



**NOLA PS**  
**Specialized Program**  
**Guide SY 2021-2022**

**CMO:** Crescent City Schools

**PROGRAM:** Aurora Program

**LOCATION:** Newly renovated campus at 2701 Lawrence Street, NOLA 70114

**OVERVIEW:** Aurora is a full-day program that meets the needs of students grades K-8 with significant trauma, social-emotional difficulties, or whose behavior in a regular school setting is evidence of student distress. Aurora provides a calm, structured environment focused on building relationships, developing self-esteem, and adaptive coping skills. This program is not designed as a short-term punishment or alternative to expulsion. This is a non-time-served model, supporting students who are not able to thrive in a regular school setting.

#### **REFERRAL & ENROLLMENT:**

Referral: Special Education director at student's sending school coordinates with the school principal and completes an Aurora application. The Aurora team does a school visit to complete an observation, meets with school staff, and reviews the student's file for documentation that would indicate the need for Aurora. Aurora will consider referrals for students who do not have IEPs, as well as students from outside of its CMO, Crescent City Schools.

Enrollment: Students remain enrolled and assigned to their sending school, and attend Aurora off-site. For students who are enrolled from outside of Aurora's CMO, Crescent City Schools, the sending LEA signs an MOU with the Aurora Program and remains the LEA of record, with an expectation to stay involved in the student's IEP.

Capacity: Based on current staffing, the program could enroll a maximum of 40 students.

#### **STUDENTS SERVED IN THE PROGRAM:**

The program is designed for students in grades K-8.

## **PROGRAM CONTENT:**

Students get support from small class sizes of 4-6 students per class, flexible groupings, and school staff focused on building relationships.

The program maintains a shortened-day structure from 9am-3pm, which includes all academic direct instruction as well as additional time for academic interventions, social-emotional learning, and structured enrichment activities.

The program works to motivate and engage students using a variety of methods. Developing age-appropriate social relationships and pro-social behavior is a focus. The expectation for student behavior is high but allows for more flexibility to meet individual student needs.

## **POINT OF CONTACT:**

Carissa Kolakauskas, Director of Aurora Program, [ckolakauskas@crescentcityschools.org](mailto:ckolakauskas@crescentcityschools.org)

**CMO:** Collegiate Academies

**PROGRAMS:** REACH, Essential Skills, Journey

**LOCATIONS:** Abramson, George Washington Carver High School, Livingston, Rosenwald

### **PROGRAM 1: REACH Program**

**OVERVIEW:** Program designed to generally serve students with Intellectual Disabilities in the Mild to Moderate range, and help them attain their most rigorous post-secondary outcomes. The program assists students in gaining academic and transition skills before graduation.

### **REFERRAL & ENROLLMENT:**

Referral: Students are referred based on review of previous evaluations, student and family interviews, universal screening of all students new to the school, quarterly assessments, quarterly team meetings that review attendance, behavior, and course performance data.

Capacity: Recommended class size is 8-12 students.

### **STUDENTS SERVED IN THE PROGRAM:**

The program serves students with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities whose academic skills are in the 1st to 5th grade range. Students are eligible if they are on a LEAP Connect diploma pathway and have a Mild/Moderate Intellectual Disability or Autism classification.

### **PROGRAM CONTENT:**

The program's instruction is usually targeted on first to fifth grade levels with multi-modal and multi-sensory methods of instruction. The program's goals are for students to achieve one year of growth in their academic performance, and one level of growth on a transition skills rubric. The program may be full or partial day, depending upon student needs. Students may take core academic classes outside of the REACH program as their skills allow.

The program places special emphasis on providing students with personal and transition skills. Students participate in internships and exposure to career opportunities, both in-school and in-community. The program utilizes a professionalism tracker to link students' transition goals to employment success.

## **PROGRAM 2: Essential Skills Program**

**OVERVIEW:** Program designed to serve scholars with significant disabilities in order to help them gain their most rigorous post-secondary outcomes.

### **REFERRAL & ENROLLMENT:**

Referral: Students are referred based on a review of previous evaluations, interviews with the family and student, screening of all students new to the building, results of quarterly assessments, results of quarterly team meetings to analyze other student data.

Capacity: recommended class size is 8 students.

### **STUDENTS SERVED IN THE PROGRAM:**

The program serves students with moderate to profound intellectual disabilities in grades 9-12.

Eligible exceptionalities include: Intellectual Disabilities - Moderate or Severe, Autism, Traumatic Brain Injury, or Multiple Disabilities. Students typically have pre-literacy skills and are pre-Kindergarten in their numeracy skills. Students must be on the LEAP Connect Diploma pathway to be eligible for the program.

### **PROGRAM CONTENT:**

Essential Skills works to increase students' ability levels in three domains: literacy, numeracy, and transition skills. Each student receives a holistic and individual plan that addresses each area of need through individualized and small-group service delivery. Transition skills focus on daily living skills including hygiene, personal health, and eating, as well as social skills and communication with peers and/or adults. The program may be full or partial day, depending upon the needs of the student.

The program ensures that time throughout the school day is dedicated to inclusion with non-disabled peers, including participation in advisory, extra-curricular activities, and lunch. As students are able, they may take general education classes with paraprofessional support.

### **PROGRAM 3: Journey Program**

**OVERVIEW:** Program that provides therapeutic behavioral support and academics for students with emotional disabilities.

#### **REFERRAL & ENROLLMENT:**

Referral: Students are referred based on a review of previous evaluations, interviews with the family and student, screening of all students new to the building, results of quarterly assessments, results of quarterly team meetings to analyze attendance, behavior, and course performance data. Specifically, a referral would come through an IEP recommendation if the student has not responded to lower tiers of therapeutic and behavioral supports and their behavior is significantly impacting their academic success.

Capacity: recommended class size is 10 students.

#### **STUDENTS SERVED IN THE PROGRAM:**

The program serves students with emotional disabilities (including Emotional Disturbance, OHI - ADHD, or Autism) in grades 9-12. Specifically, students are eligible for possible placement in the program if they have been previously enrolled in a therapeutic program or have been recommended for placement in a therapeutic setting.

#### **PROGRAM CONTENT:**

The program may be full or partial day, depending upon the needs of the student. Students receive increased therapeutic support, including counseling services and behavior interventions, along with instruction on the general education curriculum in individualized or small group settings. Core program components include therapeutic check-in/check-out, therapeutic resets, daily group counseling, and increased individual counseling. Students' BIPs feature a daily tracking sheet for receiving feedback from teachers and interventionists throughout different settings on how they are progressing towards their goals; staff use the tracking sheets to monitor progress on a daily basis and analyze data to ensure progress and adjustments to programming for scholars as needed.

The program features a phasing/leveling system that works to increase student access to the larger school community, and help students gain the skills necessary to spend an increased amount of time in the general education setting.

**POINT OF CONTACT:**

Stacie Kurtz - Interim Senior Director of Scholar Support, [skurtz@collegiateacademies.org](mailto:skurtz@collegiateacademies.org) or  
Dr. Channel Huff, [chuff@collegiateacademies.org](mailto:chuff@collegiateacademies.org)

**CMO:** FirstLine Schools

**NAME:** Discovery Plus

**LOCATIONS:** Arthur Ashe Charter School; Phillis Wheatley Community School; Langston Hughes Academy

**OVERVIEW:** The Discovery Plus mission is for all students to be provided with the skills to lead big, purposeful lives. Our vision for meeting our mission is by providing our students with rigorous academic curricula, intentional teaching of transition/life skills, and a classroom environment with a robust level of support and related services.

### **REFERRAL & ENROLLMENT:**

Referral & Enrollment: Discovery Plus serves eligible students both already enrolled at the underlying FirstLine Schools site, but also accepts student applications from external LEAs based on fit and program capacity. Students served from another school would retain their assignment at the sending school. To initiate a student application, please reach out to the Discovery Plus Program Manager or visit: [www.firstlineschools.org/discovery-plus-program](http://www.firstlineschools.org/discovery-plus-program)

Capacity: Based on current staffing, each site of Discovery Plus can enroll 15 students.

### **STUDENTS SERVED IN THE PROGRAM:**

Discovery Plus serves students in grades 3 - 8 whose cognitive functioning is 2.3 or more standard deviations below the mean and need support in two or more of the following areas: Life Skills Support (e.g. toileting, play, social communication, feeding, etc.), Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy and Motor Skills Support (Physical Therapy and Adaptive Physical Education). Attending students participate in the alternate statewide assessment.

### **PROGRAM CONTENT:**

Discovery Plus delivers educational programming aligned to the Louisiana Connectors across a wide breadth of educational content across subject areas, grade levels and even differing standards. The program setting provides intimate, responsive support with a low student to teacher ratio. The program features specialized communication support through small group and whole class lessons, as well as individualized communication plans for students as needed. Students receive instruction in adaptive skills to help them lead big, purposeful lives.

Staff in this program receive ongoing professional development focused on sensory training, teacher collaboration, and lesson planning/academic teaching strategies. With a dedicated program manager,

speech language pathologist, teachers, paraprofessionals, and an occupational therapist, significant collaboration occurs to provide each student with their own unique educational experience.

**POINT OF CONTACT:**

Tiffany Willis, Discovery Plus Specialized Program Manager, [discoveryplus@firstlineschools.org](mailto:discoveryplus@firstlineschools.org)

**CMO:** Inspire NOLA

**PROGRAM:** Content Mastery Setting

**LOCATIONS:** Alice Harte and Pierre Capdau

**OVERVIEW:** Ensuring that students are provided the implementation of a functional curriculum, assistive technology to support their communication needs, and ABA therapy, if applicable by individualized plan.

**REFERRAL & ENROLLMENT:** Please email point of contact listed below.

**STUDENTS SERVED IN THE PROGRAM:**

The program serves students with low incidence disabilities, mainly Autism, in grades K-8<sup>th</sup>.

**PROGRAM CONTENT:**

Together the special education and general education teacher identify the standard that will be targeted, how instruction will align with LA Connector, and IEP goals. Supports are given by creating and/or adapting content and/or materials utilizing Universal Design for Learning, adding pictures and/or symbols to facilitate comprehension, using technology to enhance the delivery of the content (e.g., augmentative, and alternative communication system), and task analysis.

Instruction of the general content is conducted via embedded instruction in the general education, least restricted classroom for grades K-8<sup>th</sup>, with the option of a more restricted environment/ pull-out, self-contained classroom for grades K-4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup>. Expeditionary Learning Curriculum for Reading and GO Math and/or to accommodate the individual student's need is available.

**POINT OF CONTACT:** Dianne Lewis, [dianne.lewis@inspirenolaschools.org](mailto:dianne.lewis@inspirenolaschools.org)

**CMO: KIPP**

**PROGRAM: Academic & Functional Skills (AFS)**

**LOCATIONS:** KIPP Believe Primary; KIPP Believe College Prep; KIPP Leadership Primary; KIPP Leadership Academy; KIPP Morial Primary; KIPP Morial Middle; KIPP Central City Primary; KIPP Central City Academy; Douglass High School; Booker T. Washington High School

**OVERVIEW:** Provides students with moderate to significant disabilities access to high quality education, building the skills students need to fulfill their individual potential and have joyful, choice-filled lives.

**REFERRAL & ENROLLMENT:**

Referral: A referral originates with an IEP team's referral for program placement. Program placement is appropriate for those students who are on the LEAP Connect pathway; the referring IEP team must include the Student Support Coordinator, social worker or counselor, school psychologist, and parent/family. After the IEP team's recommendation, the school's Dean of Student Support contacts the KIPP New Orleans Director of Special Education to schedule a meeting regarding the recommendation. The Dean of Student Support and Director of Special Education conduct a systematic review of the student's evaluation and IEP and consider the following to make a decision regarding program eligibility:

- The student's LEAP Connect eligibility
- The student's academic skills, and average standard deviation from the mean
- The student's adaptive functioning skills
- The student's communication skills
- Whether the student's needs could be met in a less restrictive environment
- Whether the student requires an alternative curriculum to meet academic need
- Whether the student needs life skills instruction
- The student and family's long term goals and dreams for the student

Capacity: approx. 10 students per classroom

## **STUDENTS SERVED IN THE PROGRAM:**

The program exists across KIPP schools and serves students in grades K-12 who are on the LEAP Connect pathway and have needs that cannot be met in a less restrictive setting. The AFS Program does not currently enroll students from outside the KIPP New Orleans Schools network.

## **PROGRAM CONTENT:**

The overall program goal is to teach students the academic, social, and life skills necessary to access vocational opportunities and function as independently as possible. The program utilizes an alternative curriculum and assessments (Unique Learning). The program includes time for students to access the general education curriculum, based on student abilities and needs - ranging from 10% to 50% of the day. At minimum, students spend lunch, recess, and arts/integrals classes with their non-disabled peers, and participate in all field trips and school/classroom events.

The program maintains standardized lesson plans, and benchmarks for the beginning, middle, and end of year.

## **POINTS OF CONTACT:**

Emily Waterfield, Managing Director - [ewaterfield@kipppneworleans.org](mailto:ewaterfield@kipppneworleans.org)

Jessica Taylor, Director of Special Education - [jtaylor@kipppneworleans.org](mailto:jtaylor@kipppneworleans.org)

**CMO:** NOLA College Prep

**PROGRAM:** Academy of Career & Community Education (ACCE)

**LOCATION:** Cohen College Prep, 2503 Willow Street, NOLA 70113

**OVERVIEW:** ACCE is a comprehensive program designed to prepare students with significant exceptionalities ages 14-22 to achieve their most rigorous post-graduation goals. Its mission is “to equip students with significant disabilities to reach their highest level of success and independence in adulthood.” ACCE graduates are active citizens, lifelong learners, and advocates for themselves as well as their community. ACCE places a high emphasis on self-advocacy as the cornerstone of our instructional and relational approach and believe that the more agency a student has over his or her life choices, the happier and more successful that student will be.

#### **REFERRAL & ENROLLMENT:**

Enrollment: Please email point of contact listed below.

Capacity: class size consists of 7-10 students

#### **STUDENTS SERVED IN THE PROGRAM:**

The program serves students in grades 9-12 and post-graduate (through 22, IDEA age of eligibility).

#### **PROGRAM CONTENT:**

The program is data-driven, IEP-guided, and provides a holistic model that addresses every facet of students' high school experience and transition. The program utilizes: innovative, research-based curriculum, community-based instruction, professional internships, low teacher-student ratios, assistive technology, and targeted agency partnerships. Specifically, the program utilizes iPad-based learning apps at a 1:1 student/device ratio. Students may participate in any degree of regular education programming as they are able.

The program runs the ACCE Cafe to give students hands-on practice with career skills in the school setting. The program also maintains external partnerships to place students in community-based internships in the greater New Orleans Area.

#### **POINT OF CONTACT:**

Noel Kennedy, Director of Student Services, [nkennedy@nolacollegeprep.org](mailto:nkennedy@nolacollegeprep.org)

**CMO: Collegiate Academies**

**PROGRAM: Opportunities Academy (OA)**

**LOCATION: 2625 Thalia St, New Orleans, Louisiana 70113**

**OVERVIEW:** Opportunities Academy redefines “college and career for all” by empowering students to build lives of independence, connection, and happiness. OA is a rigorous, post-secondary full day program for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

**REFERRAL & ENROLLMENT:**

Referral: Schools and agencies (like Metropolitan Human Services District (MHSD) and Families Helping Families (FHF)) refer potentially eligible students. Eligibility criteria: Student is 18 or older, has an IEP with a qualifying disability (Intellectual Disability and Autism), and/or is on the LEAP Connect pathway.

Enrollment: Students must enroll through the EnrollNOLA process; yet, enrollment is not limited to students who live in New Orleans. There is no application for the program. However, to ensure students meet the eligibility requirements, OA staff reviews relevant data and documentation of students who are seeking enrollment.

**STUDENTS SERVED IN THE SCHOOL:**

The school serves students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (Intellectual Disability and Autism) in grade 12 and/or until the student turns 22 (IDEA age of eligibility).

**PROGRAM CONTENT:**

OA offers full-day programming, for students located at campus in Central City. Additionally, students participate in internships (on campus) and externships (at partner organizations and community businesses). The school's goal is to support each student in achieving his/her highest level of independence in pursuit of ultimately experiencing meaningful and fulfilling outcomes in the areas of independent living, community access, and career readiness (employability).

Student daily schedules consist of approximately two to three hours of work experience (internship/externship), about two and a half hours of instruction in independent living, community

access, and career readiness (employability), and 30 minutes of extracurriculars. OA also integrates many related services into daily instruction.

**POINTS OF CONTACT:**

Sophia Scott, Executive Director, [sscott@collegiateacademies.org](mailto:sscott@collegiateacademies.org)

Kathleen Coverick, Director of Finance and Operations, [kcoverick@collegiateacademies.org](mailto:kcoverick@collegiateacademies.org)

CMO: ReNEW Schools

PROGRAM: ReNEW Therapeutic Program (RTP)

LOCATION: RTP is located at 9501 Grant Street, New Orleans, LA 70127 on the campus of Schaumburg Elementary in New Orleans East

**OVERVIEW:** RTP provides therapeutic programming and intensive, evidence-based interventions to students with disabilities who have profound behavioral and social-emotional needs. Students who demonstrate progress toward achieving their behavior and social goals may ultimately transition back to a less restrictive setting.

#### REFERRAL & ENROLLMENT:

**Referral:** Students with the exceptionality of Other Health Impairment (OHI) or Emotional Disturbance (ED) and who exhibit ongoing behavior problems at their sending schools are referred to RTP by application. RTP does not limit its acceptance to students from ReNEW schools; rather, we coordinate with charter networks throughout New Orleans to offer a potential placement for students in need of more intensive behavior supports than sending schools are able to provide.

RTP uses a three-part referral process: application, observations, and family consultation. First, a student's sending school completes a questionnaire providing information on the student's educational history and needs, as well as the student's current evaluation, IEP, and behavior data. Next, RTP staff conduct observations of the student in the sending school. Finally, the student and family are invited to tour RTP and speak to staff and students about the program to ensure it is a good fit for the student. Final eligibility determinations for the program are made by the program's co-directors, in consultation with the network's Executive Director of Student Support Services; if the family consents, RTP and the sending school convene an IEP meeting to change the student's placement.

**Enrollment:** Student enrollment is executed via an IEP team meeting decision among the sending school, the family, and the program. A student's placement results in substantive changes to the IEP, including setting, services, and special education minutes, as RTP students receive all academic and behavior support services in a substantially separate special education setting. While the student receives services at RTP, his or her sending school remains the LEA of Record on the student's IEP. To complete enrollment, the sending school signs a standard contract and MOU including a payment agreement between the program and sending school.

**Capacity:** 24 students

## STUDENTS SERVED IN THE PROGRAM:

The program serves students in grades 1st-8th who receive special education services under the Emotional Disturbance or Other Health Impairment classifications and who demonstrate significant behavior and social-emotional needs.

## PROGRAM CONTENT:

The program maintains a standard schedule for all students, which includes four academic blocks in the morning and therapeutic groups in the afternoon. The day begins with morning mindful movement, which creates an opportunity for community-building, dancing, singing, and other physical activity. Students spend the remainder of the morning in instructional rotations, followed by lunch and recess. The afternoon is spent in therapeutic recreation, including chess, mindfulness, social-emotional learning, art, and physical education.

For academic instruction, the program maintains a modified Tier 1 curriculum using a variety of high-yield, evidence-based instructional strategies to promote learning and mitigate effects of our students' exceptionalities. Our teachers use cooperative learning across grade and ability levels to reinforce learning and promote self-efficacy among students. RTP also uses both online intervention platforms and targeted intervention to support content area knowledge. RTP students use Achieve3000 and Dreambox to receive individualized intervention in literacy and math skills, and attend an intervention class 45 minutes each day, where they receive reinforced instruction in content area skills as well as social-emotional and organizational skills aimed to address deficits in executive functioning.

As a behaviorist model program, RTP uses a daily and weekly incentive system based on individual behavior tracker goals. Each student's behavior is tracked in each therapeutic group and academic class in the areas of safety, respect, responsibility, resilience, and a target behavior corresponding to the IEP behavior goals. The program utilizes a tiered system and considers students' levels in adherence to the program's defined values, as well as students' individual IEP goals - i.e., one student's goal may be to earn an average of 18 out of 20 points, while another student may work toward reaching 14 out of 20 points. At the end of each day, students may choose from three "school store" levels based on their tracker performance that day. In addition, students who do not receive any safety violations and meet their weekly tracker goal are able to attend Celebration, a weekly school-wide activity on Friday afternoons, which in the past has included a hot chocolate bar, popcorn and a movie, a community field trip, and an ice cream social, among others. Student growth on the level system is a major component of determining a student's readiness to exit/transition to a less restrictive setting.

The program provides transportation, with program staff riding the bus to help supervise and manage students.

POINTS OF CONTACT:

Laura Page, J.D., M. Ed.  
Co-Director & Special Education Coordinator  
rtpleadership@renewschools.org  
704-777-0184

Laura Todaro, LPC  
Co-Director & Counselor  
rtpleaderhship@renewschools.org  
504-228-5218

Mary Cole-Bush, Ph.D.  
Executive Director, Student Support Services  
mcole-bush@renewschools.org  
504-281-0360

If you are a family in need of assistance or have questions,

please contact:

Dr. Zaheerah Clark

[zclark@nolapublicschools.com](mailto:zclark@nolapublicschools.com)

