



Innovation Zone Plan

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Section 1: Innovation Zone Overview

Zone Mission and Vision

Mission

The Luminary Learning Network (LLN) brings together a group of diverse-by-design schools that are committed to providing unique and dynamic learning experiences for all students, including those historically underserved, while empowering teachers, leaders and community members as stewards of excellent schools that support the success of DPS as a collective.

Vision

By leveraging flexibility and the power of self-designed collaboration, the LLN will be a national proof-point for school-based decision making, differentiation in school support models, and excellent and equitable outcomes for students.

The LLN's unique governance structure, and the ways in which that structure specifically enables the organization to achieve the articulated mission and vision, are referenced in the [Zone Services](#) portion of this document.

Zone Common Interests and Theory of Action

Common Interests

The LLN is a diverse-by-design organization that was founded by educators, in service of educators. It remains committed to one critical common interest: achieving tangible academic and social-emotional success for all students by leveraging the leadership and governance of an independent organization and [its associated services and opportunities](#). LLN schools seek the coherence and service quality that comes with membership in the Zone that comes in pursuit of that common interest. The continuity of working with consistent and like-minded peer groups allows for deep relationship development and genuine support across all schools. The theory of action articulated below highlights the organization's shared belief system.

Zone Theory of Action

If schools are empowered to partner with parents, caregivers and the community in order to develop a vision for schooling that responds to the specific needs of their students AND

If schools are provided genuine flexibility to creatively, nimbly, and collaboratively actualize that vision AND

If schools are supported and overseen by an independent governance structure that holds schools accountable to both their articulated vision and to DPS priorities;

Then, schools will be able to:

- develop in students a lifelong love for learning;
- demonstrate a deep and specific commitment to equity, especially in service of student groups that have been underserved by historically oppressive systems;
- leverage resources strategically to support teacher growth and the school's ability to pursue its articulated vision;
- innovate on existing classroom practices and share lessons learned from those innovations;

And, in turn, achieve tangible academic and social-emotional success for all students.

Collective School Values

LLN schools are grounded in [six key, shared values](#). Each school commits to modeling these values in unique ways that respond to the needs of their specific communities.

- **Equity:** We dismantle oppressive systems that have resulted in inequitable access to opportunities and resources for our students, and in turn, build an inclusive and asset-minded system in which all students and staff members - especially those of color, are successful because they are known and celebrated.
- **Collaboration:** Our schools are stronger together. We facilitate cross-school learning and communication structures for our educators and leaders to support one another and grow in service of our students.
- **Distributed Leadership:** Decision-making at our schools is shared. Staff and community members are engaged in shaping the educational experience of students in our buildings. Empowering those closest to the students will enable program and leadership continuity.
- **Highly Effective Instruction and Student Support:** Our schools cultivate and offer highly effective and responsive instruction in support of specific student needs. We offer robust training and development that allows teachers and support staff to grow in their craft and deliver tangible improvements in student outcomes, inclusive of academic growth and social-emotional wellness.
- **Community Partnership:** Our schools are designed in collaboration with families and caregivers in response to the needs of our students. This approach will ensure that school goals are tied to the values of our communities.
- **Flexible Resourcing:** Our schools are nimble in hiring and allocating staff such that the specific needs of students are supported. Strategic external partnerships will strengthen our teams in support of our communities.

Zone Academic Goals

Three-Year Goals

DPS Board policy AB and this application direct schools and the LLN to utilize the state SPF as a benchmark for academic progress and a critical reference point for school improvement planning. The LLN is committed to achieving "Performance" (green) status for those schools not yet doing so on the

state SPF within three years. For those schools already achieving "Performance" status, the LLN commits to maintaining green status over the course of the three years.

Aligning to the goals set forth by DPS serves two purposes: 1) affirming once again that Zone schools are an important part of the DPS family; 2) providing a clear framework by which the greater DPS community can understand the impact of the Innovation Zone model.

Please reference school-specific innovation plans for more information on the goals established by each school.

Partnership with DPS

As a part of the DPS family, LLN schools are committed to the continued pursuit of Denver Public Schools' mission and vision. Zone schools are committed to working in partnership with the broader DPS community to support the District's ultimate goal of building an environment in which Every Learner Thrives.

Interim Goals

The LLN seeks to build an additional layer of accountability and transparency between review cycles via the Zone's data dashboard. The data dashboard is updated periodically throughout each school year, and tracks academic growth separate from those measures that would show up in the traditional State SPF. The dashboard serves as a critical point of reference for Zone staff to provide differentiated service to diverse-by-design schools based on the unique needs of each community, in line with the Zone's theory of action and mission. It is the Zone's hope and intention that the dashboard will also add important progress monitoring to the annual innovation data review required as part of the new Denver Classroom Teachers Association-DPS innovation memorandum of understanding. Components of the dashboard include:

- **Flexible school leader goals:** School leader voice is a critical component of shared accountability. At the beginning of the school year, each LLN school is asked to articulate 2-3 goals upon which they will be measured on an ongoing basis. These goals are often, though not always, focused on academic achievement. To give an idea on what these goals look like, consider a small sample of goals articulated for the SY22-23 school year across Zone schools:
 - Increasing the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations on CMAS in both literacy and math by 10% above current level (percentage varies by school)
 - Increasing the percentage of students of color on grade level in early literacy as measured by Istation to 70% by the end of SY23 (some schools chose to focus on different student subgroups)
- **Academic metrics:** LLN students should receive challenging, engaging instruction from a comprehensively strong school that allows the students to demonstrate mastery of standards. We must also acknowledge that brilliance will show up in our school, regardless of whether or not it is evident on an assessment. The academic category of the dashboard is focused on three key areas: 1) the ability to accelerate learning for students that are not yet meeting expectations; 2)

the ability to accelerate learning for students of color, multilingual learners, and learners with disabilities; and 3) utilizing best English Language Acquisition practices.

- **Students not yet meeting expectations:** In order to demonstrate progress (as opposed to high-stakes, point-in-time proficiency), schools will be measured on how many students improve performance bands between two sequential interim assessments. The scale of this metric is as follows:

0 - Needs Urgent Improvement	1 - Poor	2 - Ok	3 - Good
5+% growth in students below grade level	No reduction or minor growth (<5%) in students below grade level	1-24% reduction in students below in grade level	25+% reduction in students below grade level

- **Students that have historically been marginalized:** Using the same principle of student progress as noted above, schools will be measured on growth specific to students of color, multilingual learners, and students with disabilities. The scale of this metric is as follows:

0 - Needs Urgent Improvement	1 - Poor	2 - Ok	3 - Good
Percentage of students not yet on grade level for all three subgroups the same or growing	Percentage of students not yet on grade level for one of three subgroups shrinking	Percentage of students not yet on grade level for two of three subgroups shrinking	Percentage of students not yet on grade level for all three subgroups shrinking

- **English Language Acquisition best practices:** In order to leverage the [expertise](#) of the District’s Multilingual Education team, schools’ overall academic progress is reviewed alongside the [ELA Program Review](#), which ensures alignment to Consent Decree expectations and progress towards high-quality outcomes. The scale of this metric is as follows:

0 - Needs Urgent Improvement	1 - Poor	2 - Ok	3 - Good
ELA Program Review = "Does Not Meet"	ELA Program Review = "Approaching"	ELA Program Review = "Meets" but not a perfect score	Maximum ELA Program Review Score (26 for TNLI, 22 for non-TNLI)

In partnership with Denver Public Schools, the LLN is committed to continued progress monitoring on each of the goals stated above. The LLN believes in transparency and accountability in performance, as well as the importance of using data to drive strategic planning and instruction across each school and as a collective.

In accordance with the Zone's theory of action, the Zone seeks to support member schools in stimulating performance improvement by empowering schools to flexibly and creatively address gaps between current performance and the articulated vision. Schools will continue to utilize flexibilities - both tangible flexibilities in the form of waivers from District policy, as well as the intangible autonomy stemming from the charge to continue to innovate and deliver results for our students. Each LLN school plan details the specific autonomies that the school seeks in order to effectively implement its unique innovation plan. LLN staff provide thought partnership in how best to operationalize these flexibilities as needs and circumstances change at the school. For example, LLN staff may support a school in developing a supplemental compensation system that addresses in-school staffing needs and strategic priorities. Additionally, the LLN's ED and Board — as leaders and trustees of an independent not-for-profit — continue to advocate for and protect the LLN's autonomies. This allows school leaders to more strategically allocate their time, primarily by focusing on instructional leadership at their school but also, in some cases, representing the interests of the wider LLN school communities on the LLN's Board of Directors.

The Zone's theory of action also posits that, in order to achieve the desired outcomes, the Zone structure holds schools accountable to their articulated vision and to DPS priorities. Member schools of the LLN receive at least one formal school review each school year. The goal of the school review team - inclusive of LLN staff, peer school leaders from other DPS schools, and other individuals selected by the host school - is to produce a high-level analysis of strengths and growth opportunities, and recommend specific actions that will help school leadership drive towards success in implementing its innovation plan. Additionally, each school review contains a series of observations and stakeholder interviews that provide critical insight into how each school is actualizing the District's goals related to the [student experience](#), [the adult experience](#), and [the overall system experience](#). The analysis is produced with the following values-based practices and norms in mind:

Students First

Our school review process is meant to provide a useful lens on schools in support of their improvement for the benefit of students. Hence, we look for the key levers for change that will support growth, wellness and equity for all students in each school. In gathering and analyzing data for this process, we keep the academic and social-emotional needs of all students at the top of our minds.

We Find Solutions That Work For Our Communities

Our school review process can provide key information that schools need to make strong, strategic decisions for course correction. Given this, we are mindful that we are gathering and analyzing purposeful yet confidential data so that we deeply understand the values and needs of our communities, and enable schools to seek innovative solutions that will support students and families. We do this best by maintaining a culture of support when reviewing a school and reflecting deeply in a humble manner in order to seek what could be done better.

Together We Are Stronger

Our school review process is driven by a team approach. Because of this, our process is strongest when each member of the team fully engages in discussions yet remains cognizant that they have but one piece of the puzzle. Listening thoughtfully to the reports of others helps to put the entire puzzle together. We respect the confidentiality of interviews and observations, and we operate such that our school may grow and benefit from the collective brilliance of the group.

We Lead with Courage

Our school review process can only be done if we face the data we collect head on in a way that takes out any personal bias, but remains honest to our convictions. We are courageous in our reviews by keeping the needs of children in mind, while seeking the best way for our data to be heard and understood by those who educate them.

We Love What We Do

We take pride in our ability to contribute to the teams' recommendations, because we know that these recommendations will aid our ability to ensure unique and dynamic schools that support the success of the Luminary Learning Network and Denver Public Schools as a collective.

While each school (and its specific innovation plan) is unique by design, the LLN provides structured, collaborative opportunities for schools to leverage the collective brilliance found within each member school. As detailed above, collaboration is one of the key tenets of the theory of action. The diversity in approach and demographic makeup found in the Zone's current member schools serves to introduce an element of creativity and innovation into these shared structures. School leaders and, at times, teacher leaders that are members of the school's leadership team, meet at least twice per month: one meeting is centered on ensuring school alignment to DPS priorities/initiatives; the second is a longer meeting with a problem of practice protocol that allows schools to brainstorm how to best overcome a challenge related to an issue facing the school at that given time. See below for a sample of topics related to academic growth that LLN school leaders spent targeted time discussing with their peers:

- Language transitions across grade levels
- Differentiating coaching cycles to more effectively and efficiently meet teacher development needs
- Establishing a robust data process that drives towards high expectations
- Literacy- and math-specific curriculum development and implementation
- Strategies for improving the effectiveness of individual or small group learning time

These conversations are driven by the real-time needs of our unique communities, and are grounded in our shared organizational goals. The problem of practice protocol delivers meaningful feedback for our schools based on the expertise, diversity of thought, and relatively small size of our collective. LLN staff surveys LLN school leaders yearly to gauge the efficacy of these structures and alter as needed, thereby ensuring that Zone membership continues to serve as a powerful tool in meeting school and organization goals.

A key component of the Zone's theory of action is empowering the educators in member schools. The LLN's Teacher Advisory Council (TAC) provides one structure in which schools can ensure progress towards academic goals. The TAC includes representatives from every school, and meets monthly to help ensure teacher voice is represented in LLN initiatives, facilitate collaboration across schools, and deliver

professional development opportunities when possible. Though the demands of the pandemic - not to mention the demands of an average school year - have occasionally shifted the TAC's priorities and overall capacity, the 21-22 school year saw the TAC deliver a professional development session available for staff at all six LLN schools covering the following topics:

- Equity standards, resources, and strategies
- Trauma-informed practice
- Social-emotional learning systems and structures to help strengthen relationships
- Teacher self-care coming out of COVID-19

Though TAC membership can and does change year-to-year, establishing the professional development capacity of this body remains a priority for the LLN, all in service of ensuring that the professionals in front of our students are well supported.

Another way in which Zone membership supports academic progress is through coaching that is responsive to the unique, articulated need of each school leader. Following the 21-22 school year, 92% of surveyed LLN leaders agreed with the following prompt on the Executive Director's (ED) evaluation: "The Executive Director seeks to enhance the knowledge, skills, and abilities of LLN principals to meet the current and emerging needs of each campus."

Finally, the LLN provides data support to schools when needed in the form of school-based data repositories that allow schools to more effectively and efficiently use student data to devise teaching strategies.

Zone Admission Process

Our deep belief in the power of educator collaboration will guide our actions in welcoming new schools to the LLN. Any new school must have a clear learning model that promotes and demonstrates a strong commitment to our [shared organizational values](#). New member schools will be willing to share practices across the school and Zone and innovate practice to close opportunity gaps across race, class, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ability, and language.

The Innovation Schools Act requires that a local school board reviews and either approves or disapproves an innovation school zone within sixty days after receiving the plan. And, while Zones may develop their own timelines and process for evaluating whether to pursue zone expansion with a prospective school, the district process for zone expansion will ideally follow the below timeline:

1. Notification to DPS: No less than three weeks prior to the DPS zone expansion application due date, the LLN and school administration of the applying school are required to deliver a joint letter to DPS Authorizing and Accountability indicating an intent to submit a zone expansion application.
2. DPS Zone Expansion Authorizing Process: 60 days prior to the December Regular Board Meeting for the DPS Board (or the first business day following this date), the LLN and applying school will submit an application using a template developed by the district to DPS Authorizing & Accountability. If mutually agreed to in writing between the district and the LLN, the DPS Board will vote on applications at the January Regular Board Meeting, with the window for review extended beyond 60 days. Authorizing & Accountability will collaborate with the innovation zones to develop this application template so that it could possibly meet the evaluation needs of both

the district and the zones. Authorizing & Accountability will facilitate an application review process that will conclude with a consent vote at the applying school following the voting requirements stated in the Innovation Schools Act and Administrative Regulation ADE-R. DPS may adjust this timeline on an annual basis based on the needs of the district and the innovation zones, but will maintain the length of time between submission of the expansion application and the DPS Board vote, unless the district and the applying zone have mutually agreed in writing to extend this deadline.

3. **Vote by DPS Board:** At the DPS Board's Regular Board Meeting in December, the Board will vote on whether to approve or deny the expansion of the innovation zone to include the applying school. If approved, the admission of the new school to the Zone will be codified in the zone innovation plan at the time of the next zone plan review and codified in the school's innovation plan at the time of their next innovation plan review.

Zone Exit Process

In the unlikely event that there is a mismatch between the LLN and one of its member schools, it is prudent to have the proper mechanisms in place for a school to exit the Zone.

Pending review and approval from the District, including codification in an MOU, Professional Services Agreement, or equivalent document, the LLN proposes that schools must take four steps to exit the Zone and return to district-managed innovation status. Because budgeting and the school choice window for the upcoming school year begins in January, any decision to exit the Zone for the upcoming school year and the required associated actions must be made prior to the December LLN Board meeting.

1. **Notification to LLN Executive Director and Board:** No later than the scheduled December LLN Board meeting, the school administration is required to deliver a letter to the LLN Executive Director and Board detailing the reasons for the school choosing to exit the Zone. Neither the ED, nor the Board is required to take any official action on the letter, although they can partner with the school community to gather additional information from stakeholder groups including families, caregivers, and school staff.
2. **Notification to DPS:** Following notification to the LLN Executive Director and Board, the school administration is required to deliver a letter to DPS Authorizing and Accountability indicating a desire to participate in the consent vote process.
3. **Consent Vote:** Using the same requirements stated in the Innovation Schools Act and Administration Regulation ADE-R, district staff will support the formal voting process for teachers, administrators, and the Collaborative School Committee (CSC) or CSC-equivalent to exit the Zone. In alignment with the Act, exiting the Zone requires "Evidence that a majority of the administrators employed at the public school, a majority of the teachers employed at the public school, and a majority of the school advisory council for the public school consent." The vote will solely be to exit the Zone, no revisions to the school's individual innovation plan or waivers will be considered. If the consent vote results in the school leaving the Zone, only the school-based waivers included in the school's innovation plan will apply for the school, while the zone-specific waivers will not. The ED and Zone board cannot compel the school to remain in any way if the consent vote reaches the necessary threshold.
4. **Letter to Denver Public Schools Board:** No later than the scheduled January DPS Board meeting, the school administration is required to deliver a letter to the DPS Board detailing the reasons for

the school choosing to exit the Zone and the results of the staff vote. The DPS Board is not required to take any official action on the letter, but cannot compel the school to remain in any way if the consent vote has reached the necessary threshold.

Once both Boards have been alerted, the school will enter into a planning phase with Denver Public Schools personnel to facilitate their return to district-managed innovation status, which will take effect on July 1, the first day of the following school year. The LLN will offer support in this process where necessary.

Section 2: Innovation Zone Organization

Structure of Zone Organization

Zone Management

The LLN is responsible for providing oversight of schools in the Zone as codified in its [Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\)](#) with the DPS Board of Education. In summary, the Zone is responsible for eight primary [functions](#) in service of LLN schools, and in pursuit of the organization's mission and vision. These functions are continuously re-evaluated to ensure they are reflective of the needs of the organization and of the LLN's diverse-by-design member schools.

- **Talent Management:** The LLN will support the recruitment, retention, and onboarding of school leaders at LLN schools. Additionally, the LLN will provide thought partnership around succession planning, equitable hiring practices, and talent development.
- **Executive Coaching:** The LLN will provide or connect each Zone school to an executive coaching structure that upholds, improves, and empowers leadership at each of our campuses.
- **DPS Partnership:** The LLN will advocate and provide support for the operational needs of our schools with the DPS team, and will work to connect schools with DPS resources that will support the total wellness of students, families, and staff. In parallel, the LLN will share best practices and resources with DPS and other schools.
- **School Supports:** The LLN will utilize qualitative data (in the form of school reviews and collaborative community discussions) and quantitative data (in the form of a dashboard) to support thinking around how our schools operate and utilize flexibilities in support of academic and non-academic goals.
- **Non-profit Management:** The LLN will maintain in good standing the non-profit status of the organization, with specific attention paid to the organization's internal accounting, finance, human resources, and communications functions.
- **Community Board Governance:** The LLN will support the recruitment, training, and retention of community members to serve on the LLN Board.
- **Advocacy:** The LLN, with the support of partner organizations, will organize a communications strategy to help influence local and state policy and perception such that the voice of Zone educators and families, as well as the Zone structure itself remain viable on legal grounds, and in the court of public opinion.

- Sustainability:** The LLN will seek opportunities to ensure the financial and operational sustainability of the organization. Short-term, this includes a focus on the current review period. Longer-term, this work includes but is not limited to: adding schools to the Zone, negotiating a funding model that supports schools and the organization, and making effective and efficient staffing decisions.

Please see the table below for a list of the decision-making and responsible party for specific activities/processes across the organization:

Activity	LLN Board	LLN Staff	School Communities
Provide oversight to the operational activities of the organization	Responsible		
Hire and evaluate Executive Director for the organization	Responsible		Consulted
Hire staff for the organization	Consulted	Responsible	Consulted
Build accountability structures for staff re: organization performance	Responsible		Consulted
Provide functional and leadership expertise with a community voice lens	Responsible		
Determine which schools are in the Zone	Responsible for approving application to join and recommending for final approval by the DPS Board	Responsible for engaging and operationalizing	Consulted
Articulate Zone approach/functions in Zone Innovation Plan	Consulted	Responsible	Consulted
Hire and evaluate school leaders at LLN schools	Responsible for approving candidate to be recommended to Superintendent	Responsible for recommending candidate to Superintendent*	
Determine what school-level supports are needed for schools		Responsible	Responsible

Provide direct support to school leaders (e.g. thought partnership, school reviews)		Responsible	
Coordinate collaboration across schools		Responsible	Consulted
Determine the best course of action to accomplish goals laid out in school innovation plan		Consulted	Responsible
Advocate for student and school community needs	Responsible	Responsible	Responsible

**Note: the Superintendent retains the ability to conduct the final interview for recommended candidates, as well as the authority to make the final determination on hiring*

The MOU also details oversights for Zone schools that are shared between the LLN and DPS. An MOU, Professional Services Agreement, or equivalent document between the Denver Public Schools Board of Education and LLN Board will be entered into upon completion of the review.

Zone Staffing

The LLN seeks to provide a streamlined, multifunctional service center for schools through the structure of its staff - currently, this is inclusive of two positions:

- **Executive Director (ED)**: Reporting directly to the Luminary Learning Network Board of Directors, the ED is responsible for all aspects of the LLN's organizational health, including fulfillment of both schools' vision/mission, leading the LLN's strategic growth and other initiatives, overseeing sound budget process and rigorous academics, fundraising, development of the school's value-driven professional culture and, in partnership with each school leader, the achievement of the school's academic goals.
- **Senior Director of Innovation Initiatives and Programs (SDIIP)**: Reporting to the ED, the SDIIP provides multilayered support for both the LLN and LLN schools, including innovation plan assistance, advising on school operational concerns, and leadership on a variety of data initiatives. The varied functions carried out by the SDIIP are done so with the goal of adding capacity for school leaders so that they may have more time and attention to focus on achieving the goals stated in their innovation plans.

Zone staffing decisions are made in partnership with LLN school leaders and the LLN Board in pursuit of economies of scale and ensuring that schools can retain financial resources for school-based needs as top considerations.

School Leadership Support and Hiring

School Leader Support and Accountability

The LLN employs a strong coaching and evaluation model that supports the unique nature of each school's design. Coaching is conducted by an executive coach and/or by the ED based on the needs of each specific leader. This differentiated focus ensures that leaders have access to a coach who will build a deep understanding of the school's innovation plan, program design, curriculum, and staff. A small coaching caseload enables a deep level of familiarity with the school and school leader to produce better and more sustainable results. The LLN's ED and SDIIP will also provide coaching where appropriate and work closely with each school leader in order to ensure they meet all operational, management and compliance expectations. The goal of this blended approach is to provide direct, consistent professional guidance that benefits not only the school leader, but the entire school.

School leaders are encouraged to shape the support that they receive as a result of being Zone members. LLN leaders are given multiple opportunities throughout the school year, including direct feedback in 1:1 conversations and biannual surveys, to request adjustments to the specific supports offered by the Zone. Additionally, two school leaders participate as voting members of the LLN Board, ensuring school leader voice in the direction of the Zone as a whole.

Because school leaders in the LLN are still evaluated using the DPS LEAD rubric, the LLN's [LEAD evaluation calendar aligns with that of DPS](#). In addition, the LLN is deeply committed to continuous feedback and improvement. The primary evaluator for LEAD will be the LLN ED, as the ED serves in some functions similarly to a Collaborative Director and will have intimate knowledge of the work the school leader has done throughout the course of the school year. The ED will utilize both information gathered independently and provided by executive coaches (if applicable) to build the appropriate body of evidence, and provide digestible, actionable feedback.

The LLN Board will, with the support of the LLN ED, continuously monitor interim data for all schools. This data includes a summary of progress on early literacy and interim testing results in math and literacy where appropriate. As CMAS, MGP and state SPF data is published the ED shares the results with the Board, with a summary review for each campus. The role of the ED includes monitoring school progress towards their stated goals and ensuring that the LLN Board is aware when progress does not meet expectations. When a school is not making appropriate progress towards their stated goals or the overall academic goal of the LLN, the LLN Board and the LLN ED will work closely with the school leader to develop and execute a school improvement plan.

In the event that a performance improvement plan is needed, the ED will adhere to the steps outlined in [section 11-4 of the Denver School Leader Association Master Agreement](#). Any concerns of school leader misconduct will be reported to DPS in accordance with agreements with the district and any MOU, Professional Services Agreement, or equivalent document.

New School Leader Hiring

The selection of school leader candidates for LLN schools is done in partnership with unique school-based leadership committees, and in alignment with best practices as outlined in DPS's hiring process:

- Establish a School Principal Selection Advisory Committee (SPSAC) with diverse representation (parents, teachers, support staff, etc.)
 - SPSAC grounds in school’s mission, vision, and values, and innovation plan
- SPSAC determines plan for community engagement in determining desired candidate profile/hiring rubric, including outreach to be conducted in various formats (e.g. survey, interviews, forum) with translation services available when needed
- SPSAC collects and analyzes data produced during community engagement process
- SPSAC hosts community forum to allow candidates to share their qualifications and plans for the school with the public
- Committee reviews applicants against desired candidate qualities, and select final candidates to move forward with interviews
- Using the agreed-upon hiring rubric, SPSAC recommends candidate to move forward with one candidate
- The school’s Collaborative School Committee or equivalent body, the LLN ED, and the LLN Board vote to approve the recommended candidate
- The recommended candidate conducts a final interview with the District’s Superintendent
- The candidate is hired as an employee of Denver Public Schools, to be supervised by the LLN ED

Following the hire of a new school leader, that individual begins their coaching and reporting relationship with the LLN ED, in which the implications of being in a Zone structure are continued to be discussed in additional detail. The new hire is invited to participate in shared LLN collaborative structures which often involve discussion of issues germane to innovation zone schools specifically.

Zone Finances

Zone Funding Model

The LLN agrees to the funding model developed by the DPS Finance Team as outlined [here](#). The linked communication indicates that the model will remain in place for the LLN’s entire review period. In the event that the District requests significant changes to the funding model prior to the end of the Zone’s review period, the Zone reserves the right to provide feedback and engage in negotiation regarding the funding model, with changes subject to final approval by the District.

Funding Sources

LLN schools will annually allocate a small portion of their budget to cover the shared expenses of a small central administrative team. The amount of this fee - \$150 per pupil as of the 2023-2024 school year - is determined based on the ability of the Zone to be financially sustainable at full scale.

The Zone aspires to have 8-10 diverse-by-design member schools, though the pandemic and Innovation Pause and Reflect-related activities of the DPS Board have halted expansion efforts. The LLN currently benefits from philanthropic support to offset the cost of Zone operations. This helps keep the cost for Zone services lower for member schools until such time that Zone expansion is possible. The LLN does

not fundraise on behalf of its schools, but does, in some cases, support member schools with grant writing.

In the event of changes to operating practices of the Zone (e.g. the addition of schools, a reduction in services offered, etc.), the fee will be updated to reflect the expected service level to be provided to each school. The new fee will be voted on and approved by the LLN Board, which currently has two school leader representatives, and one teacher representative.

Usage of Funds

The formation of the LLN accelerates return on investment of public dollars by relying on a new funding formula that increases school-based financial autonomies, establishes opportunities for LLN schools to pool resources to achieve economies of scale, and maintains connectivity to DPS priorities and services. Specifically, the LLN accelerates return on investment by:

- Optimizing the performance of individual schools, in part through increased financial flexibilities. It is expected that Zone schools will continue to receive a modified student base budget allocation that enables them to support a streamlined service center and continue to direct more resources to the unique and strategic needs of the schools. By providing school communities increased flexibilities over their budgets, the Zone will ensure that per pupil dollars are invested with intention and in a manner that aligns directly with each school's instructional needs.
- Leveraging economies of scale for strategically selected services operated by the Zone's lean service center. By supporting a lean service center, Zone schools will also have the ability to pool resources and achieve economies of scale around distinct services aligned directly to their needs. Examples of shared services include professional development, instructional and leadership coaching or thought partnership, knowledge management, data analysis and coaching, and certain administrative supports such as UIP completion (these are only an example of services provided by the LLN admin team; depending on the needs of the schools that comprise the LLN, these services may change).
- Utilizing District-standardized services in instances when differentiation for LLN schools does not add substantive value, or participation in those services or programs is required by the district. By remaining interconnected with District services, the Zone will continue to leverage economies of scale for services that are less unique to the Zone schools and more able to be easily standardized at substantive scale. Examples include risk management, transportation services, food services, SPED, adherence to and compliance with the Consent Decree to best serve English Language Learners and other services outlined in an MOU, Professional Services Agreement, or equivalent document, most of which are areas where expectations and oversight do not differ for zone schools.

Zone Services

In alignment with the LLN's articulated mission, vision, and theory of action, see below for a summary of key supports provided by Zone staff to LLN member schools.

Task	Alignment to Mission, Vision, Theory of Action	Replacing District Service?*	Service Quality Maintenance
Executive and instructional coaching/thought partnership for school leaders	Leader empowerment in pursuit of excellent outcomes	Yes (Collaborative Director)	Annual ED evaluation, LLN leader survey feedback, school progress monitoring
Operational Supports	Support schools in delivering the unique experience they seek for their communities	Yes (Operational Superintendent)	Annual ED evaluation, LLN leader survey feedback, school progress monitoring
Facilitate collaborative Zone structures (TAC, school leader meetings, etc.)	Bringing together diverse-by-design school communities	Yes (Collaboratives)	Annual ED evaluation, LLN leader and TAC survey feedback
School leader hiring/retention supports	Leader, teacher, and community empowerment	Supplement, but Not Replace (DPS HR team)	Process and recommendations approved by school/CSC/equivalent, LLN Board, and Superintendent
School leader evaluation	Holding schools accountable to their articulated vision and DPS priorities	Yes (Collaborative Director)	LLN leader survey feedback, school progress monitoring
School site review	Holding schools accountable to their articulated vision and DPS priorities	No (District staff do visit schools, but not 100% in alignment with this process)	LLN leader survey feedback, school progress monitoring
Data support - dashboard/report creation	Pursuit of equitable and excellent outcomes	Yes (Assessments & DDI)	Monthly school data check-ins, monthly accountability updates for LLN Board

Innovation review support	Proof-point for differentiation in school support models	No	
Understanding and implementation of school flexibilities	Proof-point for school-based decision making	No	
Advocate for protection and expansion of school autonomies	Proof-point for school-based decision making	No	

**The LLN will provide evidence of these replacement services, if requested by the district.*

In addition to the supports enumerated above, the LLN also assesses support needs ongoingly and partners with schools in determining curricular resources and professional learning on an as needed basis and when there are opportunities to leverage cross-zone sharing. Schools also retain autonomy in alignment with their school innovation plans and with the zone funding model to direct curricular resources and staff support as appropriate at the school level.

All thirteen respondents to the LLN’s end-of-year school leader survey answered that they were “Very Satisfied” - the highest possible score - with the LLN’s service during the year. The LLN will provide additional documentation, examples, or attestation of service quality from school leaders receiving the services above if requested by the District. The services offered by the LLN are subject to change should school/community needs or contextual factors (e.g. a pandemic) require a shift in order to continue delivering on the mission and vision of the Zone.

Following the determination of the funding model each year, Zone staff reviews which services are available to Zone schools at no additional cost from their discretionary budget; which services are available at a cost; and which are not available at all. In the event that a school needs a service that neither the District nor the LLN can or will provide, the Zone will work with school leadership to identify and implement alternative solutions.

Section 3: Alternative Governance Structure

Board Structure

At a high level, the LLN bylaws* outline the structure of the LLN Board as follows:

There shall be between seven (7) and nine (9) voting members of the Board of Directors of the Corporation (“Directors”), except during such time when a Director vacancy is in the process of being filled, as follows:

- between four (4) and six (6) individuals representing the interests of the community (“Community Representatives”), at least one of whom is directly connected to the communities served by the schools in the Innovation Zone, who will select and appoint

successor Community Representatives by a majority vote of a quorum of the Community Representatives. Selection of community representatives should consider diversity of membership and the following characteristics: alignment to mission and vision; community connections; experience and expertise; and engagement and advocacy skills;

- one (1) individual who serves as the Teacher Representative and is elected annually by the Innovation Zone’s teacher council;
- two (2) school leaders of schools that are a party to that certain Memorandum of Understanding between the District, the Corporation and such schools dated April 25, 2016 (“Zone Schools”), elected annually by the majority vote of a quorum of the school leaders of such Zone Schools (“School Leaders”);
- And the ED of the Corporation as an Ex Officio non-voting member of the Board of Directors.

*Organizational bylaws may be periodically updated in alignment with updated Innovation Zone Plans and any MOU, Professional Services Agreement, or equivalent document between the Denver Public Schools Board of Education and LLN Board that will be entered into upon completion of the review. The current MOU will stay in place until a new agreement between the LLN and DPS is negotiated and agreed to by both parties.

The LLN strongly believes that schools are the unit of change and that teachers and school leaders have a unique and important understanding of their students and community. This understanding allows these educators to be the best suited to address the needs of their school community, the design of their school community and the support required from those holding them accountable. With two LLN school leaders and an LLN teacher on the Board, the voice of school leaders and teachers is engaged at the highest level of organizational oversight and decision-making, ensuring that students and school communities are always a central focus. The presence of school-based representatives on the Board are critical to the Zone being able to empower educators as stated in the organization’s mission. The presence of community members ensures that the organization remains aligned to the stated mission and vision of the organization, and to the voice of the communities we serve. The LLN bylaws contain a conflict of interest policy, which articulates the voting rights of each type of Board seat. Board members do not receive compensation for their service on the Board.

The Board is currently comprised of three officer roles and three working groups:

- Officer Roles
 - **Board Chair:** The Chair shall preside at all meetings of the Board of Directors and in general shall perform all duties incident to the office of Chair and such other duties as may be prescribed by the Board of Directors from time to time.
 - **Board Treasurer:** The Treasurer performs all the duties incident to the office of Treasurer and such other duties as from time to time may be assigned by the Chair or by the Board of Directors.
 - **Board Secretary:** The Secretary shall keep or cause to be kept the minutes of the meetings of the Board of Directors in one or more books provided for that purpose; see that all notices are duly given in accordance with the provisions of these Bylaws or as required by law; be custodian of the corporate records; and in general perform all duties incident to the office of the Secretary and such other duties as from time to time may be assigned by the Chair or by the Board of Directors.

- Board Working Groups
 - **Governance:** The Governance group spearheads goal setting for the Board alongside the ED, and assists the ED with Board member recruitment (in alignment with the LLN Board’s [key functions and qualifications](#)) and onboarding.
 - **Talent Development:** The Talent Development group is responsible for designing and executing the ED’s annual evaluation, and ensuring continued access to professional learning opportunities for Zone staff as needed and/or requested.
 - **Academics and Accountability:** The Academics and Accountability group is responsible for keeping the Board informed of schools’ academic and Whole Child outcomes. This includes periodic reporting of the LLN’s internal dashboard, which tracks a variety of metrics across schools, including the completion and progress monitoring of Black Excellence Plans.

Key Functions and Qualifications

LLN Board Members will...	
Alignment w/ Mission & Vision	demonstrate a deep understanding of and alignment to the organization’s mission and vision and proactively communicate that mission and vision and the organization’s performance toward aligned goals in order to enhance the organization’s reputation in the community.
Connections	develop and maintain meaningful connections with relevant stakeholder (e.g. regional communities, school communities, DPS) groups to ensure strategic partnerships in support of the organization’s mission and vision and member schools.
Experience & Expertise	provide insight, thought-partnership, and oversight through relevant experience (e.g. leadership, non-profits, governance, short- and long-term strategic planning) and expertise (e.g. education, finance, legal, human resources, communications/marketing, school operations) that contribute to the health and sustainability of the organization and improved performance of its member schools.
Engagement & Advocacy	champion diversity of perspective and voice in support of the organization’s mission, and channel passion for the organization’s work toward external decision-makers such that they align priorities with what our represented communities and organization need to be successful; communicate with passion and clarity about why the LLN and its member schools’ work matters to those whose decisions impact our mission and vision.

Oversight of Zone Organization and Staff

The LLN Board is responsible for conducting an annual evaluation for the LLN's ED utilizing the following process:

- The LLN Board of Directors shall set annual goals in partnership with the LLN ED
- The Board shall designate one Board member to serve as point person for the evaluation; this person will lead the effort to gather feedback on the ED's performance from stakeholders, the Board, and the ED, and take responsibility for drafting the written evaluation for the ED
- The full Board will approve a process and tools for conducting a fair, thorough, professional, and candid evaluation of the ED
- The Board will create a survey/set of questions to gather feedback on the ED's performance, focusing on whether the ED achieved their goals and consistently demonstrated the competencies needed to excel in the role - [see here for the 21-22 survey framework](#)
- The ED will offer a self-assessment by completing the survey
- The Board will work with the ED to identify a list of people who will be asked to provide input on the ED's performance via survey
- The Board will send the survey to those individuals and collect their input
- All Board members will complete the survey
- The designated point person will draft an evaluation report by collecting and analyzing all input
- The designated point person will share the written evaluation confidentially with the full Board of Directors
- The full Board discusses the review in closed session
- The point person incorporates feedback, finalizes the evaluation report, and sends the evaluation to the ED
- The Board point person, Board Chair, and ED will then meet (within 2 days of the ED receiving the written evaluation) to discuss the evaluation, including both positive and constructive feedback and together
 - Board members and ED are prepared with a set of questions to discuss
 - Board asks ED:
 - What resonated most?
 - What surprised you?
 - What additional feedback would be helpful/what's missing?
 - ED feedback for Board:
 - What has been the most helpful in how the Board has governed?
 - What has been less helpful/what might the Board consider doing differently?
- The evaluation is then sent to the full Board of Directors and placed in the ED's personnel file.
- The Board works with the ED to set goals for the coming year based on the performance evaluation.

In the event that the ED is not meeting expectations - as determined by feedback from school leaders and/or progress towards Zone and student achievement goals - the Talent Development work group is responsible for establishing a performance improvement plan for the ED, including providing access to training/professional learning that will close performance gaps. If the ED does not show improvement following the implementation of the improvement plan, the Talent Development work group will recommend dismissal of the ED, to be voted on by the full Board.

Zone Organization Leader Hiring

The LLN Board is responsible for establishing a committee that determines the desired characteristics of the ED, and builds the process to source and hire candidates for the ED position. The interview process will include representatives from the Board and from LLN member schools, and will include individual and group interviews to establish each candidate’s perspective and qualifications relevant to the desired characteristics established by the committee. Following interviews, the selection committee will bring forth a recommendation for a single candidate, to be voted on by the full Board.

Academic Oversight of the Zone

The Academics and Accountability work group is responsible for sharing disaggregated academic and non-academic data with the Board on a monthly basis. Crucially, the group is responsible for providing context and training for the Board in order to understand and make use of any data shared in service of the organization and its member schools. The LLN’s internal data dashboard is the primary year-long vehicle for data sharing, and it includes measures in the following categories:

Category	Category Description
I. School Leader Goals	<i>How is our school progressing on Leadership-identified priorities?</i>
II. Equity	<i>How disparate are the experiences of our students based on socioeconomic factors?</i>
III. Academic Progress	<i>Is there evidence of our students learning?</i>
IV. Human Resources	<i>Does the experience of our educators reflect a healthy working environment?</i>
V. Social-Emotional Health	<i>How are the children? How are the adults?</i>
VI. Engagement	<i>Does the school experience encourage students to engage with the material?</i>
VII. Zone Collaboration Goals	<i>How is our school engaging in the work of the Luminary Learning Network?</i>

Additionally, the Academics and Accountability work group utilizes point-in-time reporting made available through DPS's data reporting systems (e.g. READ Act testing windows, staff/student/family surveys, CMAS results, student enrollment trends, etc.). Specific attention is paid to those students that have historically been underserved by the education system - students of color, multilingual learners, and special education students. Should there be concerns about specific areas of performance, the Board's sole employee - the ED - is responsible for coaching and working alongside school leaders at the relevant school(s) to establish an improvement plan.

The Board also engages with school leaders to understand and talk through academic performance at multiple points throughout the year during Board meetings. The structure of this engagement could change based on the context of the particular school year, but generally involves inviting one or more school leaders to a meeting to talk about what's working well at the school, what challenges exist, and how the Board can support in overcoming any challenges that may exist.

Financial and Operational Oversight

The LLN Board has the fiduciary responsibility to approve the LLN budget and costs. The budget for the following fiscal year - beginning in July - is developed each spring by the LLN's Governance work group, and is grounded in a review of the organization's expected revenue streams and expenses, compared against the service needs of the member schools, and in response to any changes to the Zone funding model. The Board then reviews and votes on the proposed budget in the May Board meeting prior to the beginning of that fiscal year.

The organization conducts an audit in September, and shares the process and results with the LLN Board. Additionally, monthly financial reports are made available and reviewed at each Board meeting to ensure the healthy short- and long-term financial standing of the organization. Financial reporting to the district is done in accordance with the terms of an MOU, Professional Services Agreement, or equivalent document.

Oversight of the finances and the operations of Zone schools is done through the Zone staff. Zone staff is responsible for engaging the Board should there be concerns at any LLN school that requires intervention on the Board's behalf. The Academics and Accountability group supports by reporting on enrollment, thereby informing the Board of one of the key drivers of financial sustainability.

Grievances are handled in accordance with LLN Board policy reflected in the organization's bylaws. In cases involving a DPS employee, for which there are existing processes for grievance in place, all concerns and complaints filed with the Board will be redirected to those channels.

Stakeholder Engagement and Decision-Making

The LLN Board is a unique combination of leaders, practitioners and community members with relevant content knowledge. Board members are integrated into the communities served, and bring community-based content knowledge - educational, leadership, non-profit management, policy - to all collaborative discussions. Cross-pollination and collaboration happens in: 1) Board meetings, which feature panels of school representatives and genuine dialogue on school and Zone activities and; 2)

events, including school visits, open to all Board members. This allows a direct connection to student/family/stakeholder voice through the eyes and ears of the LLN’s practitioners, who are closest to the students the LLN serves. The Board also engages in mobilization of support, community development, planning, and visioning alongside the organization’s stakeholders and communities.

Section 4: Supplemental Materials

Academic Data

In the 2019 innovation plan, the LLN committed to the following:

In each three year approval cycle (currently, 2019 – 2021), each Zone school seeks to move a full performance band on the School Performance Framework (SPF) or, if achieving or exceeding 70% or more of possible points on the SPF will maintain above the 70% threshold. Schools that “Meet Expectations” (green on SPF) and score less than 70% or more possible points will increase the percent of possible points over the three-year period.

Though the District no longer produces a unique SPF score for each school, the goal listed above - taken against the Colorado SPF - shows progress at each school as follows:

School	2018-2019 CO SPF Result	2021-2022 CO SPF Result	2021-2022 CO SPF Academic Growth
Ashley Elementary	Improvement Plan (42.7)	Performance Plan (65.8)	Meets (84.6)
CASA	Turnaround Plan (29.6)	Performance Plan (51.8)	Meets (69.6)
C3	Performance Plan (84.6)	Performance Plan (84.8)	Exceeds (87.5)
DGS Northfield	N/A	Performance Plan - Low Participation (87.9)	Exceeds (88.8)
DGS Southeast	Performance Plan (74.7)	Insufficient Data	Exceeds (87.5)
Valdez	Performance Plan (71.5)	Insufficient Data	Meets (75.0)

Note that all schools - including those that did not formally receive a full score - met or exceeded expectations on academic growth in this framework.

The links below contain summarized data from a variety of universal screening tools from before, during, or after the pandemic:

- [CMAS \[Zone-level\]](#)
- [CMAS \[School-Level\]](#)
- [READ Act](#)
- [ACCESS](#)

Data from across the District, State, and country, have shown that students that have historically been marginalized - students of color, multilingual learners, and special education students - are those that were most impacted by the pandemic. Students in the LLN were not immune to the effects of the pandemic on learning and overall well-being. That said, the table below summarizes just a few of the highlights from each school during the past school year, and establishes a case for these schools to continue their work alongside their respective school communities, and with the support of the Zone structure. For additional information on the flexibilities and strategies that contributed to these results, please refer to each school’s innovation plan.

School	SY22 Academic Highlights (Normed Assessments Only - Not Inclusive of School-Developed Interims, Nor of SEL Data)
Ashley Elementary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students in each grade at the school collectively exceeded pre-COVID national growth expectations from the Winter to the Spring testing window in both reading and math in NWEA’s MAP assessment • Increased student of color early literacy (English) proficiency by 16% from fall to spring READ Act testing windows
CASA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased student of color early literacy proficiency by 13.5% (Spanish) and 11.0% (English) from fall to spring READ Act testing windows - note that students of color made up 90.6% of the total student body at the school in SY22 • Relative to DPS-defined similar schools, withstood the effects of COVID on CMAS scale scores more effectively - drops in scale scores meaning students were getting further away from proficiency than they were before on average: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ELA scale score '19-'22 change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ -2 (CASA) -6.5 (cluster schools) ○ Math scale score '19-'22 change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 0 (CASA) -11.9 (cluster schools)
C3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exceeded DPS CMAS median growth percentile in both math (80 compared to 57) and literacy (62 compared to 49) • CMAS proficiency for students with disabilities exceeded DPS’s average in both math (29% to 5%) and literacy (38% to 7%)

DGS Northfield	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than doubled the District’s average middle school literacy proficiency on CMAS for students of color (58% to 27%) • Nearly doubled the District’s average middle school math proficiency on CMAS for students of color (32% to 17%)
DGS Southeast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exceeded the DPS ACCESS median growth percentile (64 to 49) and percentage on-track (71% to 49%) • The school’s CMAS mean scale score for FRL students exceeded the DPS average in both literacy (734 to 724) and math (718 to 715)
Valdez	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hispanic students performed in the top 11% of the District in both literacy (16th highest scale score out of 146) and math (13th out of 145) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Note that no school ranked ahead of Valdez in either category has a higher percentage of FRL students • The school’s CMAS mean scale score for multilingual students exceeded the DPS average in both literacy (732 to 714) and math (730 to 710)

Stakeholder Survey Data

In addition to the positive academic trends noted above, the LLN also received positive stakeholder feedback on the Fall 2022 Your Voice/Tu Voz survey administered by DPS. These results affirm the work of the schools to not only deliver academic outcomes, but to support the holistic experience of students, families, and educators. A sample of the results - disaggregated where possible - are below:

Stakeholder Group	Statement	<i>Relevant LLN Shared Value(s)</i>	LLN - Response Positivity Rate
Students of Color	I feel safe at school.	Equity	92% (+3% compared to DPS avg.)
Students of Color	I am excited about going to my classes.	Highly Effective Instruction and Student Support	75% (+5%)
Families of Color	I feel welcomed at my student's school.	Equity Community Partnership	94% (+1%)
Families of Color	My child’s school asks me to take part in making important school decisions.	Community Partnership	82% (+5%)

Staff	Teachers are trusted to teach in the way they think is best.	Distributed Leadership Highly Effective Instruction and Student Support	92% (+14%)
Staff	I am involved in decisions that affect my work in my school/department.	Collaboration Distributed Leadership Flexible Resourcing	86% (+13%)

Documentation of Stakeholder Engagement

[Engagement Tracker](#)