coursework about cliques. Lindsey’s coach adapts a mentor time lesson plan on inclusion from Summit, which culminates in a vision reflection. At the end of Pod Time, Lindsey gets this week’s Mentee Buddy Mission—have lunch with Le’Onna, a 9th grade pod mate who she doesn’t know very well yet.

3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Lindsey’s mom works late, so he stays after school to catch up on Growth Goals. She starts working through an ELA Focus Area that supports her Project: Rhetorical Devices: Figures of Speech. Using resources under each Objective, Lindsey makes Quizlet flashcards with definitions and examples for the terms “idiom,” “apostrophe,” “metonymy,” “synecdoche,” and “litotes.”

GOALS/OUTCOMES

Academic: NCI will open in the fall of 2022 with 125 9th and 10th grade students, adding students in the 9th grade each year thereafter until the enrollment capacity of 200. We will measure academic growth in literacy and mathematics through local assessments and NWEA (a nationally normed assessment). We will measure achievement of grade level standards through the Missouri End of Course Exams (EOC’s), beginning in 11th grade for our inaugural 9th grade class. Students enrolled for three or more years will score proficient or advanced on the state EOC test, with no performance gaps for subgroups.

Attendance: We aim to have a 90% average daily attendance rate. Students participating in the boarding program will help to ensure attendance goals are met.

Governance: NCI will be governed by an independent Board pursuant to Missouri state statute for charter public schools. Our Board will ensure that the faculty and staff successfully operate the school to fulfill our stated mission in ways that aligns to our stated values and beliefs.

Financial: NCI will work with a contracted organization to provide operational, financial and accounting services. NCI will develop a plan to become financially viable through public funds by our fifth year of



North County Innovative High School

Re-Imagining Alternative Education

operation. Leading indicators of financial sustainability will be: 30 days of cash on hand, positive cash flow, our debt-to-income ratio, and a positive fund balance.

Schools with Evidence of Impact: In addition to our current program, we have visited, researched and spoken directly with successful schools that implement other programs essential to our model: [C.A.S.A.](#), [Logos](#), [Monument Academy](#), [DeLaSalle](#), [St. Benedict's Preparatory School](#), [Summit Public Schools](#), [Boston Day & Evening](#), [Xceed Preparatory Academy](#), [Kairos Academies](#), [Wentzville School District](#), [USC Hybrid](#), [Chugach School District](#),

Founding Team Members

This initiative is “homegrown” by professionals excited to provide educational choice to families. All members of the Design Team have either worked, or are currently working in the Normandy Schools Collaborative. This team of educators are not only compassionate about making a difference, but are well versed in the needs of students and families in the community.

Design Team- Denitria Neil, Shirleas Washington, [Gloria Martin](#), [Susan McLean-Leigh](#), [Toni Cain](#), [Kisha Spencer](#), [Eric Brooks](#), [Kevin Boevers](#), [Rashad Sullivan](#), [Dustin Stockmann](#),

Executive Director/Founding Board

Denitria Neil - Founder/Executive Director- Denitria has been in education for 14 years, starting her career as a teacher at the Dwight McDaniels School of Christian Education. She has a vast knowledge of Student Services practices and has served in such capacities as Enrollment, Homeless Coordinator and Family Engagement Coordinator. She currently serves as the Coordinator of Alternative Learning for the Normandy Schools Collaborative.

Julia Burke- Julia is a retired school administrator who has served in the capacity of Area Coordinator for Special School District, and both Assistant Superintendent for Student Services and Associate Superintendent for Human Resources for the Hazelwood School District.

Tanya Carr- Tanya is the founder of Providence Consulting Agency, which specializes in servicing personal and commercial clients. Services include consumer financial advising, financial literacy training programs, small business development and Non Profit 501c3 implementation.

Steven Harmon- Steven is the Vice President of Human Resources for Affinia Healthcare. He is a licensed attorney and former police officer with the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department.

Ethan Leigh- Ethan is the Vice President of Finance at Launchcode, a nonprofit organization offering free technology education and job placement opportunities.

Kimberly McKenzie- Kimberly has more than 20 years of communications and public relations experience. She currently serves as the Director of Communications for the Ladue School District.

Katrina Wallace- Katrina is a highly effective Sales Professional with a strong and comprehensive background inclusive of Pulmonary and Allergy Biological Sales. Katrina is a certified Life Coach and has strong leadership, strategic planning and goal setting skills.

Shirleas Washington- Dr. Shirleas G. Washington, is a retired Executive Director of Student Services from the Kirkwood School District. Currently, she serves on the board of LaSalle Charter Middle School.