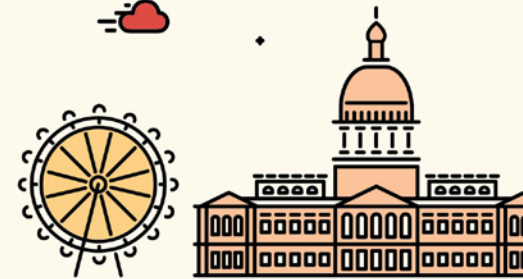


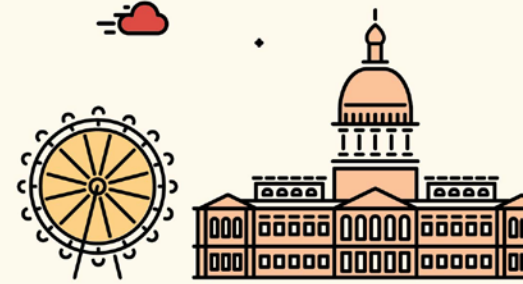


# STAND TOGETHER TO FACE THE FUTURE



2016 NACSA LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE | ATLANTA, GA

# STRONG START, STRONG SCHOOL



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# AGENDA

- Introductions
- Importance of Pre-Opening
- What is Pre-Opening?
- Lessons Learned:
  - Supports Needed
  - Project Management
  - Making the Call
- Q&A



Sean Perkins, Orleans Parish School Board  
Wendy Swanson-Choi, NEO  
Kristin Hines, The Mind Trust



# IMPORTANCE OF PRE-OPENING

What do you need to know is true in order to allow the school to enroll students?

What do you need to know is true in order to allow the school to open & serve students?



# WHAT IS PRE-OPENING?

- Ensure Legal Compliance
  - State law
  - Federal law
- Ensure Organizational Viability
  - Communication
  - Financial planning
  - Political mapping
- Ensure implementation of educational model



# KEY CATEGORIES

- Governance & Management
- Curriculum & Instruction
- Finance
- Facilities, Fixtures & Equipment
- Staffing
- Students & Families

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A stylized illustration of a city skyline at the bottom left of the slide. It features several buildings of varying heights and colors, including a prominent red building on the left and a yellow building on the right. The buildings are outlined in grey and have some internal details like windows and architectural features. A thin grey line extends from the top of the yellow building up towards the 'Students & Families' category in the list above.

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# CASE STUDY: THE FACTS

ABC Charter School was approved by the board in May 2014. The authorizer recommended approval, along with independent evaluators. Throughout the following timeline, the authorizer met with the school leader, CFO and board chair.

**June 2014** - Initial pre-opening meeting with red flags:

- No facility identified
- Revised budget showed deficit in Year 4 due to non-secure funding

**August 2014**

- Facility identified, but lease remains unsigned
- Revised budget shows unrealistic salary decreases

**October 2014**

- Lease signed, but modular arrival delayed until mid-July 2015
- Enrollment materials are printed without school address
- Additional grant funding has been secured, solving unrealistic salary

**February 2015**

- First round of enrollment shows 15 students at school
- Student level funding creates another budget deficit
- Grant funders showing concern

**April 2015**

- Second round of enrollment projects 20 students *total*
- Grant funding is alive, but with a yellow flag

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Are there points where you would have “pulled the plug”?

What else would you have monitored?

Would you let the school open?

Who are you involving, and when, to make this decision?

What technical assistance would you give or connect to remediate progress?

# CASE STUDY: WHAT HAPPENED?

## June 2015

- School is given until July 1 to provide sustainable budget with minimum threshold of students

## July 1, 2015

- School meets minimum threshold of 40 students
- Modulares are delivered

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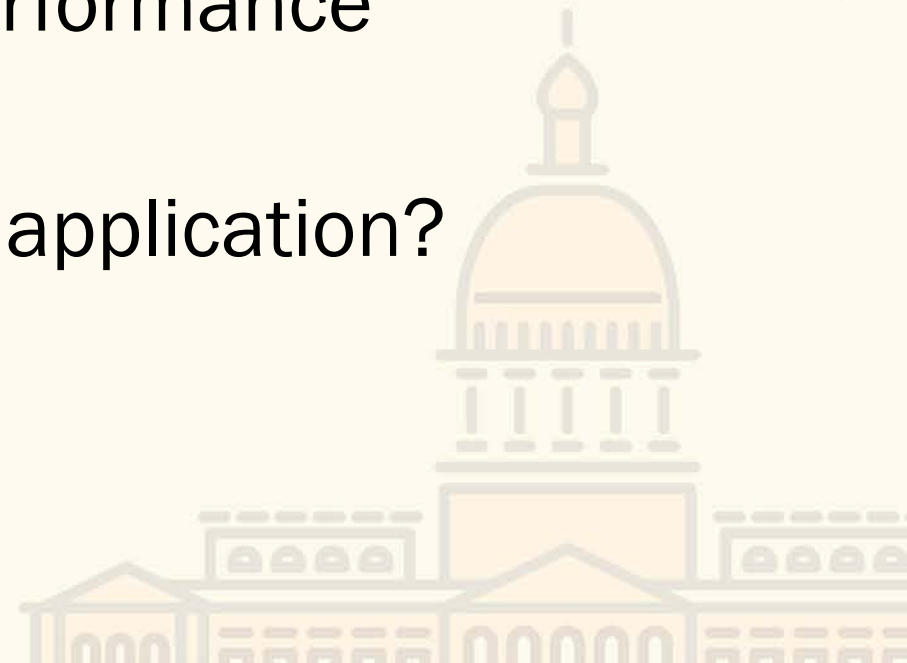


# LESSONS LEARNED: SUPPORTS NEEDED

- What level of support do you provide directly as an authorizer?
- Who else can you utilize to motivate progress?
- Potential support categories:
  - Starting points
  - Exemplar documents
  - Connections to resources and contacts
    - Leveraging schools that have recently launched
  - Guiding through state processes
  - Vendor lists

# LESSONS LEARNED: MAKING THE CALL

- What are the major milestones that are required by law and by charter contract?
- What are the implications of a school not meeting those milestones?
- Will the school be able to meet your performance framework / contract requirements?
- Is the school adhering to the approved application?



# LESSONS LEARNED: PROJECT MANAGEMENT

- Placing responsibility on the schools / governing boards
- Methods for tracking:
  - Dropbox Folders
  - Excel Spreadsheets
  - Project management tools
    - Basecamp (8 projects for \$240)
    - Epicenter



# KEEP IN TOUCH

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