The NET Charter High School

The NET was developed after years of research into highly effective strategies for young people who struggle academically or behaviorally in traditional high school settings.

2014-2015 was The NET’s fourth year serving New Orleans and its third year as an independent charter. During this year, the school served approximately 150 students at a time using targeted, innovative methods designed to insure that each student’s individual academic, behavioral and other needs are met.

2014-2015 Highlights

This year the NET graduated its 100th graduate. Each was a talented young person who former teachers, parents and the students themselves believed would not otherwise have received a diploma. The NET achieved 50 points on the State Alternative Accountability system and was approved for a one year Extension as is required in Louisiana at the end of the first three years of a school’s first charter.
Student Enrollment

The NET continued to meet its enrollment goal of 150 students. The NET is entirely open admissions and participates in the city-wide One App process. The school works closely with the RSD to support the placement of struggling students into the NET. While students were accepted all year, most students started in August or January. For the first time this year, a significant number of students started Semester 3.

Student retention continues to be a large struggle for the school. While improvements such as home- visits, homebound services, and working with the city-wide Youth Opportunity Center have helped multiple students, the school did not make significant progress in retention this year.

One factor is the greater number of severely disconnected enrollees. As the school gains greater visibility with the courts and advocates, more young people who profess to “not want to go to school at all” are persuaded to try The NET. Many are still actively involved in the streets and may or may not be ready to commit to school. Thus The NET must continue to improve its ability to serve these and all students more effectively.
Educators for Quality Alternatives


Student Demographics

Every student at the NET has an individual story and each has unique strengths. In addition, every student at the NET faces multiple challenges which create serious barriers to succeeding in school and beyond.

The school’s small size and individualized design serves students with special needs and special circumstances well. Each student has his or her own individualized plan which considers their unique academic, behavioral, out-of-school, and post-graduation goals and challenges.

This plan address everything from the hours a student attends school to the supports he or she gets in the classroom. Each student is involved in making their plan and it is constantly reviewed and adjusted as needed.

The NET’s Special Education population reached 23% in 2014-2015.
The NET’s annual average daily attendance rate stayed steady at 67%. This is a disappointment to staff who put a large emphasis on attendance.

However, the additional supports and efforts did produce two significant improvements:

- Semester 3 (the summer semester) attendance increased by 15%
- A large increase in the number of students who attended 95% or more which is the optimal attendance for learning

While approximately 20% of students continue to be effectively missing, more students are attending more of the time which is a positive and academically impactful trend.
**Academic Growth**

The NET’s academic program and curriculum are directly targeted at students who are working below level. The school structure allows for four major innovations:

1. **Individual Plans** All students have an individualized graduation plan. Staff and students work together to develop intervention plans whenever a student is struggling to stay on track.

2. **Flexible Scheduling** Students typically take 3 of the 6 periods per day allowing for a variety of start and end times which help students parent, work etc. It also allows students to have shorter or longer school days depending upon their stamina, focus, and graduation progress.

3. **Three distinct learning environments**: Students typically attend one class in each environment: Computer Lab for credit recovery and Math and Reading remediation; Core Classes for Math and Science; Advisories for seminar style project driven learning in English, Social Studies and electives. This variation helps students focus, gain ownership over their academic growth and receive highly individualized supports.

4. **Targeted Interventions** Specialized advisories, individualized opportunities, small group pull outs and other interventions are available as needed.

Despite all being high school students, in 2014-2015, only 4% of students arrived at the NET able to read at a high school level and only 10% being able to do math at the high school level.
Standardized Test Results

With state testing requirement shifts in 2014-2015, all but a very small number of students were required to take the End of Course exams. Even with a larger percentage of Special Education and English Language Learners, EOC scores continued to improve over all, up 2% in 2014-2015.
In all by two areas, the NET outperformed the city’s other alternative schools. Only in English II does it trail both comparative schools.

The comparisons below are among initial testers only. The state only release the passage rates of initial testers- students who are taking the EOC for the first time. For the NET and other alternative schools, between 5%-30% of students may be re-taking any particular EOC after failing the class or test in the past. The NET has asked for more comprehensive data to be released in the future.
Internship Program

The NET’s Internship program made some significant progress in the 2014-2015 school year, increasing the number of internships and improving, over the last two years, the rate of successful internship completion.

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<tr>
<td>PLACEMENTS</td>
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<td>8</td>
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Internship Highlight:

Recirculating Farms

Multiple students each semester interned at The NET’s neighborhood urban farm. Students from the construction class built planting beds, benches and other items for the farm. Other students learned sustainable gardening and cooking while providing much needed volunteer labor to the farm.

Successful Internship Completion

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rate</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>62%</td>
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Culture & Behavior

NET students mostly struggle with themselves—they are often missing the skills to respond adaptively to expectations, requests, difficult assignments or situations. Thus their most challenging behaviors occur when they are asked to push themselves—stay in class, complete a difficult assignment, speak respectfully to someone who upset them etc.

For this reason, the NET responses to behavior are focused on building students’ communication, conflict resolution and problem solving skills. Each time a student’s behavior is inappropriate, the student is addressed by a staff member and must complete a restorative process which includes taking responsibility and “making it right” with whoever they disrespected or hurt. This process can be a simple conversation, a written agreement, or a mediation. Over time, students learn the skills they need to respond appropriately to challenging situations inside and outside of school.

Relationships

Research shows that one of the most important factors in a student succeeding in high school is the quality of the relationships the student has with his/her teachers and other school staff.

The NET’s small size, advisory system, orientation, excursions, Town Hall, internships and many other school structures and opportunities are designed with this in mind. Surveys in 2014-2015 continue to show school’s success in bonding students to adults and the resulting sense of student investment and empowerment.

In addition, efforts in 2014-2015 to build students’ trust of each other and bonding to each other showed positive results. Students at The NET have often had a difficult time socially in school—whether because of bullying, fighting, or feeling “different.” Thus building students’ sense of positive peer community takes even more deliberate work than bonding them to adults.

Student Perceptions of Each Other
Graduation

Graduation Rate

The State Department of Education has developed a graduation rate indicator for alternative schools which tracks the rate at which 12th grade students graduate. This is an important development because so many of The NET’s students start many years behind, making their graduations “invisible” under the state’s traditional calculations.

The NET’s graduation rate for 2014-2015 was 85%.

100th Graduate!

In 2014-2015, The NET reached 105 graduates. Ironically, it’s 100th graduate, T’Darryl Lee Jr., attended just a few months.

While most NET students attend an average of two years, some students, like T’Darryl come just for a semester. These students typically got behind their senior year due to family tragedies, pregnancies, incarcerations, or because they did not pass their exit exams. Frustrated, embarrassed, and/or facing external pressures, they cannot or do not want to return to their high schools for a second senior year.

While short, The NET is a vital part of their educational journey. Thanks to the individualized supports students are able to earn their missing credits and get the tutoring they need to pass their exams. The school’s flexibility allows them to handle their other responsibilities and in most cases they are able to graduate in less than a full year.
Next Steps Program & Alumni

The NET’s Next Steps program expanded during 2014-2015 and partnered with our neighbor Café Reconcile to provide additional counseling and services to seniors and alumni.

While tracking alumni remains a challenge, more and more students are returning to the school for counseling and support as they continue their education and find and improve their employment options. Below are three of The NET’s 45 2014-2015 alumni.

Julio Bermudez
Julio immigrated to the US as a child and came to The NET because of a history of fighting in school. Not only did he never get in a fight at The NET, but he took advantage of every opportunity afforded him—from taking classes at Bard Early College to spending a semester working in Yellowstone National Park. After Julio’s father passed away during his first year at The NET, he took an internship with Son of a Saint, mentoring young boys without fathers themselves. Julio is currently a freshman at Xavier University. He is studying Accounting because he wants to own his own business and give back to the community through philanthropy.

Wil’liesha Landry
Wil’liesha came to The NET after getting behind in school when she lost her parent. She needed the school’s flexibility and support to get back on track. When she arrived, Wil’liesha believed that college was no longer in her future. However, with time and encouragement from her teachers and her internship mentor, a local Physical Therapist, she realized she was indeed “college material” and is now a freshman at Dillard University. Wil’liesha is studying Public Health so she can contribute to her city.

Jermaine Scott
Jermaine came to The NET after being incarcerated. While at The NET, he studied hard but often had to leave class early to take care of his young siblings. A turning point came when Jermaine got involved with the school’s construction program. He developed a passion which he is now following at Delgado Community College where he is studying Carpentry and Welding.
School Year Highlights

Big Picture Learning Connection & Study

During the 2014-2015 school year, The NET connected in several ways with Big Picture Learning, a highly respected organization which runs multiple schools across the US and internationally and advocates for individualized, student-driven, project-based learning. Big Picture Learning schools, like The NET, serve students who have not been successful in traditional environments. They are known for their very rigorous internship programs and for a deep respect for young people and young people's agency to lead their education and lives.

Early on in the design process The NET founders researched BPL’s work and adopted many of their methods. Having the opportunity to connect with BPL leaders and teachers has been a gift to The NET’s continued development.

The NET contracted with BPL to conduct a school study to give NET leaders and teachers feedback. The study highlighted:

- Positive, transformational student & staff relationships
- Staff and system dedication to developing individualized experiences and supports for each student
- Staff commitment to the mission and vision
- Strength and quality of NET community partnerships

The study suggested the following areas to improve on:

- Increasing the rigor of Exhibitions (students’ final presentations)
- Increasing the rigor and relevance of academic projects
- Developing academic components of Internships
- Increasing student voice and choice in instruction and culture
Staff Retention

While still respectable, 2014-2015 saw the lowest staff retention to date. Several staff founding staff members moved on to higher education or leadership positions in other schools.

Unfortunately this is a challenge of a small organization. On the other hand, the shifts did open positions which allowed for several important internal promotions.

The NET staff are recruited and developed to:

- **Believe** in each and every student
- **Achieve meaningful results** with each student
- **Take personal responsibility** for professional, school and student growth
- Continually grow through constant **reflection and feedback**
- **Passionate about and skilled in** their subject, their craft and the mission
- Work **collaboratively** to design **innovative and effective solutions**

Staff Retention & Promotion
Staff Profile
Kara Dorsey, Advisor

Kara joined The NET in 2012 as an English Teacher and Advisor.

One of Kara’s greatests gifts to The NET is her willingness to pilot new partnerships and ideas. Her first year, Kara worked with 1 Million Bones a genocide awareness organization to teach and gallvanize students. She even took two students to Washington DC for the project’s national installation.

Kara has piloted a Parenting Advisory, co-lead The NET’s now famous Lights, Camera, Action film class, and in 2014-2015 she designed and co-led a Big Picutre Learning inspired “internship advisory.”

Kara is continuing The NET’s work on integrating academics and internships through the 2015-2016 school year.
State Accountability: Charter Extension

In accordance with Louisiana charter school law, The NET was up for a one year extension at the end of 2014-2015. At the end of 2015-2016, the school will be up for a three year renewal. The extension process only happens during a charter’s first four years; after that, the charter is reviewed every three years.

The NET was recommended for, and received, its extension on December 2, 2015 from the Louisiana Board of Elementary & Secondary Education.

When The NET was first granted a charter, there was no way for the school to earn an extension or renewal based on the current state laws. Therefore this extension was a great milestone not just for The NET but for alternative schools across the state as it was a test of the new Alternative Accountability Framework. This framework holds alternative schools to the same expectations financially and organizationally while recognizing that our mission is to serve a demographic with different needs and thus different outcomes from traditional schools.

Below are the State indicators, along with The NET’s results.
### ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE SCORE INDICATORS

#### A. ENROLLMENT (TYPE 5 SCHOOLS)
- **Indicators**
  - I. School follows all components of the OneApp process including appropriate child welfare and truancy policies
  - II. School follows Recruitment and Enrollment Plan, Lottery
  - III. School follows Attendance Laws, Truancy Policy, and Timely Transfer of Records
  - IV. School re-enrolls high percentage of students
  - V. School retains students during the school year

- **Points Earned**
  - I. 4
  - II. 4
  - III. 4
  - IV. 0
  - V. 0

- **Points Possible**
  - I. 4
  - II. 4
  - III. 4
  - IV. 4
  - V. 4

- **School Data**
  - I. 71.1%
  - II. 75.0%
  - III. 2.4%
  - IV. 2.2%

- **Total**
  - 12

- **Detail**
  - Full Credit

#### B. FACILITIES (OBSERVED DURING FACILITIES REVIEW)
- **Indicators**
  - I. School meets local and state fire and life safety codes
  - II. School meets public health sanitary codes
  - III. ADA requirements

- **Points Earned**
  - I. 4
  - II. 4
  - III. 4

- **Points Possible**
  - I. 4
  - II. 4
  - III. 4

- **Total**
  - 12

- **Detail**
  - Full Credit

#### C. DISCIPLINE
- **Indicators**
  - I. School adheres to BESE Model Master Discipline Plan
  - II. Suspensions and expulsions are handled properly

- **Points Earned**
  - I. 4
  - II. 4

- **Points Possible**
  - I. 4
  - II. 4

- **Total**
  - 8

- **Detail**
  - Full Credit

#### D. SPECIAL EDUCATION, 504 ACCOMMODATIONS, & OTHER AT-RISK STUDENT POPULATIONS
- **Indicators**
  - I. Enrollment and retention
  - II. Schools identify at-risk students
  - III. School conducts evaluations
  - IV. School writes required IEPs
  - V. School provides programming and placement
  - VI. School follows discipline procedures
  - VII. Assessments

- **Points Earned**
  - I. 4
  - II. 4
  - III. 4
  - IV. 4
  - V. 4
  - VI. 4
  - VII. 4

- **Points Possible**
  - I. 4
  - II. 4
  - III. 4
  - IV. 4
  - V. 4
  - VI. 4
  - VII. 4

- **Total**
  - 28

- **Detail**
  - Full Credit

#### E. HEALTH & SAFETY
- **Indicators**
  - I. School conducts background checks on all employees
  - II. School provides health services to students
  - III. School follows bus safety protocols

- **Points Earned**
  - I. 4
  - II. 4
  - III. 4

- **Points Possible**
  - I. 4
  - II. 4
  - III. 4

- **Total**
  - 12

- **Detail**
  - Full Credit

#### F. GOVERNANCE
- **Indicators**
  - I. Board structure meets Bulletin 126 requirements
  - II. Board adheres to Louisiana Code of Governmental Ethics
  - III. School and board adhere to Louisiana Open Meetings Laws
  - IV. Board adheres to Public Records Act
  - V. Board follows Public Bid Laws

- **Points Earned**
  - I. 4
  - II. 4
  - III. 4
  - IV. 4
  - V. 4

- **Points Possible**
  - I. 4
  - II. 4
  - III. 4
  - IV. 4
  - V. 4

- **Total**
  - 20

- **Detail**
  - Full Credit
# The NET Charter High School

## Alternative Charter High School Extension Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Potential Points</th>
<th>Performance Metric</th>
<th>Actual Score</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Department Selected Indicators</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>EOC / LAA¹ Performance</td>
<td>Full Credit – 20 Points</td>
<td>&gt; 75% of Students Receive Score Eligible for Graduation</td>
<td>51.90%</td>
<td>0 / 20</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Partial Credit - 10 Points</td>
<td>61 – 74% of Students Receive Score Eligible for Graduation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No Credit – 0 Points</td>
<td>≤ 60% of Student Receive Score Eligible for Graduation</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Credit Accumulation²</strong></td>
<td>Full Credit – 20 Points</td>
<td>&gt; 75 % of Students Earn their Credit Target</td>
<td>65.41%</td>
<td>10 / 20</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Partial Credit - 10 Points</td>
<td>61 – 74% of Students Earn their Credit Target</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No Credit – 0 Points</td>
<td>≤ 60% of Students Earn their Credit Target</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Student Stability Rate³</strong></td>
<td>Full Credit – 20 Points</td>
<td>&gt; 85% of Students Stay Enrolled in School</td>
<td>57.64%</td>
<td>0 / 20</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Partial Credit - 10 Points</td>
<td>61 – 84% of Students Stay Enrolled in School</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No Credit – 0 Points</td>
<td>≤ 60% Students Stay Enrolled in School</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Graduation Completion⁴</strong></td>
<td>Full Credit – 20 Points</td>
<td>&gt; 70% Graduation Completion</td>
<td>85.29%</td>
<td>20 / 20</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Partial Credit - 10 Points</td>
<td>55% - 69.9% Graduation Completion</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No Credit – 0 Points</td>
<td>≤ 55% Graduation Completion</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Growth in STAR Enterprise Reading and Math Assessments⁵</strong></td>
<td>Full Credit – 20 Points</td>
<td>Average rate of 2 years of growth in Math and Reading OR Average rate of 2 years growth in either Math or Reading and a minimum of 1 year growth in the other subject</td>
<td>2.0 (Math) 1.0 (Reading)</td>
<td>20 / 20</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Partial Credit - 10 Points</td>
<td>Average rate of at least 1 year growth in Math and Reading</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No Credit – 0 Points</td>
<td>Average rate of less than 1 year growth in Math and Reading</td>
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**Total Points Accumulated**: 50 / 100
Finance & Fundraising

In 2014-2015, EQA continued to maintain good financial health. The school’s fund balance is over 40% which will allow the school to budget long term continuation of positions and programs started by one-time grant funding.

EQA had an unqualified audit with no findings, and received 100 out of 100 points on its LDOE Financial Performance Rating.

The NET received the following major grants during 2014-2015:

- NOLA For Life grant to support social work services
- Harrah’s Fund for mental health services and the Next Steps program
- Greater New Orleans Foundation grant for computers and wireless for students on homebound
- RSD grant for ELL student support

Two of the NET’s students were selected to spend the summer in the Grand Canyon Youth program. While they earned full scholarships, staff members rallied to raise donations for their airfare and equipment.

Thank you for your support!
In Memoriam

During the 2014-2015 school year, three of The NET’s students were murdered on the streets of New Orleans. Our city is a poorer place without these beautiful young people. In our school community we have grown more likely to say “I love you” than ever before as we are reminded that each day is precious.

Wanda Dusset
6/10/1996-8/21/2014

George Carter
6/4/1999-10/21/2014

Penny Proud
Born: Perry Thornton
12/13/1993-2/10/2015
Voices from the NET

What I Carry
By: Ireyan Mayberry, ‘14

On me I carry:
My cap and gown,
My diploma that symbolizes my achievements,
Gifts from friends and family who are proud of me,

Inside my head I carry:
Knowledge,
Accomplishments that took four years to gain,
Emotions built up,
A future of success that is yet determined

What I carry physically is light.
My thoughts are heavy
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