

Charter School Final Application Executive Summaries

2010 - 2011

Alma del Mar Charter School **Executive Summary**

This was prepared by the founding group of the Alma del Mar Charter School.

Mission: Alma del Mar is an inclusive, K-8 Expeditionary Learning school that puts New Bedford students on a college trajectory and challenges them to be service-oriented leaders. By engaging in a rigorous academic program with an emphasis on meaningful work, our students will master essential skills and content, take ownership of their learning and think boldly while addressing complex academic and community issues.

Educational Program: Alma del Mar's (AdM) educational program is designed to cultivate the knowledge and skills in students that will put them on the path to college and enable them to be service-oriented leaders. Our curriculum will consist of learning expeditions—long-term investigations into key topics that teach essential ELA, social studies and science content—in addition to supporting research-based literacy and math curricula. Our students will do rigorous work as members of a school community that emphasizes service, quality, accountability, persistence and integrity. By engaging in meaningful work that frequently draws on the rich resources of the Greater New Bedford area, our students will

- Master essential skills and content as outlined by the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks
- Take increasing responsibility for their own learning
- Approach complex problems thoughtfully
- Learn to appreciate the perspectives of others, and
- Recognize and pursue opportunities for service

Enhancing Options for Students: At Alma del Mar, New Bedford students will have the opportunity to attend a school that provides more individualized student support, an emphasis on service leadership and a curriculum that builds core background knowledge starting in the early grades. Our K - 8 structure allows for students to receive uninterrupted support for their individual learning needs through middle school, preparing them to succeed in the variety of secondary school options that exist in this region, while our extended school day and year creates more time for in-depth learning, as well as for co-curricular subjects like music, art and PE. Students for whom English is a second language, students with disabilities and students from low-income backgrounds will benefit especially from our integrated curriculum, college-bound culture and use of active pedagogy.

Community's Demonstration of Support for School: Over 150 families have signed a list indicating their interest in enrolling their children in AdM, pending the granting of our charter. At events throughout the city and in individual conversations with AdM's founding group, community members have expressed support for our proposed school. Parents and community members are excited about an educational option that would provide a strong, college-bound culture, a curriculum emphasizing service and a structure that allows for continuous, individualized student support through middle school. In addition, the support of our community partners, GiftstoGive, Working Waterfront Festival, Coalition for Buzzards Bay, ArtWorks!, The Ocean Explorium and SMILES Mentoring, will allow us to leverage the rich resources of the New Bedford community to the benefit of our students.

Founding Group Capacity: Our proposed Founding Board consists of professionals with expertise in law, finance, development, management, and school administration, has strong ties to the city of New Bedford and a shared passion for improving educational opportunities for New Bedford students. Our lead founder has worked successfully to improve educational outcomes for students in grades pK-8 in low-income communities. In his recent role as Campus Director for a Citizen Schools site in New Bedford, he ran a highly successful program serving an at-risk population within a New Bedford middle school which showed significant academic gains for its students and was recognized within the national network for its innovative and effective hands-on apprenticeships. He has an extensive network within the city of New Bedford and broad support from students, parents, educators and community members.

Our proposed school support partner, Expeditionary Learning (EL), is a national network of over 160 schools that has demonstrated strong results working with students from all backgrounds, especially students from low-income households, English language learners and students with special learning needs. As our school support organization, Expeditionary Learning will provide valuable professional development for teachers and administrators, curriculum support and a designated School Designer who will spend a significant amount of time at our school providing targeted coaching and connecting our school to resources from the wider network.

Boston Chinese Immersion Charter School Executive Summary

This was prepared by the founding group of the Boston Chinese Immersion Charter School.

Mission

Through an academically rigorous curriculum using Mandarin Chinese as the medium of instruction, the Boston Chinese Immersion Charter School (BCICS) will prepare a diverse body of Boston students in Kindergarten through 8th grade to become fluent and literate in Mandarin Chinese and English who will graduate from the school poised for academic success in high school and beyond. BCICS will leverage the benefits of language immersion and immersion methodology for acquiring subject matter mastery, engaging family involvement, developing oral language skills as a base for literacy, expanding student's literacy and vocabulary skills across two languages, creating a respectful community of learners, assessing student performance through a broad range of measures and developing culturally and globally diverse perspectives.

Vision

Boston Chinese Immersion Charter School will be a respectful community of learners, with students in kindergarten through 8th grade, faculty, and families who will engage in learning and participate in school activities with BCICS as their center. Students will learn and demonstrate academic success in all core subjects: math, language arts, social studies, arts and sciences—as measured in both English and in Mandarin Chinese. Staff will participate in professional development weekly and during the summer. Families will be offered classes in Mandarin, ESL and technology. BCICS will build on the demonstrated success of language immersion programs for Boston area children eager to develop multilingual and multicultural skills that will serve them throughout their lifetimes.

Need

There is a compelling mandate for a Mandarin immersion school in Boston at the elementary level evidenced by the large number of Chinese and non-Chinese parents who place their children in the more than 45 privately supported Chinese Schools in Massachusetts (12 in the Greater Boston region) on weekends and after school. Boston area business firms, major museums and universities have written strong letters of support for the charter application, recognizing the growing need to develop future employees who are fluent and literate in Mandarin and who have a deep understanding of and appreciation for Chinese culture. Boston's premier colleges and universities are already capitalizing on the benefits of global experiential learning through a variety of exchange programs with China. As we consider what knowledge and skills will be most important to the success of our students as workers and citizens of the 21st Century, we can predict with some certainty that knowing Chinese will become of paramount importance.

Educational Philosophy

The Boston Chinese Immersion Charter School believes that all children benefit from learning in more than one language and that to truly learn a language one must also learn the culture that underlies the language. Since children acquire language best in their youth when their affective filter is lowest and their pronunciation skills are still developing, BCICS believes that they should begin their Chinese language study in kindergarten and is thus committed to a foreign language immersion elementary model as the optimal means for students to reach their full academic and intellectual potential in all subject areas. BCICS also believes that learning happens best within a respectful community of learners led by teachers who are also learners; that global and cultural diversity contributes to the learning of all community members; that a range of assessments are the best means for measuring the full academic performance and potential within a child; and that subject matter mastery is necessary for academic success.

BCICS believes that families are active participants in a child's successful educational development and seeks to develop a strong partnership with families who enroll their children in the school. BCICS also believes that the path to life-long academic success begins with conversations about post-secondary education in childhood.

School Organization and Culture

BCICS proposes to open in August 2011 with (3) kindergarten classes and (2) first grade classes with 20 students in each class for a total of 100 students. The school's operational structure of a longer school day, 8 hours, and a longer school year, 190 days, with before school and after school programs, is aligned to meet the school's vision of academic success for every student. BCICS will strive for a diverse student body in terms of language, ethnicity, socio-economic status, physical and mental abilities, English fluency, immigrant status, family composition, religion, race and learning abilities, believing that students learn and thrive best in diverse environments that are academically and socially enriching. The school curriculum will weave language immersion, character development, personal discipline, technology and social integration into all subjects and all instruction with an emphasis on global and cultural diversity. BCICS will develop a strong relationship between the school and families with adult classes and extended day learning for working parents. Families will have a non-voting advisory member on the Governing Board and will be closely linked to the school through interactive technology.

Community of Learners

From the hiring of native Mandarin-speaking teachers, to placing the school in or near Chinatown, to the representation of ethnic Chinese among the Founders, BCICS will teach, learn and breathe the Chinese language and culture in an academically rigorous environment within the larger community of learners.

It will be an active community of respectful learners comprised of students, teachers and staff, family members, and community members. BCICS will include organizations that seek to bridge China and the greater Boston communities through education, business and cultural exchanges. BCICS will work with local charities serving the Asian community; students will participate in community service projects at all grade levels. The proposed school has received enthusiastic and generous responses from the Boston cultural, academic and business communities with substantive offers of partnerships for curriculum and professional development enrichment from The Confucius Institute; The Boston Children's Museum; Museum of Science; The Museum of Fine Arts; The University of Massachusetts Boston; Emerson College and Suffolk University. BCICS also seeks to develop a partnership with the Boston public school system.

The Founding Group

The founding group consists of dedicated members who are certified educators with many years of teaching experience in K-8, high school and colleges, including those who have implemented charter school legislation in Massachusetts and served as directors of bilingual, ESL and two-way immersion programs. The Founders are supported by an Advisory Board whose members include a current head of a charter school and another who headed a charter school. Other members are experts in pre-school, bilingual education, curriculum and instruction, technology as well as teachers, skilled administrators and professionals in real estate, finance and law. Both groups are racially and ethnically diverse and include parents dedicated to the success of the proposed school in the hope that their children might one day attend.

Boston Green Academy

Executive Summary

This was prepared by the founding group of the Boston Green Academy.

Our proposal closely aligns with the goals of Superintendent Johnson's *Acceleration Agenda*, her *Five-Year Plan*, and *An Act Relative to the Achievement Gap* recently approved by Governor Patrick and the Massachusetts Legislature.

Boston Green Academy's mission is to graduate all of our students prepared for success in college and the workforce. We are especially committed to recruiting, enrolling, and supporting off-track 6th and 9th grade students before they enter the "drop-out pipeline". As a public school that is deeply vested in cultivating a highly skilled and actively engaged global citizenry, we will prepare all of our students to be leaders in local and global environmental stewardship and activism, to live their lives responsibly and sustainably, and to take advantage of employment opportunities in the burgeoning "green" economy.

We will replicate Fenway High School's successful family and student support systems, its high-quality instruction and performance assessments, and its systems for including students with disabilities and English Language Learners. We will also add innovative approaches, e.g., a pervasive "sustainability" theme, trauma readiness, community-based support systems, single-sex programming, a Summer Academy, and Universal Design for Learning/graphic design strategies that are woven into our pedagogy, assessments, and educational materials.

Boston Green Academy will open in 2012 with new students in grade 9 and students from a closed BPS high school (TBD) in grades 10-12. Starting in 2013, we will add middle school grades over three years until we reach full capacity (595 students) in 2015. To ensure a high degree of personalization, enrollment in each grade will not exceed 85.

We will be a school that is accessible to all Boston students and families, but our recruitment strategy will emphasize outreach to students and families who might never find their way to a high quality educational option like Boston Green Academy. Our goal is to create a truly heterogeneous student body in which 50% of our school's entering 6th and 9th graders have not experienced success in the previous academic year (per Parthenon & Balfanz reports).

Proximity to rapid transit will allow our students to access dual enrollment, internships, and off-site job training opportunities and will allow resources (tutors, guest speakers, mentors, etc.) to flow freely into the school. Rapid transit access is also consistent with our "sustainability" theme and will save the Boston Public Schools transportation costs.

In summary, Boston Green Academy will:

- graduate students who are at high risk of dropping out
- attract/re-enroll families who leave BPS
- improve the district's fiscal health by increasing enrollment, reducing the number of students who drop out, and implementing "green" practices throughout the school
- increase the district's overall capacity to end the drop-out crisis by developing, implementing, documenting, and sharing best practices that address the crisis early in students' academic career.

Boston Green Academy's academic program is innovative and rigorous and will prepare all of our students to be successful in college and the workforce. Our courses will adhere to the Massachusetts Frameworks while cutting across traditional academic boundaries and using resources creatively. Our school's "green" theme will be woven into all courses. We plan to offer the following curricular areas:

Science: Using the extensive resources of our partners, we plan to provide an inquiry-based science education that prominently features our "green" theme. We plan to offer unified science in grades 6-8 with a focus on building strong habits of mind and investigatory skills. Our high school program includes Physics, Biology, Chemistry, and AP Environmental Science. We also plan to offer robust internships, community-based fieldwork, and exploratory opportunities.

Math: In keeping with the "habits of mind" approach to mathematics that the Boston Public Schools has adopted, we plan to offer the Connected Math Program 2 in grades 6 and 7 supplemented by a program like Mathscape that supports math investigations more fully. We will implement the new Center for Mathematics Education Project program for grades 8-11 with Algebra I being the standard course for all grade 8 students. For seniors, we plan to offer AP Calculus and to explore dual enrollment options at area colleges. A "Foundations of Math" course will also be offered in grades 6 and 9 to shore up students' identified skill and content gaps.

Humanities: We will offer an interdisciplinary course of study for students in grades 6-12 that integrates the frameworks for ELA and History into in-depth courses focused on essential questions, literacy development, research-based writing, and critical thinking. We will also offer "Foundations", a supplemental literacy course in reading and writing, to all students in grades 6 and 9 and to students who need it in grades 8 and 10. Nationally acclaimed curriculum resources developed by Facing History and Ourselves will be used in Humanities courses across all grades.

World Languages: We plan to greatly exceed the BPS standard requirements in this area by offering Spanish in grades 6 and 7 for a half-year, in grade 8 for a full year, and in grades 9-11 as required courses. In addition, we are exploring ways to partner with cultural and academic institutions to offer Mandarin Chinese, both as a way to support global awareness and to provide native Spanish-speakers—and those who prefer another language option—an additional college-preparatory experience.

Arts, Entrepreneurship, and Physical Education: These powerful content areas inspire many adolescents and will be offered in innovative ways to all students through our collaborative partnerships and our core faculty, both as discrete courses and as essential elements of our core curricular classes and Advisory.

Advisory: Students at all grade levels will be supported academically and socially through the implementation of an Advisory program that will feature ongoing study skills development, role-like groups and field experiences, mentoring and tutoring, physical activity and recreation, college application support, financial literacy training, and civic education. In most cases advisories will be co-taught by one teacher who is a consistent advocate for a small cohort of students and families over multiple years and another teacher who has expertise with students at specific developmental levels.

Bridge Boston Charter School Executive Summary

This was prepared by the founding group of the Bridge Boston Charter School.

Mission: Bridge Boston Charter School students thrive in a challenging, joyful, inclusive K1-8 public school community that values close partnerships with families and a focus on the whole child. Our students will develop the skills necessary to excel academically in rigorous high schools, reach their individual potentials, and view themselves as creators of their own futures. Through full-service programming, Bridge Boston Charter School works to remove the health and social obstacles that hinder student learning.

Community Support: All members of the Bridge Boston Charter School Founding Board are deeply connected to Mattapan, Dorchester, and Boston as a whole through years of work, community service, and residence, making us keenly aware of the need for greater educational options for Boston families. We anticipate that our school will serve as a neighborhood resource. We will make a special effort to reach out to parents/guardians with children who qualify for free and reduced-price lunch, have special needs, or are English Language Learners. We will provide our intent to enroll form in multiple languages. We will be clear that we are a free, public school open to all students regardless of academic performance or special needs.

Rigorous Academics: Bridge Boston Charter School will feature a challenging academic program with high standards and consistent accountability. Our individualized academic program will feature expanded learning time, will teach basic skills and empower students to develop rich intellectual lives. In the first four grades, the program will feature central themes which integrate language arts, social studies, science, art, physical education, and music. Students will be assessed using standardized tests, social and academic benchmarks, and other classroom assessments. Bridge Boston is deeply committed to being part of the effort to close the achievement gap that exists between many urban children and their peers across the state.

Full-Service School: Bridge Boston Charter School will focus on the elimination of barriers to learning, utilizing vibrant community partnerships to meet the health and social service needs of our students, including screening and referral for vision, hearing, dentistry, scoliosis, immunizations and mental health needs. As a full-service school, we will also partner with community organizations to provide evening classes and workshops for parents and guardians and to assist families and children in a variety of other ways.

Deliberate Shared Community Values: Bridge Boston Charter School will be a nurturing school in which each individual, child and adult, is well known and supported in their efforts to offer their best every day. Our culture will value respect, responsibility, integrity, empathy, high expectations, the joy of life-long learning, and service to others.

Partnerships with Parents and Guardians: We believe that a consistent, close relationship between teachers and families is crucial for the success of students and the

school. These relationships will be nourished and respected through close communication and opportunities for parents and guardians to engage meaningfully in the school community through volunteering, visiting, and evening programs. We will ask parents/guardians to hold us to the high standards that we set for ourselves and that we owe to the Commonwealth and to the children in our role as a public school. Teachers will find a collaborative and cohesive shared culture that will help leverage their efforts to improve teaching and learning throughout the school.

Enhanced options: Bridge Boston Charter School will enhance the educational options open to children and families because we will:

- Teach rigorous academic content and set high standards;
- Provide well-utilized expanded learning time and after-school extended day programs;
- Offer an innovative and integrated curriculum, including an interdisciplinary focus, central themes, and a rich program in art, music, and physical education;
- Have deliberate consistent differentiation of instruction to meet each student's individual needs, including a daily class period for additional support or enrichment;
- Have a vibrant intern teacher program to allow smaller classes, more individual attention for students, and to train future urban educators;
- Feature a K1-grade 8 format;
- Include small classes averaging 18 children;
- Offer full-service programming to meet students' health needs;
- Include intensive professional development to encourage adoption and replication of best practices;
- Help place graduates in rigorous high schools at the optimal entry point for each student;
- Create deliberate community and parent/guardian partnerships, including parent/guardian programs for ESL, GEDs, or financial management;
- Help develop students' essential social and emotional skills, knowledge, and awareness.

Capacity of Founding Group: The founding group came together through a strong commitment to serve economically disadvantaged children of Boston. About half of our group members have supported the success of Epiphany School in Dorchester, as founders, administrators, teachers, volunteers, and members and presidents of the Board. Epiphany accepts students for its program for grades 5-8 through a lottery open to Boston children eligible for free and reduced-price lunches, with siblings automatically admitted, and 20% of seats reserved for children involved with the Department of Children and Families. Ninety-nine percent of Epiphany students are children of color. Fifty-two percent speak English as a second language and 24% have special needs. Students show 1.7 years of progress, on average, for each year of attendance, as measured by national standardized tests. Attrition and absentee rates are under 5%. Eighty-nine percent of age-appropriate graduates have earned high school diplomas, including one third at independent schools; one third at Boston exam, charter, or pilot schools; and one third at parochial schools. For the three most recent college-ready classes, 72% of graduates are enrolled in college. Epiphany remains in touch with 96% of its alumni and arranged

summer internships or jobs for 85% of its graduates who are in high school. A strong intern teacher program further enables individual attention and extended school days. Seventy-seven percent of interns choose to teach urban children as a career. Fully 39% of Epiphany faculty members and top administrators have served since the school opened 12 years ago. The school has extensive community partnerships to provide full-service programming and student enrichment. Epiphany is financially supported by about 1600 donors each year, allowing annual budget surpluses, a schoolhouse and intern house without debt, and a small endowment. The school has been also been supported by many Boston political leaders, is accredited by the National Association of Independent Schools, and has been replicated by more than a dozen schools throughout the United States.

Other Founding Board members also share strong ties to Boston and a commitment to urban children. The Founding Board's 15 members include a cumulative 212 years of Boston residency, 307 years working in Boston, 220 years as educators, and 252 years of service on Boston-area nonprofit boards. A separate 11-person curriculum design team includes 9 elementary school teachers, totaling a cumulative 270 years of teaching experience.

Bridge Boston Charter School will have no affiliation whatsoever with Epiphany School and will have a completely separate Board of Trustees, policies, and personnel. (Epiphany School will continue to thrive as a financially sound, independent, successful school under the leadership of its current Head of School, Principal, and Board.) The Bridge Boston Charter School Founding Board seeks to replicate elements of Epiphany's success, but specifically seeks the role of a public charter school, with its accountability and emphasis on dissemination of successful elements that may be replicated by others. This role in the public sector is part of an exciting drive to improve educational opportunities and to build a stronger web of social support for urban children. We also seek to serve younger students when educational growth may be most profound, when self-esteem and academic habits are in formation, and where close family partnerships may serve students over many years.

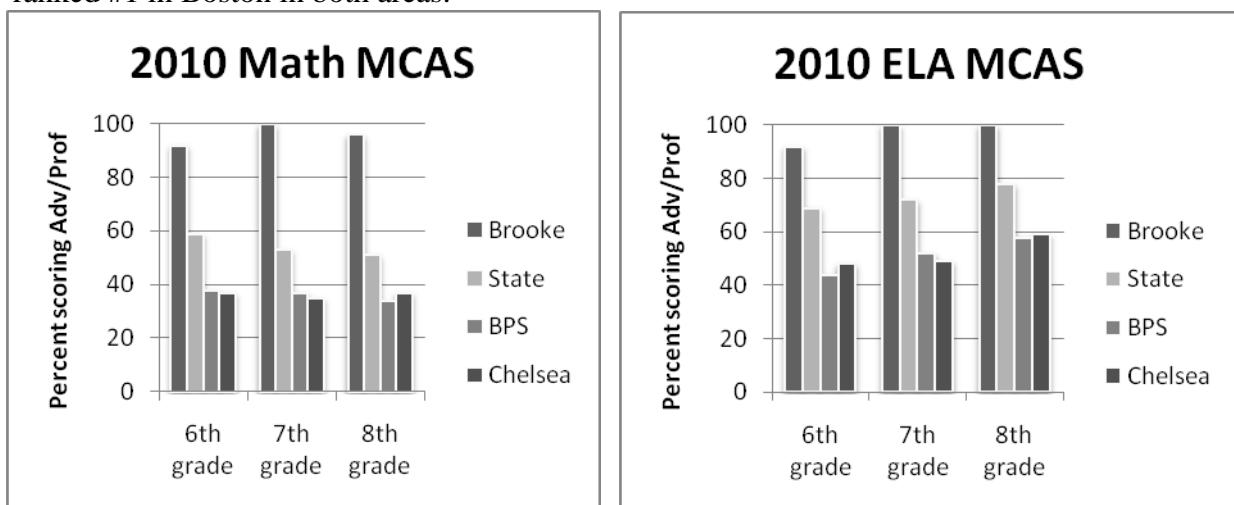
Brooke 2, 3, and 4 Charter Schools **Executive Summary**

This was prepared by the founding group of the Brooke 2, 3, and 4 Charter Schools.

“Brooke 2” and “Brooke 4” will be K-8 schools, located in Boston, each serving 475 students. “Brooke 3” will be a K-8 school, located in Boston, serving 475 students from Boston and Chelsea. The school’s mission is to provide an academically rigorous education to students from the cities of Boston and Chelsea that will ensure that they are prepared to attend and succeed in college. The applicant group came together through the course of its experience as the governing board at the original Brooke School, and it includes all members of the current board of trustees, the chair of the advisory board, and the co-directors of the original Brooke School.

The original Brooke school in Roslindale, founded in 2002, has quietly grown into one of the highest performing schools in the city and the state. At Brooke, students are closing the achievement gap and exceeding expectations for even Massachusetts’ highest performing students. On the 2010 MCAS:

- Our 8th graders ranked #1 in the state in both math and ELA.
- Our 7th graders ranked #1 in the state in both math and ELA.
- Our 6th graders ranked #6 in the state in math and #18 in the state in ELA.
- Our 4th graders ranked #3 in the state in math and #12 in the state in ELA. They ranked #1 in Boston in both areas.



The founding group is committed to bringing this opportunity for an excellent education to more Boston families and to Chelsea families. We expect to serve a population that is very similar to the population we have served at the original Brooke School, where 98% of our students are African-American or Latino and 72% are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch. We are committed to closing the achievement gap and will continue to welcome families in this demographic.

In Boston, demand for enrollment at the original Brooke School alone is sufficient to enroll three schools of the size we seek in this application. Our current waiting list in

grades K-6 stands at over 1,500 students (our current enrollment policy does not allow for new students in grades 7 and 8). We are confident that opening schools in different locations throughout the city, coupled with our ability as of 2011 to send a direct mailing to eligible families and our expansion in Brooke 3 to a regional school including Chelsea, will further increase demand.

The founding group is committed to developing a replicable school model. To that end, the original Brooke school has been minimally reliant on private fundraising and has produced its results at the same or lower per-pupil expenditure as Boston Public Schools.

We believe that the achievement gap is the shame of our nation – and that great teaching can close it. Our vision for this school is the same vision that has led to excellent results at the original Brooke School. This vision is shaped not only by what we believe, but also by what research has proven. Research tells us that the number one predictor of student achievement isn't race. It isn't socio-economic status. It's teacher quality. The best lever that we have to help low-income and minority students succeed is the same one that is most effective in helping all students achieve, regardless of their backgrounds: quality teaching in bigger doses. Therefore, our approach is guided by the following questions:

- a. **What does research tell us about what quality teaching looks like?** Our standards of excellent teaching include four major domains:
 - **Growth Mindset** - Research tells us that great teachers instill in their students the belief that intelligence is not something we are given, but something we work for. Brooke scholars will know what it means to work hard and to experience the related rewards.
 - **Strong Leadership, Strong Relationships** - Research tells us that great teachers are strong leaders who develop nurturing but demanding relationships with their students. Brooke scholars will feel known and cared for.
 - **Basic Skills AND a Conceptual Framework** - Research tells us that great teachers engage and challenge students to think and conceptualize, while at the same time building proficiency and automaticity in basic skills. Brooke scholars will develop automaticity in basic skills AND an ability to think critically.
 - **Individualized Feedback** - Research tells us that great teachers assess their students frequently and follow-up with individualized feedback and support. Brooke scholars will receive prompt and frequent feedback on their performance.
- b. **How can we best develop our teachers to ensure that they can deliver this kind of quality teaching to our scholars?** The cornerstone of our program is professional development. Our teachers will be relentlessly reflective about their practice, using weekly video analysis, peer observation, and collaborative lesson study to improve. When analyzing data to give targeted feedback to students, teachers will simultaneously use that data to improve their own performance, analyzing the extent of their own effectiveness in teaching each learning standard to mastery.

c. **How can we create the conditions across the school community that support quality teaching?**

We are proud to serve among the ranks of the “no-excuses” charter schools that are closing the achievement gap across the United States.

Together, our schools have shown that we can close the achievement gap by instituting common sense practices, such as:

- Providing for more time on instruction (longer school day and school year)
- Ensuring a safe and orderly learning environment
- Establishing a positive, achievement-focused school culture
- Implementing strong organizational supports and resources for teachers
- Self-contained classes all the way up through 8th grade in order to ensure that students are known and cared for and to ensure that teachers have the opportunity to co-plan in a meaningful context
- Dedicating time each day, each week, and each school year to professional development to help teachers continually improve their practice

Collegiate Charter School Executive Summary

This was prepared by the founding group of the Collegiate Charter School.

Collegiate Charter School will be a high quality, innovative school serving students in grades 6-12 in Springfield, Massachusetts, and surrounding areas. The school's mission is to prepare first-generation and other underserved students to be successful at institutions of higher learning by giving them the opportunity to earn a high school diploma while simultaneously earning college credits through American International College. Students will be afforded a chance to earn up to two years of college credits at the secondary level. Through this model, students will gain the skills and attitudes to thrive in our increasingly technological and global economy. CCS students will be educated in a caring environment that recognizes that all learners are unique and strives to tailor educational experiences to embody that concept. Using the resources of the school, American International College, students' families, and the community, CCS will build supportive teams that encourage all students to set high academic and personal goals for themselves, achieve those goals, and proceed to further post-secondary education with confidence and college credits in hand.

CCS will enroll a student body that is urban, historically underserved, and frequently underperforming. The school holds as its core the fundamental values and practices of the Early College High School and Middle High School models. Those values include: providing a small school environment in which students are known and valued; creating a collaboration among school, higher education partner, and the community—all of whom share responsibility for student success; developing an integrated curriculum that allows secondary students to earn up to a full year of transferable college credits; and offering a comprehensive support structure in school to ensure academic and social skills necessary for college access and success.

The vision of CCS is to increase the rate of college entry of first-generation and underserved students in Springfield and the surrounding area. CCS will address clear needs existing at both a national level and at the local target level—Springfield and its surrounding area. In the wake of the No Child Left Behind Act and other national and state mandates, many urban schools are struggling to attain the new standards that have emerged from recent research and study groups. This struggle is particularly visible when one looks at the target population for CCS: first generation students, underserved populations, and those who lack sufficient financial resources to navigate college costs. Additionally, transforming the culture of low-achieving urban schools from a culture of failure to a culture of college going is a necessary process if post-secondary access and success are to be open to all. Research on successful transformations of urban schools suggests the necessity of innovations beyond simply academic reform in order to achieve secondary and post-secondary success. Students and their families need direct programming that provides information, encouragement, and support in seeing college and career attainment as necessary and possible. Underserved students need to be invited and trained to join the ranks of mentors, school leaders, civic participants, and community volunteers in order to recognize their talents and build their college and

career portfolios. Research demonstrates that such students are less likely to have access to situations in which they can develop and practice leadership skills, take part in volunteer and civic activities, attend events on a college campus and engage in enrichment activities, in large part because of issues such as transportation, GPA, finances, lack of networking, and safety concerns. Therefore, a school such as CCS can be the key change agent in providing equity. The most recent demographics of the target area for CCS reinforce the need for such a school. The student population of the Springfield Public Schools as of June, 2009, was 25, 360, with 5, 634 middle school students and 7, 067 in grades 9-12. The population by ethnicity is: 23.2% African American; 2.2% Asian; 54.8% Hispanic; 15.7 % White, 4% Multiracial; and .01% Native American. The Special Education population is 22.9%; 13% of all students are considered Limited English Proficiency, and 23% do not speak English as a first language. The percentage of all students eligible for free and reduced lunch is 81.6%. According to 2008 statistics, only 15.9% of residents held a bachelors degree and 5.9% a graduate degree. The dropout rate is high compared to the state average, and Black and Hispanic students, particularly males, are at even greater risk. Just 54.4% of students in the target geography graduated from high school, according to 2008 statistics. The rates for attendance at a four-year college in the Springfield, West Springfield, and Chicopee districts fall below the state average. The populations of potential first-generation students in Chicopee and West Springfield also are high, with only 17% and 29% of residents respectively having attained a bachelor's degree or beyond.

CCS is proposed to open in the 2011-2012 academic year in Springfield. During its first year, students in grades 6-8 will be served. In each subsequent year, at least one grade level will be added until the school enrolls grades 6-12. In keeping with the value of a small school environment in which students are known and valued, no more than 100 students will be enrolled in any one grade.

In order to successfully achieve the school's mission and vision, CCS has built a core educational philosophy that is translated into six specific practices. Those are Early Career Awareness, Tailored Instruction, College Expectations, Relational Learning, Service Leadership, and Families as Partners.

All students will be expected to engage in personal, career and academic goal setting; take part in service activities; demonstrate leadership in their school and community; prepare for post-secondary access and success; and be active, positive members of their school. Family and community will be welcome into all aspects of the school's life, and the AIC faculty, staff, and students will be valued team members who will make possible the goal of all students leaving high school with not simply a diploma, but college credits in hand. CCS distinguishes itself in making assumptions about the inherent potential of its student population. Rather than seeing a few students as natural leaders, all students are asked: **What kind of leader are you going to be?** Rather than viewing some students as "college material," all students will be able to answer: **How will you use your strengths, talents and interests to develop a path to college and career?** In expecting that all students can develop agency and self efficacy in meeting their college and career goals, they explore the question: **What are the roles that you can play in developing academic goals, monitoring them, and achieving them?** Finally, each

student is continuously prompted to evaluate his/her answer to the query: **What have I done to be a positive member of the learning community at CCS?**

CCS students will study core subjects such as Language Arts, Math, Social Studies, and Science; they meet the requirements of a traditional middle and high school curriculum while enrolled. However, the structure of their day—which is extended until 5 pm—includes many additional experiences developed to ensure that the expectations above are met. They begin each day with a core group—a small group of students assigned to the same faculty or staff member; the group functions as both an advisory group and a “family” group. After core subjects and lunch/recess have been completed, students move into Enrichment Period. During this time, guest speakers, college personnel and students, prospective employers or others may present programs; students can meet in interest groups or clubs; college preparatory activities can take place; and School Improvement Committees (to which each student belongs) gather to make plans that will improve all aspects of school and community. During this time, leadership and peer mentor training can occur, as well as service activities. Teachers and staff take turns facilitating the various activities. The day ends with Achievement Center, in which students can receive tutoring or mentoring, get help with or finish homework, use computers, or—in the case of upper grade students, work on college courses or participate in community-based internships or jobs. The high school will function on a dual-enrollment system. As high school students are deemed ready, they enroll in courses through AIC or another higher education partner, thus getting a head start on earning credits and mastering the requirements of college-level work.

CCS is an inclusive school, in which students with special needs and those with limited proficiency in English will be served by the Director of Student Services. A vast array of supports in such areas as reading, writing and speech are provided. Beyond following the required protocols for such learners, s/he will convene teams that include teachers, staff, parents/guardians, and, when appropriate, students, mentors and other key personnel. Assessment and modification of each student’s individualized plan are ongoing. Additionally, special students are integrated into the full experience of the school community through the expectation that they will take part in mentoring, service, leadership and career planning.

CCS also strives to be a community school. In determining the need for a school such as CCS, founding members conducted a phone survey targeting the largest of the potential communities: Springfield, West Springfield, and Chicopee. Analysis of data showed that respondents not only saw the need for an early college charter school in the area (Springfield, 89%; West Springfield, 94%, and Chicopee, 92%), but had substantial interest in sending their own school-age children to such a school (Springfield, 79%, West Springfield 72%, Chicopee, 82%). The combination of an enthusiastic college partner in AIC, community interest, and demonstrated need make the site a logical choice. In promoting family and community collaboration, CCS will invite those partners to take part in celebrations such as First Night’s Eve and Recognition Breakfasts; serve on committees; attend professional development trainings; conference quarterly with students and staff; and use the resources of the Family Coordinator and dedicated Family Resource Center at school.

**Community Day Charter Public School – Riverside
Community Day Charter Public School - South
Executive Summary**

*This was prepared by the founding group of the
Community Day Charter Public School-Riverside (CDCPS-Riverside) and the
Community Day Charter Public School-South (CDCPS-South).*

The mission of the Community Day Charter Public School-Riverside (CDCPS-Riverside) and the Community Day Charter Public School-South (CDCPS-South) is to provide a rigorous academic experience for early Kindergarten (K-1) - Grade 8 students in Lawrence, a Massachusetts “Gateway” city where most parents of school-age children identify Spanish as the first language of the family. Each school will replicate programs and best practices developed by Community Day Charter Public School in Lawrence, drawing upon the expertise of experienced founders and board members who have an established track record of providing an effective curriculum and establishing a school culture with high expectations for student achievement. The school has an impressive history of developing innovative approaches to teaching students and in replicating those practices through training. At its inception in 1995, the school envisioned the need for standards based curriculum, English immersion for English language learners, and the use of data to support student learning. Students graduating from grade 8 at CDCPS demonstrate proficiency on standardized tests of achievement; they are well-prepared and successful in high school, including high schools that base admission on achievement, and college.

In 1995 CDCPS founders adopted one of seven national instructional models that were developed by research groups with funding from the U.S. Department of Education. When at a later date, Massachusetts Standards were promulgated, CDCPS teachers realigned curriculum to meet state requirements and were among the first to be funded by the MA DESE to provide standards based training to new teachers from across the Commonwealth. Teachers at the school continue to design pedagogy and develop core content in response to data analysis related to standard based goals. The school was also among the first in the state to hire a full time director of data reporting and analysis. The school’s rigorous use of data to assess both student learning and teacher competency and to provide insights into improving classroom teaching has become a model that is funded by foundations for replication in other schools. CDCPS proposed a program of English immersion for second language learners in its 1995 Commonwealth Charter application. Founders drew upon their experience with Lawrence children in early childhood programs to propose a language immersion curriculum that is supported by Spanish speaking classroom teachers. The school has been recognized by several national groups for its outstanding record in closing the achievement gap for low income, second language learners; these are cited in the narrative describing plans to build a network of schools.

Student achievement data as well as parent demand support the need for another high performing charter school like CDCPS in Lawrence. In Lawrence there is a very large achievement gap for proficiency on the MCAS between all white students in the state and Lawrence Hispanic students (-39.4 points in 2009). On the other hand, CDCPS has

completely closed the achievement gap between Hispanic students and all white students in the state (+3.8 points in 2008 and +0.8 points in 2009). Moreover there are over 1,000 families on the school's wait list.

In addition to success in the area of academic achievement, and critical to that achievement, is the school's attention to every aspect of student development and its belief in supporting the individual differences of each child. Music and art programs as well as Spanish language instruction, a strong athletic and physical education program, community service and values based character development are all aspects of CDCPS culture that we will replicate in our new school. We also have a strong commitment to the role of parents in developing our school. CDCPS was founded with input from parents and we propose to draw upon parent counsel in developing our new school by implementing a comprehensive marketing program of outreach to potential parents. We will ask them to serve on our founding parent advisory board to help us develop policies related to issues like uniforms, school calendar, field trips and school discipline and on our governing board to develop policies related to school governance. The many parents who enroll their children in the school lottery each year are testimony to the level of satisfaction families have with not only the academic life of the school but all aspects of its culture and achievement.

Past experience in sharing the innovations cited above will support the replication of these successful practices for our new school. CDCPS teachers have impressive records in delivering training and disseminating good practices for other teachers and schools. The school launched its consulting and training initiative, *Community Partners Initiative* (CPI) in 2002 to disseminate school practices relative to the use of data, curriculum mapping, aligning curriculum with standards, and meeting the needs of ELL students. Teachers and administrators from the school developed instructional content and workshops to train a range of both charter and district school teachers and administrators throughout the state and beyond. The school's director of data and analysis developed a series of reports relative to MCAS data used by teachers to improve classroom teaching; to date CPI has trained over 1,000 teachers to use these data reports.

Finally, CDCPS will extend its successful approach to school management by collaborating with the non-profit agency, Community Day Care Center of Lawrence, Inc. (d/b/a Community Day Charter Management Organization) to provide its new school with central services: fundraising and development, technology, human resources, financial services, data reporting and analysis. This practice is both efficient and effective; it is a cost effective way of distributing central functions across several programs to enable an efficient delivery of services at a reduced cost. Moreover the assigning of central management functions to the agency permits the school administrators to concentrate their energies on being quality instructional leaders, able to focus on strategic areas of school culture and student life.

Dorchester, Dudley Square, and Grove Hall Preparatory Charter Schools Executive Summary

*This was prepared by the founding group of the
Dorchester, Dudley Square, and Grove Hall Preparatory Charter Schools.*

Dorchester, Dudley Square, and Grove Hall Preparatory Charter Schools, 5th – 12th grade public schools, will prepare students to enter, succeed in, and graduate from college. Dorchester, Dudley Square, and Grove Hall Preparatory Charter Schools are founded on the philosophy that all students are entitled to and can succeed in college preparatory programs when: 1) the curriculum is rigorous, engaging, and well-planned; 2) the school emphasizes student character, community responsibility, and exposure to life's possibilities; and 3) a community network supports student academic, social, and physical well-being.

Dorchester, Dudley Square, and Grove Hall Preparatory Charter Schools will be based on the successful model created by Roxbury Preparatory Charter School, a 6th – 8th grade public school located in Mission Hill. Since its founding in 1999, Roxbury Prep's enrollment has grown to 256 students. The student body is currently composed entirely of students of color. Most students live in single-parent households and 76 percent qualify for either free or reduced-price lunch. Internal and external assessments of entering 6th grade students at Roxbury Prep indicate that students, on average, arrive with poor basic academic skills—one-third of enrolling students typically score at least two years below grade level on the Stanford 9 Achievement Test.

On the 2010 MCAS exams, Roxbury Prep has closed the achievement gap: one hundred percent of 8th graders passed the Math and English Language Arts exams, scoring Advanced and Proficient at a rate of 82% and 93%, respectively. Roxbury Prep was recognized by Governor Patrick as a Commendation School, citing Roxbury Prep students' impressive student achievement gains. Roxbury Prep has been cited by the United States Department of Education and national organizations such as the Education Trust as one of the best charter schools in the country, a model for closing the persistent racial achievement gap.

School Overview

Dorchester Prep, Dudley Square Prep, and Grove Hall Prep will be singularly focused on preparing students to matriculate into and graduate from college. Dorchester Prep, Dudley Square Prep, and Grove Hall Prep students will be challenged, enriched, and supported. The first class of seventy-five 5th grade students will begin in August 2011 and a new class will be added each year until Dorchester Prep, Dudley Square Prep, and Grove Hall Prep each serve up to 600 students in grades 5 – 12.

Daily Schedule

Dorchester, Dudley Square, and Grove Hall Preparatory Charter Schools will place an intense focus on their core academic program. The school day will run from 7:45 AM to 4:15 PM—the significantly longer school day will allow for additional instructional time to address previous academic deficiencies and to provide for more academically

challenging opportunities. Every student will take two literacy classes and two mathematics classes each day in addition to social studies and science. Each academic class will meet for nearly one hour. Extended learning will occur before school, after school, in Saturday sessions, and through summer opportunities. Additionally, all middle school students will participate in a mandatory extended day Enrichment program from 3:15 PM to 4:15 PM. Enrichment classes will include visual and performing arts, athletics, and foreign language. High school electives will be offered throughout the school day rather than at the end of the day.

Curriculum and Instruction

The hallmark of Dorchester, Dudley Square, and Grove Hall Preparatory Charter Schools' program will be a rigorous curriculum focused on reading, writing, speaking, and mathematics. Advanced Placement exams, state guidelines, and other successful college preparatory programs will be used to establish specific, rigorous, and measurable academic standards. All courses will align with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks (MCF) and MCAS exams. Teachers will meet for three weeks each summer to develop and refine the curriculum. To encourage student achievement through reflective teaching, improved practice, and collaboration, teachers will form Inquiry Groups. During summer and school-year Inquiry Group meetings, teachers share their own work and analyze student work to consider teacher efficacy, evidence of student learning, and achievement of goals.

Character

Dorchester, Dudley Square, and Grove Hall Preparatory Charter Schools' classes, Community Meetings, and school programs will encourage students to be confident, responsible, positive, determined, compassionate, and reflective leaders. Friday Advisory class will focus on deepening student understanding of concepts described in the Dorchester, Dudley Square, and Grove Hall Preparatory Charter Schools' creed such as dignity, community, and leadership. Student achievement is dependent upon a positive, safe, caring, and vibrant school community. In order to ensure high academic standards, Dorchester Prep, Dudley Square Prep, and Grove Hall Prep will maintain high personal standards. Each school will require a dress code and enforce a strict code of conduct in which misbehavior is not tolerated. The safe environment will allow classes to be focused and effective and enable Dorchester Prep, Dudley Square Prep, and Grove Hall Prep to celebrate learning and recognize each student's academic and personal talents and accomplishments.

Community

Dorchester, Dudley Square, and Grove Hall Preparatory Charter Schools will rely on a vast array of community resources and organizations to provide students with sufficient structure and support. Families—the school's most important partners—will be expected to monitor schoolwork, communicate effectively with Dorchester Prep, Dudley Square Prep, and Grove Hall Prep, and ensure that students arrive on time every day. Dorchester Prep, Dudley Square Prep, and Grove Hall Prep will keep families involved and well-informed through orientations, family nights, family/teacher conferences, family breakfasts, bi-weekly advisor/family phone calls, newsletters, monthly academic progress reports, a Homework Hotline, evening programs, and the Family Involvement Committee. The parental demand and wide community support for Roxbury Preparatory

Charter School is evidence of the support that will exist for Dorchester Prep, Dudley Square Prep, and Grove Hall Prep.

Founding Group Capacity

The founding group of the Dorchester, Dudley Square, and Grove Hall Preparatory Charter Schools consists of the Board of Trustees of Roxbury Preparatory Charter School led by Greg Shell, Chairperson, Will Austin, Co-Director of Roxbury Prep, Debby Saintil Previna, Principal of Grove Hall Prep, and Oliver Truog, Director of Operations of Grove Hall Square Prep. This Board and leadership of Roxbury Prep have worked together to create conditions for the outstanding results of Roxbury Preparatory Charter School.

First and foremost, this group has the capacity to make Dorchester Prep, Dudley Square Prep, and Grove Hall Prep successful by utilizing the model of and lessons learned from Roxbury Preparatory Charter School. In addition, the Roxbury Preparatory Charter School Board of Trustees has engaged Uncommon Schools, a non-profit charter management organization with a tremendous track record, as a partner in building and managing Dorchester, Dudley Square, and Grove Hall Preparatory Charter Schools.

Uncommon Schools manages twenty-three schools in New York and New Jersey serving students in kindergarten through 12th grade that have consistently closed the achievement gap and are among the highest-performing public schools in the Northeast. Evan Rudall, the CEO of Uncommon Schools, is a founding Co-Director of Roxbury Prep and Josh Phillips, the COO of Uncommon Schools, is a former Co-Director of Roxbury Prep. In exchange for a management fee, the Board of Trustees will receive programmatic and operational services from Uncommon Schools.

Uncommon Schools will provide curriculum and instruction support to the leaders of Dorchester Prep, Dudley Square Prep, and Grove Hall Prep through Managing Director Dana Lehman. Ms. Lehman taught at Roxbury Prep from 2001-2004 and served as Co-Director for Curriculum and Instruction from 2004-2010. Ms. Lehman will be able to provide hands-on coaching and support to the leaders of Roxbury Prep Charter School, Dorchester Prep Charter School, Dudley Square Prep Charter School, Grove Hall Prep Charter School, and any other future schools that are part of the network. In addition, Roxbury Prep teachers and leaders will have access to a full range of quality professional development opportunities through Uncommon Schools. Uncommon Schools will provide significant operational support to Dorchester Prep, Dudley Square Prep, and Grove Hall Prep. These services include teacher and staff recruitment, fundraising, financial management and payroll, real estate, human resources, marketing, and technology. The founding group's experience with a successful school model and the partnership between the Board of Trustees and Uncommon Schools ensures that this founding group has the capacity to allow Dorchester Prep, Dudley Square Prep, and Grove Hall Prep to effectively serve students and families by preparing its students to enter, succeed in, and graduate from college.

Excel Academy Charter School – Boston, Boston II, and Chelsea

Executive Summary

*This was prepared by the founding group of the
Excel Academy Charter School – Boston, Boston II, and Chelsea.*

Our Mission

Excel Academy Charter School – Boston, Boston II, and Chelsea will prepare students to succeed in high school and college, apply their learning to solve relevant problems, and engage productively in their communities.

Our Educational Philosophy and Approach

Excel Academy - Boston, Boston II, and Chelsea believes that all students, regardless of race, ethnicity, or socio-economic background, are capable of achieving at the highest levels. Yet, sadly, a persistent and vexing Achievement Gap holds too many students back from achieving this ideal. In order to reverse this trend, Excel Academies adheres to an educational philosophy that is guided by three simple, yet powerful beliefs values about urgency, highest expectations, and no excuses:

- Urgency: There is no more urgent work than that of urban education. An average middle school student from an underserved urban neighborhood is often academically years behind his or her suburban peers. In order to make up valuable academic ground, teaching and learning must be approached with the greatest sense of urgency recognizing that every instructional minute is precious and must be maximized.
- Highest expectations: All students are capable of achieving at the highest levels when they are held to the highest expectations. Students will strive to achieve what is expected of them, and lowering standards for a group or individual student because of their social or academic background is not a support, but a hindrance to their learning.
- No excuses: If we truly believe that all students can achieve at the highest levels, then we must accept no excuses. Educators cannot make excuses for student performance based on a student's background or prior academic attainment. Excellence in urban education requires educators to uphold the highest expectations for students at all times and never make excuses for underperformance. Educators working with urban students must be relentless and do whatever it takes to drive student achievement, never settling for anything less than educational excellence.

In order to make these intrinsic values and beliefs about urban education tangible and actionable, Excel Academy - Boston, Boston II, and Chelsea will utilize a clearly articulated and defined operating model, to drive the school's educational program:

- Culture of high expectations: All members of the school community are held to the highest expectations. A comprehensive behavior management system creates

a safe and orderly environment where learning can thrive. An embedded character education program supports students in internalizing our expectations and as result, our students develop an ethical code that guides their actions both inside and outside of the school building.

- Rigorous academics and student supports: All students are exposed to a college-preparatory academic program through a curriculum with a unique balance of targeted remediation and higher order critical thinking. We identify all the reasons why a student may not be academically successful and provide targeted supports to meet the unique and diverse needs of our students.
- Investment in talent: We recruit and retain highly qualified teachers with both the will and skill to execute our educational program. We recognize that the culture we create for the adults in the building is of equal importance to that which we have built for the student body. As such, we invest significant resources in building the profession of teaching and supporting staff in perfecting their practice. Staff members take ownership of their core functions and do whatever it takes to achieve the school's mission.
- Systems of operating procedures: We identify, down to the minute, how to maximize the productivity of the school and develop and execute a comprehensive system of procedures to ensure the efficacy, efficiency, and effectiveness of our program. Procedures are precisely and consistently applied by every member of the community; because of this consistency, our procedures enable us to achieve the intended outcomes.

Through a well-defined and executed operating model, Excel Academy - Boston, Boston II, and Chelsea will produce scholars and leaders who are prepared to succeed in high school and college and go on to change the world.

Our Community (Excel Academy Charter School – Chelsea)

The crisis of the Achievement Gap in the United States is particularly evident in the education of our Hispanic students; they tend to perform academically far below their Caucasian peers and also face a much higher risk of dropping out of high school and a much lower chance of attending and graduating from college than either their Caucasian or African-American peers.

Chelsea is a very diverse urban suburb, with a particularly high percentage of Hispanic residents. We believe that Chelsea is a community with students in need of increased educational opportunities and support, and that Excel Academy – Chelsea will be an exemplary educational resource for this community.

We have a proven track record of success in raising the achievement of Chelsea students – approximately one-fourth of the student body of our existing school reside in Chelsea. With a solid waitlist of Chelsea families seeking enrollment at our existing school and strong community connections and partnerships, Excel Academy – Chelsea is well-

positioned to make a significant impact on the quality of education offered to Chelsea students and families.

Our Capacity

Excel Academy - Boston, Boston II, and Chelsea will be governed by the Board of Trustees of an existing, highly successful charter school, Excel Academy Charter School located in East Boston. With a proven track record of overseeing educational excellence and deep experience in organizational growth and expansion, the Board of Trustees is uniquely positioned to capitalize on recent legislative changes that allow a single board to hold multiple charters.

Our Vision

The application for Excel Academy - Boston, Boston II, and Chelsea is a part of our broader vision for significantly impacting the quality of education provided to our most underserved, urban students and families. The Board of Trustees has initiated the creation and growth of a network of high-performing charter schools serving the greater Boston area. Each school within the network will be modeled after our existing flagship school, Excel Academy Charter School, which has a seven-year record of success in closing the achievement gap for students most at risk of being left behind. Through creation of the Excel Academies network, the Board of Trustees will, over the next 3 to 5 years, oversee the delivery of educational excellence to approximately 1,800 students and families and provide a beacon for what urban education can achieve at scale.

KIPP Academy Boston Charter School **Executive Summary**

This was prepared by the founding group of the KIPP Academy Boston Charter School.

Mission

The mission of KIPP Academy Boston Charter School is to create a school environment where students develop the academic skills, intellectual habits and character traits necessary to maximize their potential in high school, college and the world beyond.

Educational Program

Our educational program is based on the following elements:

- **High-Quality Instruction** - to ensure our students develop the academic and intellectual, and interpersonal skills and habits that will allow them to become responsible and successful adults.
- **Character Development**-a consistent and fair Student Management System that rewards positive student behavior and reinforces strong character traits.
- **More Time on Task** - KIPP students attend 50% more school than their public school peers, completing 6 years of school in 4 years.

The Success of KIPP: Offering enhanced options for students

With 99 KIPP schools across the country in 20 states and the District of Columbia, we know the KIPP model *works*, and we know that the success demonstrated by KIPP Academy Lynn is replicable in and adaptable to Boston. Our successful experience with the following four measures means that we are prepared to replicate this success in Boston.

- 1) **MCAS gains:** Our MCAS gains year-over-year speak for themselves. Lynn Public Schools have MCAS averages that closely mirror those in many Boston Public Schools. Given the remarkable gains made by KIPP Lynn students who came to us from LPS, we have proven our ability to provide any remediation necessary to turn largely under-performing populations of students into students who primarily test at or above grade level. For example, the 2009 cohort of KIPP Academy Lynn (KAL) graduates had average 4th grade proficiency rates of 23% in Math and 25% in ELA before entering KAL. By the time this cohort graduated from KAL four years later, the cohort had average MCAS proficiency rates of 78% in Math and 85% in Reading. This magnitude of academic gains is consistent across multiple classes, and is just one of many indicators that KIPP Academy Boston will provide the same remarkable opportunities for Boston students as KAL has for the students of Lynn.
- 2) **Demographic Similarities:** KIPP Academy Lynn has been successful with a similar population of students that exist in Boston. KAL educates a student population that is 87% low-income, and 87% minority, a demographic makeup that closely mirrors that of Boston. We are prepared to serve the Boston communities that are in most need of high quality school options.
- 3) **Academic gains particularly for most challenging populations:** We are uniquely prepared to serve not only the mainstream population of students in Boston, but particularly the populations who are at highest risk of failure: Special Education students,

English Language Learners, and those in the bottom quartile of testing. As proven by a recent longitudinal study conducted by researchers at Harvard and MIT, KIPP Academy Lynn was able to help these highest-risk groups of kids make the greatest gains in year-over-year MCAS scores. The findings were:

- In Math, KAL students improved 1.2 deviations in their 4 years at KAL.
 - In English, KAL students improved .5 deviations in 4 years.
 - Students who entered KAL classified as English Language Learner (ELL) had the greatest gains over 4 years, improving 1.8 deviations in Math and 1.5 deviations in English Language
 - Students with IEPs had the next highest gains, 1.76 deviations math over 4 years and 1.16 in ELA
 - Overall, KAL had the most success with our most challenging students (the students who were in the bottom quartile in MCAS coming in made the largest gains while at KAL)
- 4) KIPP Academy Lynn is part of a very large, highly successful national network. Having begun in 1999 with two KIPP schools in Houston and New York City, the KIPP network has grown to 99 schools in 20 states and the District of Columbia serving more than 26,000 students. We have the resources, the experience, and the expertise to expand in the most strategic, responsible way possible. *We know how to grow*, and are well prepared to grow the KIPP Massachusetts network to include Boston.

Community Support for KIPP

Currently, the waitlist for charter schools in Boston (estimated at 10,000) indicates that parents and families of students in low performing schools want more options. This increased demand clearly indicates the need for academically rigorous schools that will prepare these students for success in high school, college, and life beyond. Perhaps the greatest indicator of support for KIPP is the parent response. On the most recent survey conducted with KIPP Academy Lynn families in May 2010, parents made their support for KAL clear. When asked, “Would you recommend KIPP Academy Lynn to another family?” 99% of respondents (238 families) reported ‘Yes’. Parents report strong levels of satisfaction across a multitude of other performance measures, indicating that the KIPP model has been and continues to be very well received by the community we serve.

Founding Group’s Ability to Make the School a Success

Since its opening in 2004, the KIPP Academy Lynn Charter School has been remarkably successful in educating its students and preparing them for success in high school, college and life. Many Board members have deep personal commitments to the Boston community, and are similarly concerned about the limited number of high quality school options in many Boston neighborhoods. The Board of Trustees for KIPP Academy Boston is highly qualified to lead a successful expansion effort. Several of our members have extensive experience with growing companies as well as expanding schools. Since its formation in 2003, the board has effectively governed the operation of an academically successful and operation. The KIPP Academy Boston management team includes two former KIPP school founders with substantial history of leading schools that produce transformative outcomes for kids.

Lynn Preparatory Charter School Executive Summary

This was prepared by the founding group of the Lynn Preparatory Charter School.

Lynn Preparatory Charter School (LPCS) is a proposed academically rigorous 324 student capacity K-8 school which offers an “exceptional education without exception” to prepare all students for success in high school and beyond. Although open to all Lynn students, the LPCS specifically targets students attending the lowest performing schools in the most economically distressed neighborhoods of the city, providing them with tailored supports to meet their individual needs.

We believe that all children are entitled to a superior public education—an exceptional education without exception—to provide them with an opportunity for economic mobility thus opening doors to higher education and better employment opportunities, all of which will help break the cycle of economic discrimination.

The Founding Board of Trustees is a diverse group with strong ties to the Lynn community and has the skills, qualifications and expertise to guarantee viability of LPCS. Each member shares a passion for and commitment to providing Lynn students an exceptional education without exception.

Lynn Preparatory School will address the great unserved need amongst students at the underperforming twelve elementary and three middle schools in Lynn that substantially lag behind the state and the higher performing city schools in terms of average test scores. Data compiled from the Department of Education shows:

- Lynn is a district made up of traditionally disadvantaged populations.
- The Lynn school district as a whole is underperforming.
- There are huge disparities of opportunity for children living in the lowest performing schools.

LPCS will service the community’s need for an exceptional education without exception by fulfillment of the following promise of commitments:

- LPCS students will be active learners through high quality, standards-based academic and co-curricular programs. The LPCS will guarantee that students are given the opportunity to be prepared for superior high school and college academia. All students will learn Spanish through integration into the rest of the curriculum. While providing our native English speaking students the opportunity and benefits of becoming bilingual it will also facilitate our significant Spanish speaking population to gain understanding of their language and culture while providing shared learning experiences to both groups
- LPCS students will be empowered to take greater ownership of the academic, emotional, social, physical and civic development. Teachers, parents, students and other educational professionals will work together as a team to utilize data comprised from the student’s school history to develop an individual learning plan outlining benchmarks of success for each student. Each individual’s

contribution to the larger learning community is an expectation at the LPCS. All students will be participatory contributors not only in their own learning, but in the learning of their peers, especially when members of the school community have different levels of ability.

- LPCS will establish a school-family-community partnership that fosters active student citizenship, supports student achievement, and aims to close the achievement gap. LPCS understands that real school change begins when the broader school community works together to minimize social and economic barriers that often impede success. We are committed to targeting the needs of children by: 1) targeting low income families that qualify for a childcare voucher through the Child Care Circuit (CCC) and provide an opportunity on campus to attend a high quality preschool program to ensure that students are well prepared and ready to learn regardless where they may attend grades K-8; 2) offering on campus health and social services which lead to improvements in test scores and overall achievement; and 3) offering extended learning time throughout the school year including programs during summer and school vacations to close the achievement gap that widens during these times.

MATCH Community Day Charter Public School Executive Summary

This was prepared by the founding group of the MATCH Community Day Charter Public School.

MATCH Charter Public School serves 440 Boston students in Grades 6-12. The student body is 78% low-income, 61% black, and 32% Latino. Our high school has entered its 11th year and our middle school its 3rd year. Parent demand is high. In March 2010, 960 students applied to our school for 150 openings.

Over the past two years we have prepared for the possibility of growth. Our teacher licensure program was approved by DESE in 2008 and will be a source of faculty for our new school after year one. We have set aside \$200,000 in reserves for start-up costs associated with the launch of a second school. And we have expanded our back office, particularly our controller and general finance functions. We are ready for the challenge of adding a second school.

We write this application with humility. While we believe MATCH School is strong, we also believe our existing school has much room for improvement. As a result, we have chosen to propose only one Boston school, rather than several, because we feel that is “just right” for our capacity. Also, we have chosen to create a major partnership with another proven charter school (described later), rather than go it alone. Third, we have carefully studied charter growth in other cities, so that our proposed new school can improve our existing school (via teacher and leader collaboration, and certain economies of scale).

The school’s leadership is stable. Alan Safran has been Executive Director since 2002. Founder Michael Goldstein has led the school in various capacities since 2000, and currently leads its teacher development. Board Chair Stig Leschly created the Newark (NJ) Charter School Fund, and is attuned to growth challenges.

Our mission is to prepare Boston children to succeed in college and beyond, in particular those who would be the first in their families to earn a college degree. We further believe that college success is the most likely way to escape intergenerational poverty. Our approach includes outstanding teaching, high-dosage individualized daily tutoring, a long school day, relentless and ongoing outreach to parents, and a quality standards-based curriculum. Embedded in all that we do are the values of courage, discipline, and perseverance.

MCAS is not a perfect measurement tool, but it is a useful one. Because of their hard work, our students have done well on this exam, often equaling or exceeding students in suburban schools. For example, among roughly 300 school districts in Massachusetts, our 10th graders were #1, #4, and #20, respectively, in English, math, and biology in 2010 MCAS proficiency. Both *Newsweek* and *US News & World Report* have ranked MATCH within their top 100 high schools in the nation. 99% of our graduates have been accepted into a four-year college or university, and 82% of them are still in college or have received degrees.

We seek to replicate our school, with one key difference: we hope to serve large numbers of **English language learners (ELLs)**, also from low-income families. This population

has been growing in Boston. It now roughly numbers 16,000 children, or 29% of the Boston Public School population. No Boston charter school currently enrolls more than 4% limited English proficient students.

Meanwhile, the Governor, Secretary of Education, Mayor, and Boston Superintendent all have called on charter schools to serve more ELLs. Letters of support from immigrant, refugee, parent, and community organizations demonstrate the support for a college-preparatory charter like ours to serve this particular component of the Boston community. As a result, MATCH Community Day **will recruit these ELL families with fervor**. It will, of course, be **open to all students**, per the law, but marketing materials and outreach will target Boston's main limited English proficient populations: those speaking Spanish, Haitian Creole, Cape Verdean Creole, Vietnamese, and Chinese.

We believe we're unusually well-positioned to serve this population. First, the MATCH model provides more tutoring than any other public school in Massachusetts, through an elite group of recent college graduates called MATCH Corps. Second, the proposed school's preK-12 configuration (rather than the 6-12 configuration of our existing school) was selected to reach students early in their language development. Finally, we have created an **unprecedented partnership with another charter school**, Community Day Charter Public School (CDCPS) of Lawrence.

CDCPS is the highest performing among public schools in Massachusetts with an ELL population of at least 20%. CDCPS (which is separately applying to DESE to grow two more charter schools in Lawrence) is a proven provider in the elementary grades and with ELLs. A copy of our partnership agreement is included as an Appendix. Briefly:

- MATCH will license for 5 years the curriculum and data tracking of CDCPS for Grades preK to 5, along with related technical assistance.
- CDCPS's Executive Director, Sheila Balboni, will join the MATCH Board, as will a second CDCPS trustee.
- CDCPS withdrew its application for a charter school in Boston, focusing instead on providing the support listed above, and on its application to DESE (separate from this one) to replicate in Lawrence.
- This application, called "MATCH International" in the prospectus stage of the DESE approval process, has been renamed **MATCH Community Day Charter Public School**.
- In all other matters, MATCH Community Day is still run by MATCH School, and governed wholly by the MATCH Board.

The proposed MATCH Community Day Charter Public School will build on the strengths of both institutions – MATCH's success with low-income, minority students in grades 6 to 12 and CDCPS's success with grades preK to 5 and with limited English proficient students.

Finally, looking forward, the proposed MATCH Community Day School has a **terrific opportunity to collaborate** with Boston Public Schools (BPS), from which it will draw entering students.

- Our founding team has met with Boston's Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent, Director of Literacy, School Committee Chair and other Members, Director of the Office of Language Learners, Director of Teacher Residency, and City Council

Members. As a result of this ELL-focused outreach and the extensive work MATCH tutors have done in BPS schools, we have received a letter from the Deputy Superintendent supporting close collaboration in the future. (See Appendix).

- We have a track record, described in the application, of effective dissemination. With this foundation of positive relationships, we hope to do the following with BPS:
 - a. Educate district leaders on the successes of the curriculum-and-testing regimen of CDCPS, particularly for English language learners;
 - b. Supply teachers trained by MATCH Teacher Residency to BPS turnaround schools (already underway);
 - c. Work with the district on leasing its excess buildings to charters (underway); and
 - d. Expand our already massive math tutoring deployments with BPS.

Therefore, we believe that a successful MATCH Community Day Charter School, if approved, could not only help the students it serves directly, but could create the conditions for a better working relationship between the school district and all Boston charters.

Paulo Freire Social Justice Charter School

Executive Summary

This was prepared by the founding group of the Paulo Freire Social Justice Charter School.

Mission Statement

The Paulo Freire Social Justice Charter School (PFSJCS), located in Holyoke and serving the towns and cities of the Pioneer Valley, offers a secondary school alternative dedicated to: academic excellence, social justice awareness and practice as espoused by Paulo Freire, leadership development, and community and global connections. PFSJCS will promote powerful, transformative teaching and learning for the development of the whole student, who will graduate: intellectually adept, socially responsible, actively involved, and dedicated to a just and sustainable society.

Vision Statement

The Paulo Freire Social Justice Charter School will: provide a strong intellectual and ethical foundation, instill academic excellence, enhance self-esteem, increase community and global understanding and involvement, and inspire future leaders for our society. The School will provide a continuous program of growth and development for students, faculty and staff, family members, Board members, and the surrounding community. Paulo Freire will have programs throughout the school year, an extended day, virtual learning programs, adult literacy classes, a summer academy and community building activities.

Communities to be Served

Students in Holyoke Public Schools are disproportionately from families that are low income, Latino, single parent households, and have low parental educational attainment. The students themselves are more likely to be homeless, to drop out, and to become teen parents. Among the educational needs of these students are strong preparation for standardized tests, expert support for English Language Learners, and an environment where student and family knowledge is respected and utilized as a foundation for curriculum. The school will focus on responding to these needs, and we recognize that student sub-groups from the surrounding communities, including Chicopee and Springfield, may also require special focus. PFSJ Charter School will develop curriculum using critical pedagogy, which will provide connections that are crucial to preventing students from becoming disaffected and dropping out. The school will also maintain the high standards and structured support necessary for high achievement.

Providing wrap-around social services will help families see and use the school as a community center and insure that social needs are met before they become a barrier to education. A school that is committed to social justice in curriculum, pedagogy and governance will be inherently responsive to the needs of the community that it serves. A commonwealth charter will allow the school to remain a size that is congruent with creating real community and ensuring the participation of all members. The school must draw students from communities other than Holyoke because a social justice high school option is not currently available anywhere in Western Massachusetts and because in

order to serve Holyoke as a community, PFSJ Charter School must not disproportionately affect the state revenue stream for Holyoke High School and Dean Technical High School.

Educational Philosophy

The educational program will be centered on the following three areas: Individual Excellence, Community Membership, and Global Intention. The curriculum will utilize the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, the newly adopted Federal Common Core Standards, a scope and sequence, common themes that integrate subjects, and exciting topics of study that integrate academic, developmental, social, and political standards. The classroom curriculum will use a variety of teaching techniques including hands-on activity/project-based learning. Scheduled assessments will include: individualized goal setting, portfolios, self and peer assessments, written and verbal assessments, and standardized testing. An extended learning time will provide support for all students to reach their highest levels of achievement.

School Characteristics

The culture of Paulo Freire Social Justice Charter Public School will be built around the core values of Global Intention, Individual Excellence, and Community Membership.

The process of building this culture will begin long before the first day of school. All teachers new to the school will be trained in the educational approaches and values of the school. Incoming students will attend a ten-day summer academy, part of which will be devoted to modeling participatory democracy and social activism. The culture of the school will be explicitly taught to students and parents during mandatory orientations, and the distinctions between the school culture and that of home and previous schools will be explored in these orientations and in the summer academy. An integral part of the philosophy of Paulo Freire and consequently PFSJCS is to honor the gifts of all members of the community. Consequently, the general education classroom will be designed to welcome and support all learners. Whenever possible every student will be placed in the general education setting 100% of the time.

Organizational Viability

The challenge for a school based on the concepts of social justice and Freirean pedagogy is to create a governance model which supports and mirrors these concepts and allows for strong, clear leadership for those duties required by Massachusetts regulations and dictated by common business sense. Consequently, we are proposing a “true” representative form of governance where faculty and staff, parents, and students each have designated seats on the board of trustees. Such a form requires time and support to be effective. The school will provide time on Friday afternoons and during all school meeting for faculty to meet about school governance. Faculty advisors will work with students to insure that students get the educational support they need to be knowledgeable and effective leaders and to play a positive, integral part in governance. One evening per month the school will provide a dinner meeting for parents where the Executive Director will present topics from the upcoming Board agenda and support parents in formulating additional items they want brought before the Board. It will be the responsibility of the Board of Trustees to insure that these three constituent groups (faculty, students, and parents) are meeting effectively and receiving necessary support.

Salem Community Charter School Executive Summary

This was prepared by the founding group of the Salem Community Charter School.

More than two dozen community partners, representing social service, college, medical, criminal justice and community-based organizations, have come together with the Salem Public Schools to address the high rate of high school dropouts in the City of Salem. Students, parents and teachers who have insight into the challenges faced by Salem's at-risk youth have joined them in this effort. They have put together a plan to found an innovative, off-site alternative public high school to help dropouts and at-risk youth earn a high school diploma, and continue on to college or meaningful employment.

The Salem Community Charter School will collaborate with a broad coalition of community partners to serve 125 students ages 15 - 21 who have dropped out of school or are at-risk of dropping out as a result of challenges and obstacles that interfere with school success. These challenges include, but are not limited to, social and emotional problems, family violence, substance abuse, court involvement, a history of foster placements, significant family distress, English language difficulties, learning disabilities and special needs. In addition to an academically rigorous program of study, students will receive supportive and therapeutic services to assist them in achieving a high school diploma and continuing on with higher education and/or work and career opportunities.

Fewer than 75% of Salem's students graduate high school in four years and only 80% within five years. The mission of the Salem Community Charter School will be to reduce the high rate of students failing to graduate from high school. Many at-risk students lead chaotic lives, and need intensive support and positive reinforcement to get through the school day. Students of the Salem Community Charter School will get the continuous support they need to overcome obstacles to their education. Families will be actively engaged and communicated with by the school. Family situations that impact learning, such as mental illness or domestic violence, will be addressed.

Salem High School has several programs to help at-risk youth, including a teen parent program, an on-site alternative program called the Bridge Academy, and the Freshman House, a small learning community to help freshman successfully transition to high school. Despite these measures, which are successful for many students, fewer than 75% of Salem's students graduate high school. Between 2005 and 2009, 242 students dropped out of Salem High School.

Salem's demographics result in higher numbers of youth being vulnerable to dropping out. A study of youth in 19 North Shore cities and towns, including Salem, conducted by the Children's Law Center of Massachusetts, found that:

- Males, low-income and minority youth are most at-risk to drop out of school.
- 11% of Salem's residents live in poverty. (Approximately 50% of Salem students qualify for free or reduced lunches.)
- More than 50% of the children living in poverty in Salem speak a language other than English at home.
- One out of every four Salem residents is a member of a minority group.
- Salem's Hispanic population is more than two times greater than that of the state and 1.5 times that of Essex County.
- Hispanic youth are most likely to drop out of school.

Clearly, a new approach is needed to meet the needs of these students. The consequences of doing nothing will be disastrous -- for the disaffected youth and the entire community. Studies show that dropouts are at higher risk of homelessness, unemployment and incarceration. The educational foundation of the Salem Community Charter School is the belief that Salem's most at-risk students can achieve academic success if they are provided with:

- A purposeful academic program, individualized to meet each student's needs, along with
- Intensive community support, therapies, mentoring and encouragement.

Following are the core components of the school:

1. **Individualized, competency-based and service/project-based instruction** will enable students who have failed in other programs to achieve success.
2. All students will complete **a final Capstone Project** that will involve research and/or community service on a topic of interest in the curriculum (student's choice). The Capstone Project will provide evidence that the student has obtained the skills and mastered the competencies expressed in the school's core values.
3. Each student will work with staff to develop a **clear post-graduation plan**.
4. An **individualized learning plan** will be developed for each student.
5. Students will receive **skills training for successful employment** and job placements and participate in work/study and community-based work experiences.
6. The school will operate on an **extended year** (11 month) calendar and a daily schedule of 9 am to 5 pm. Within that time frame, each student will follow a **flexible schedule** that takes account of personal needs and work requirements.
7. **On-site social services** will be provided by community agencies to enable students with emotional, social, physical, legal or financial problems to deal with those challenges effectively, in order to reduce obstacles to their successful completion of high school.
8. The school will be guided by the **Principles of the Coalition of Essential Schools**.
9. The school will make **regular contact with students' families**, to actively engage them in supporting the student. Communications will be in English and Spanish.
10. Staff will take part in frequent, sustained **planning and professional development**.

The founders have the experience and qualifications necessary to carry out the proposal. Their skills and professional expertise include fiscal oversight, budgeting, fundraising, law, executive management, program design, therapeutic services, medicine, fitness, recreation, and education, as well as knowledge of and access to the population to be served. All have worked with youth and several have extensive experience with charter schools.

UP Academy Charter School of Boston Executive Summary

This was prepared by the founding group of the UP Academy Charter School of Boston.

UP Academy Charter School of Boston is proposed as a new Horace Mann Charter School to open in fall 2011, serving students in grades 6-8. In addition to enrolling 162 incoming 6th grade students, UP Academy aims to, that first year, serve all rising 7th and 8th grade students previously enrolled in the Patrick F. Gavin Middle School, an underperforming district school that Boston Public Schools (BPS) intends to close after the 2010-11 academic year.¹ In total, the school will open its doors to nearly 500 middle school students.

Our Mission. UP Academy will ensure that its students acquire the knowledge, skills, and strength of character necessary to succeed on the path to college and to achieve their full potential.

Our Students. UP Academy seeks to educate students at risk of not reaching their full potential. The school aims to serve a population of students who, without our program, may have been substantially excluded from the path to college. We intend to initially enroll many of the students currently attending the Gavin, including the school's large population of Special Education students and English Language Learners. Going forward, we intend to enroll students reflective of the demographics and learning needs across the BPS system. We believe that our school program can provide all students with a tremendous middle school education that they may otherwise have gone without.

School Turnaround. Our founding team believes that partnering with BPS to close an underperforming district school and to "restart" it as a Horace Mann Charter School represents the most effective and efficient means to close the state's achievement gap. In collaboration with the BPS, which is continuing its efforts to improve student achievement at underperforming schools through new strategies and alternative approaches, and with Unlocking Potential, a non-profit school management organization, UP Academy intends to rapidly transform the academic outcomes of students who may otherwise have attended an underperforming school.

Our Vision. Through the creation of UP Academy, we will create an extraordinary school option for families and students in Boston and we will be part of the national effort to turn around the country's lowest-achieving schools. Within four years, at least 75% of the school's students will demonstrate grade-level proficiency in math and English, and thus secure a firm place on the path to college. Over time, UP Academy will aim to both support and learn from other district-led school improvement efforts being pursued throughout the city and state.

Our Program. To effectively fulfill its mission, UP Academy will utilize the practices of the highest-performing urban charter schools, BPS schools, and school turnaround organizations. Our team believes that any student can rapidly approach grade-level proficiency when exposed to an academic environment defined by the following programmatic components, which will infuse our school:

1. *Relentlessly high, consistent academic and behavioral expectations for all stakeholders, including our students, our families, and our staff.* Our expectations will be explicitly taught, meticulously enforced, and consistently supported by school-wide systems of incentives and consequences.

¹ Per state regulations, the proposed school will hold a lottery for all of the school's seats.

2. *Seamless and detailed operating procedures.* Our operating systems will be wide-reaching and encompass every imaginable aspect of school operations, and will be implemented with unyielding attention to detail. All routines will be modeled for, and practiced by, the appropriate constituents at the beginning of each year, and regularly reinforced thereafter.
3. *Rigorous, standards-based curriculum, instruction, and assessments.* Our educational program will be designed to help students master core basic content and skills by the end of 8th grade, while simultaneously preparing them for the intellectual demands of a college preparatory high school program.
4. *A wide-reaching network of supports designed such that no child is left behind.* Our school will employ an extensive network of whole-school and individualized supports to catch struggling students before they fall behind. When faced with a student who is not finding success in our program, we will seek to identify the underlying skill deficiency and then provide systematic supports to address the issue.
5. *An obsession with regularly and effectively using data.* We will regularly analyze academic assessment data to understand which concepts students have and have not mastered, using this analysis to build tutoring plans and to make adjustments to our program. Data detailing student performance on non-academic goals will also permeate the school and drive individual and school-wide improvements.
6. *An atmosphere of enthusiasm and joy.* Our program will be designed to ensure that teaching and learning become exciting and fun.

Our Philosophy. The above programmatic components will be implemented in parallel with the school's two guiding philosophies. To accomplish UP Academy's mission effectively, (1) all stakeholders should work with urgency in all that they do and (2) all stakeholders should not make or accept excuses for anything less than excellence.

Our People. We know that without a mission-aligned, philosophically-aligned, smart, relentless team, nothing else will matter. Thus, we are prepared to work tirelessly and invest significantly to recruit and hire the most talented and driven staff members from within Boston and across United States to work at UP Academy and serve our school's students and families.

Our Community Support. Our plans have been embraced and welcomed by the Mayor of Boston, the BPS Superintendent, BPS families, BPS teachers, and many other community stakeholders, all of whom recognize the need for Boston's underperforming schools to be transformed by those with a strong track record of success in serving the city's students and families.

Our Capacity. UP Academy has the capacity that is required to achieve its mission. The school's founding team will contribute insights from having managed, governed, or worked in some of the highest performing urban public schools in the United States. For example, the school's Lead Founder, Scott Given, spearheaded a dramatic school improvement effort between 2005 and 2008, ultimately leading the school to become one of the state's highest-performing public middle schools. UP Academy's proposed founding Board of Trustees possesses a wide variety of critical qualifications, including charter school governance experience. The balance of the school's founding team shares a commitment to the school's mission and the attributes necessary to turn the vision for UP Academy into a reality. Further, BPS will contribute many district-wide best practices, including those prescribed to serve the city's most at-risk learners. And, not insignificantly, UP Academy has the commitment of large philanthropic organizations that will ensure that the school has the financial resources necessary to succeed.

Veritas Preparatory Charter School Executive Summary

This was prepared by the founding group of the Veritas Preparatory Charter School.

Mission

Veritas Preparatory Charter School prepares students in grades 5-8 to compete, achieve, and succeed in high school, college, and beyond.

Vision

All students are entitled to a high quality public education defined by high academic and behavioral expectations, regardless of race, class, or socioeconomic circumstance. We propose to provide a highly structured middle school built upon a rigorous college preparatory curriculum, accompanied by daily academic supports students need to achieve and targeted character education that stresses hard work and the **DRIVE** to succeed. Partnering with Proven Provider Building Excellent Schools, Veritas Prep builds its school design upon the highest performing urban schools in Massachusetts and across the country. We propose to replicate what works - under trained and prepared leadership - to ensure that all Veritas Prep students, regardless of their incoming academic profile, are by the completion of eighth grade set on a course to succeed in high school and on their way to college.

With focus on student outcomes, measurement of academic achievement and differentiating instruction to meet the needs of all learners, Veritas Prep educates middle school students within a highly structured college preparatory program. Frequent assessments allow us to know students well and plan our instruction and supports to meet their needs - particularly important for special education students and English language learners. While there is no single approach or individual solution to preparing students for college success, the following core principles define our educational philosophy.

- 1. High Expectations.** All students are college bound – every one. We expect our students to behave well and work hard. We expect students, families, and staff to be accountable to each other for maintaining high expectations.
- 2. Structured Learning Environment.** Before effective instruction can occur, a school must establish a structured and respectful school culture. We teach and hold our students to a fair and strict code of conduct with clearly defined actions and consequences.
- 3. Curriculum Focused on Achievement Outcomes.** The road to college and higher-level work begins with the ability to read well, write well and compute accurately. A future of academic success is built on a strong foundation of literacy and mathematics.
- 4. Data Drives Instruction.** Continuous assessment of student progress is critical to student success. With testing, and with trained staff to respond efficiently to assessment results, we gauge our student's academic needs, and meet those needs effectively.
- 5. Focus on Literacy.** Teachers use common reading and writing strategies and students are given explicit and continuous instruction to become active, voracious readers and reading strategies to maximize learning in all of their subjects.

- 6. Character Education.** We develop the character needed to build and sustain achievement. In daily advisory classes, weekly community meetings, and cyclical rewards, we build students' **DRIVE** (Determination, Responsibility, Integrity, Vision, Enthusiasm) for success.
- 7. Teacher Quality and Effectiveness.** We recruit, retain, develop, and compensate highly effective teachers. We attract the best and brightest educators and offer them a professional environment in which all staff members are mission-driven team players.
- 8. Accountability.** Our instructional program and educational principles are informed by practices of high performing schools serving similar populations. We establish measurable academic outcomes, and compare our students' performance to the highest performing schools in the state.

Need

Veritas Prep's mission and educational program are created in response to the compelling need in Springfield for a public middle school that prepares students to achieve in high school and college. With a high school graduation rate of 54%, Springfield students are not prepared with the skills and competencies they need to move forward. Long before high school, Springfield students begin the process of dropping out of their education – and the promise of their and our future - prior to the successful conclusion of twelfth grade. The source of this process for many of our most underachieving students has its roots in the middle school years.

Springfield's middle schools are characterized by a marked decline in math achievement and a limited gain in ELA achievement. In 2009, MCAS scores show that from fifth to eighth grade, students proficient in math dropped from 23% to 9%, and those proficient in ELA increased from 33% to 45%. The academic gap between students in Springfield and those across the state averaged 15% and widened by eighth grade between the number of students proficient in ELA at the state level compared with that at the district level. There are seven middle schools in Springfield, serving students in grades six through eight. None demonstrate overall proficiency rates for English above 50%, and none have overall proficiency rates for math above 30% as measured by the 2009 MCAS.

Capacity

Strong leadership – visionary, uncompromising, and trained to execute on a clear mission - is a critical component of a high-performing school. This includes strong day-to-day management by the Executive Director and oversight by a highly competent Board of Trustees. The founding group of Veritas Prep is an extraordinary team of individuals capable of governing and managing the school, and able to execute on the mission and vision, as well as to establish policies that protect the school's organizational and academic success over time and ensure its success into the future. The founding group, supported by Proven Provider Building Excellent Schools, is further honored by the many business and community leaders who have offered their strong support and stand ready to assist Veritas Prep in the planning, development, and sustaining of a no excuses charter school in Springfield.