

## Baystate Academy Charter Public School

Questions as derived from panel review

### Mission, Vision, and Description of the Community (ies) to be Served

#### **1. How have your experiences working in Springfield led you to want to start a charter school in Springfield?**

Dr. Stephen Mahoney: Principal of Springfield Renaissance School, an Innovation and Expeditionary Learning school, been there since it was started in 2005-6, 25<sup>th</sup> year in schools and have three children attending Springfield public schools.

Miquel Arce: I am a social worker for 35 years – I bring a real strong commitment and experience in terms of doing community work with a sub-interest in organizational development and a member of two charter school boards previously – practical experience.

Ira Rebunzhal: I am the president of Springfield Technical Community College – my interest in this particular charter school is that we get about 40% of our students from Springfield and about 75% of them are placing in developmental mathematics and English and writing even though they have high school diplomas. I am very concerned about college readiness even if students pass the MCAS. I used to be the president of Capital Community College in Hartford, Connecticut – we started a middle college, it is one of the gate schools called Capital Prep – it has now the highest college going rate of any high school in Connecticut even though it is predominantly an African American and Latino school. I think this school has real promise to follow on that same path.

Peter Blain: employee of Baystate Health – I coordinate the BSEP (Baystate Springfield Educational Partnership) as an institution working with the schools to promote their advancement into different opportunities and career pathways and part of the critical element of health care is the educational pathway – you cannot get anywhere without an education and that is the biggest challenge that we face and the genesis for this school and our commitment and the ongoing conversations with Ira around the very issues he described.

Mark Conrad: Northeast Regional Director of Expeditionary Learning; prior to my position at EL I was the founder and principal of a successful EL charter school in Baltimore City, MD called the Crossroads School. Since joining EL, I have been involved with starting approximately 15-20 charter schools in Massachusetts, New York, Maryland, District of Columbia, and Rhode Island.

Marjorie Hurst: I am a practicing attorney and life-long educator – was a teacher in the public schools in Springfield and also taught at Springfield College was in administration at the College level and then went to law school. Currently I am editor of a Springfield community newspaper called An African-American Point of View and I am a past School Committee member for twelve years of the Springfield Public Schools. I was excited to become a part of the founding board because it does two things for me – it allows me to keep my interest in education current

and I believe it gives students in Springfield an opportunity for an excellent choice should they desire to come to our school and if we should be so fortunate as to receive a charter.

Willette Johnson: My experience in terms of children and schools has predominantly been with the Springfield Public Schools. I retired after 37 years working in the SPS and held a lot of different jobs while in Springfield one of the greatest jobs I ever had was that of classroom teacher which I did for 15 of my 37 year career – the rest of my career was in administrative roles – Assistant Principal, Principal, Area Improvement Officer, etc. but now I am retired but excited to still be in the game and have still been working, for example with the Office of School Accountability here at ESE. I think this opportunity to be a part of a start-up charter school is something that I have wanted to have for many many years and I am just so thankful that the opportunity has presented itself and excited to have the chance to bring my expertise to the table – my experience of working with children in schools.

Dr. Frank Robinson: Director of Community Health Plan for Baystate Health as well as the Executive Director for Partners for Health and Community which is a free-standing non-profit – in both jobs I am basically doing the same thing – working with our community around public health issues. Education is one of the major social determiners of health that puts me squarely in the basic health arena with respect to the work I've done with Peter with the BSEP program. On the flip side of partners, preschool, young families, youth development I am well grounded in that arena as well as other stuff. I am here because we get these emails from these students who have come through the out-of-school time program describing the health care career positions they acquired and expressing gratitude for the opportunity. If we can multiply those experiences by a thousand, if we can touch students deeply in terms of academic preparation in a thoughtful and intentional way, I think we can move hundreds and thousands of our students onto that same pathway.

Joshua Class: I am a second year medical student at Howard University, I was also a teacher at the high school that I graduated from – The reason why I am here today is that I went to a high school where 600 freshmen were enrolled and only about 130 graduated with diplomas and of those 130 only 4 of us went on to get our bachelor's degrees. And I think that a lot of that had to do with the fact that there wasn't a lot of leadership and there wasn't a lot of role models – living in an impoverished neighborhood you don't see your parents going out with suitcases and briefcases and engineering jobs – you don't see that pattern – you don't see that far ahead in your life so you take what is in front of you whether it is street life or whatever it is. I really want to give back to my city as a positive role model so students can actually look up to me and say man he went through the same things and the same problems I went through look at the position he is in today. The reason I am here today is because of the BSEP program – there is no way I can see myself where I am today if it was not for the BSEP program and what they provided to me – the networking skills, working with mentors, and everything of that nature. I really think there are a lot more stories of Joshua's in Springfield that just need that inspiration – that one leader that one mentor who can inspire them and look to the future and not just what is in front of them. There are better things for them out there if they just get the right education.

John Davis: I'm with the Davis Foundation in Springfield and the focus of our foundation is children and their families. I have spent 35 years in manufacturing – this is my third charter

school, I have been on two other charter school start-ups. I guess I can say I've seen the good, the bad and the ugly. I've learned a lot from trial and error and I am very excited about this application. I found the BSEP where we work with one of our public schools and were able to bring the young people into the hospital and there was a real connection and I have great expectations that our new charter will inspire these young people to really reach their full potential.

Dr. Kevin Hinchey: Practicing Internist in Springfield, Director of Medical Education for the Internal Medicine Residency Program and the Interim Chief Academic Officer and oversee the education of all the Allied Health providers at Baystate. Part of my interest in this is as you get more and more education you have more options and have more choices and this is a way to get people more choices in their careers.

Dr. David Cates: I am a clinical psychologist and director of behavioral health at Baystate Health in Springfield and one of the experiences that I bring to the board is having run a school program at Baystate Medical Center for ten years for kids with severe emotional and behavioral problems where I learned the essential role of culture in creating a safe environment where kids can learn and where I learned the essential role of motivation in tying classroom activities to real world applications particularly for kids who don't have a lot of motivation and what is so exciting for me about this board is that from the ground up we are trying to design a school with an explicit focus on culture and character as well as project-based learning.

**2. What do you think are some of the challenges you may face? What skills and knowledge does the founding group possess to address these challenges?**

- The most obvious challenge is that we are living in a community that is impoverished. Many schools, though they are making heroic efforts to try to meet the needs of the children, don't have the flexibility to be able to respond in a quick fashion. We are going to be creating a culture where we are going to see that all children succeed not that only four of the 600 as Josh described. We are proposing that we are going to provide an atmosphere where children are expecting to go on to college from the day that they enter.
- One of the big challenges that we are going to have to deal with is lots of students; I don't know what percent, a very large percent who will be two or three grade years behind when they enter our school. We've got to figure out, and we have talked about this, methods and techniques, extended time and summer programs, to really get people up to speed those are some of the exciting things that we want to do. We've got to make a leap and bring people up to grade level. That will be one of the main functions of the school is people performing at grade level. Some people will be able to do it in one month and with others it will take a long time.

**3. How do you see the BSEP experience informing the vision and development of founding a successful charter school?**

- Part of the experience at BSEP is why we are making this transition – BSEP provides the context for the learning but the out of school time is not strong enough in order to make up the gap that John is describing. It is an effort to meet that challenge –it is a significant challenge - it is not the occasional student – it is a significant number and that needs to be addressed.
- We had a prophetic experience – when we opened BSEP in 2004-05 – we had a professor from Holyoke Community College come in and followed the students longitudinally over about three years. She tracked specifically low income urban youth from Putnam (Vocational Technical High School) through BSEP – she said we had gotten it right and that we were providing urban youth and opportunity and experiences that gives them a rich picture of the future but also rich experiences with mentors. – student led and directed experiences that they were having were phenomenal then she said your biggest problem, challenge for the students, is when they return to school they encounter a school with a completely different culture – we failed to work from the inside out to create a different school experience –the basic principles of student led, student driving is an EL experience – BSEP successes and failure has informed this work – She told us what we need to do differently – this application is where we need to be...
- First as a board our biggest challenge is to find the right leader that can create a great balance of trains arriving on time, establish culture as well as the pedagogy of Expeditionary Learning– we have a start- up 6-12 EL school in Springfield that has posted our 10th graders who were with us for five years their Proficient/Advanced MCAS scores are 93% ELA & 75% math – that is as close a metric for being on grade level as you can have – we have seen that there has been success within the EL network and the city of Springfield.

**4. What progress have you made since submitting your application to engage families and the community in your vision?**

- BSEP reflects the Springfield population and through the public comment period we contacted alumni of our program and current families of BSEP and sent them information about what we were doing because we were starting to get lots of phone calls – we have had at least three dozen phone calls – about what to do for enrollment –we take their information and share it with Rachel Romano the school leader of Veritas Preparatory Charter School opening in 2012 if they are of the right age – but also explain what our time frame will be though it is all hypothetical - we have a waitlist (Springfield Renaissance) – it will be an EL school – with the added cache of a close partnership with the college (STCC) and Baystate Medical – without that cache Springfield Renaissance has a 300-400 waitlist for incoming class.

- Survey was conducted with parents and of the 52 that responded 51 said they would send their students to a BSEP charter school.
- There is a lot of interest in choice in Springfield – parents want opportunity particularly starting in the middle school – it is a challenging time for everybody.

**5. What strategies are in place at the proposed school to bring parents along the journey with their children – strategies to connect with community resources?**

- In terms of structures, there are several built within the EL model – for example part of enrollment are home visits for everyone working around expectation and engagement – mandatory –first choice is a home visit if they are uncomfortable then come to school building a relationship over time to build that comfort. Actually, we have found SPS parents have liked home visits we have had positive feedback from most – it would not be a barrier to enrolling in the school if a parent was unwilling to participate in a home visit.
- Key piece in the EL model for parent participation is the crew course – akin to a dojo for students on how to become self-directed independent learners –a family for students at the school - students can work through development issues that are normal for their grade group.
- Structures are in place that also pull families into the academic life of the school: for example, three times a year student led family conferences take place – students will prepare for a meeting with their crew teacher and family members where they will bring evidence of the work that they have done - how it has met the learning targets in Habits of Scholarship in their individual courses and school wide – here is what I am doing weekly (my successes and problem areas) and what to work on and what is the plan moving forward – conferences are tailored to the need of families scheduled with working families in mind – if transportation is an issue we’ll go to the home for the conference - address language interpretation services – growing up – when my kids come home and they say nothing happened in school that day – a typical teacher parent meeting is brief and uninformative – this is instead a conversation that is led by the student about a dialogue about how school is going for that student with questions from parent and teacher.

**6. How will the proposed school address the needs of families whose first language is not English (language or cultural barriers) and provide them access to the school’s programming?**

- I lead a community coalition called Cradle to Careers– notion of supporting families and schools concurrently is something that I bring to the table – we have literally 50-60 organizations that are volunteering to figure out how to do that job better – we are a community rich in resources, support services, but not well connected and I am a connector – this school is part of that process – there is an overarching community agenda to serve and support families better and differently and support them as part of

the public school system. I take my networks and drop them in here – I've been doing it in this community for about 17 years in this job and about 30 years in this community – we succeed in collaborative work at a high level – I think it is going to be fun because we are going to be so successful.

- We visited King Middle in Portland, ME – 33% of their students are English Language Learners – it is a refugee immigrant school - succeeding at very high levels – the basic premise that these populations can't connect to the EL model does not hold up in our experience– we think that we can borrow from their experience and expertise – they are at or above state averages with 33% ELL population – that is the model – that is our challenge – how will answer that question we will look at others that are doing it well – best practices within the EL network will enable us to work at a high level.
- Embedded in the school is a culture of respect – in the school program that we ran the parent engagement was essential – if the parents weren't engaged, the children acted out even worse – we learned that if you demonstrate and model respect – parents may come in skeptical and anticipate multiple cultural barriers but by being accommodating and hearing them and reaching out in a respectful way – that is part of the culture of EL with students, that the administration has with teachers and with families –what we hope to do in all of our interactions is to model flexibility and respect which we hope will improve engagement.

### **Educational Philosophy, Curriculum and Instruction**

#### **1. How do Expeditionary Learning's practices align with the proposed school's educational philosophy?**

- I think part of it is we have the expertise of setting up these networks, of doing this outreach for social work that may not directly apply to education but we can mold it to help with education – from the teaching perspective it just is a way to make it a real world experience –I am learning math because it actually applies to something in the future – I think just having something to hang this on – it could be math, English, art, any of these topics – all of them are important in health care.
- EL is all about contextualizing what students are learning in the classroom with real world applications and issues and dynamics that are effecting their immediate community or not so immediate - that is where I will be in ten years kind of piece – centering it in health services is simply taking advantage of one of the great assets that we have in our city, a magnificent medical health services community that is not just limited to Baystate, our lead partner.
- I would see expeditions occurring at STCC - with respect to STCC's allied health sciences division, they have a full dental clinic – it's not only Baystate, but also STCC, ideally as we move forward Mercy Medical Center – we have a range of options and opportunity – school of social work – there are business applications in the health care environment – anything you find in the community in general you will find in the health

community. A health profession is not necessarily a medical profession. We have a rich array of experiences.

**2. How are career readiness objectives or workplace skills integrated into the curriculum?**

- We want to be very clear that while health science is theme this is an academically based school focused on college readiness – if you want to come out and be an art history major we hope that we have prepared you with the skills to do that - with that broad picture – we have designed it with extra time – the Saturday, summer programming, intensives – those are designed to provide those opportunity to take that knowledge in a contextual sense and building on it with work readiness and college readiness skills. At our traditional program, schools will say they want to start with a shadow but a junior without a little support can struggle in a health care environment – Prior to building the BSEP program, shadows were failing at 50% rate but they just does not happen anymore because we build up students through these opportunities building up to the learning, to the context, to the actual experience – we have structured into our school time for that type of opportunity and partnerships to exploit that time.
- We have 68 career programs at our college – more than any other community college in Massachusetts. There is a huge enrichment opportunity for student especially if they are co-located on our campus – to have experience in IT, in manufacturing, in laser optics as well as 16 health programs – we have a SIMS medical center – our health majors do simulations in this environment with robotic patients – tremendous opportunities on our own campus which are educationally focused.

**3. What kinds of strategies around assessments will be used to identify student needs and what remediation supports will be provided for students performing below grade level to be able to access the richness of the curriculum?**

- We have had those kinds of discussions - we have got to get excellent teachers and we are developing techniques to find them and we can talk about that later – we are going to use assessment tools, specifically ANET for middle school and will be piloting ANET tools for ninth grade students, we are going to make sure our faculty know how to do those assessments – we are going to measure where we are – we cannot possibly get our students to do college level work, which is our goal, unless they have the basic skills – key thing is we have to get our students to grade level – priority to do the first few years.
- We know that we will have to do that type of work so we decided to start with 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade rather than sixth and ninth grade – we have built in acceleration – we have built in the fact that we will have to work with these kids - we have established structures – extended day, Saturday school – that will become part of the culture – that is one of things that I have seen succeed at the Renaissance in Springfield that frankly we have had difficulty within some of our other schools – be able to get in on the start up to be able to select teachers, establish culture, have a great leader in Steve - John has been insistent that we address those things, think through how we're going to make it different.

- Part of our expectation and recruitment is that we know we are going to have a large Spanish speaking population because we are recruiting those students and families – we know that we will have ELLs and we will also have tutors, as well as regular teaching staff, who will work to bridge that gap.
- When I was assigned to an underperforming middle school many years ago – I was very confused as to how do we do this work – 92% of the children were free and reduced lunch and some of the staff hadn't been received additional education themselves in years – so we just decided that the vision and mission that we would develop it as a school family –I would tell the teachers we have to do this work ourselves – it was a blessing that people wanted to rally – they didn't want to be associated with an underperforming school - they wanted to have children who were learning, growing, and developing and whose parents and families were engaged – as the instructional leader, we rolled up our sleeves, we assessed and analyzed - we were able to make some real good progress in that school by deciding that it is on us. As a start-up charter school, we will be able to put some of these strategies in place in the beginning that some of us, who had to walk into situations, had to undo and relearn to get to the successes.
- It is not enough to hire great teachers but they must be supported – we built in structures for common planning time so that they can work together to problem solve on issues they're facing, and paid professional development one full morning every other week – summer opportunities for paid professional development. It is not just about hiring but supporting them and letting them be the professionals that they can be.

### **Assessment, Promotion, and Graduation Standards**

#### **1. What are the professional development opportunities for teachers in use of data?**

- A common structure in all EL schools is the data inquiry team – every teacher is involved – the assessment tools that are used are carefully selected, such as ANET, and teachers come together regularly to review the assessment and to plan instruction in a way that matches the rigor of the assessment – after the assessment is given the gaps in student understanding are identified by carefully analyzing the results student by student, item by item – building action plans which are implemented by teachers and monitored by leadership and then there is a short cycle of assessments to monitor the effectiveness of the action plans and student progress.
- At the hospital, we have experience with training people from all over the world. Regular feedback and evaluation systems as well as plans to assist people in getting up to speed are in place at our systems at Baystate – cultural differences exist amongst our resident doctors as well as with patients - it is different but we can bring expertise to the school - it will not be developing in an island – we have a lot of resources at Baystate.
- Our number one task is to hire the principal. We have to hire the academic leader and we have to empower and support the teachers. An important part of our proposal is the



sharing of knowledge between teachers at the school and medical professionals in the field to translate ideas into language students can understand.

- A few things - first, the professional community of the school as we envision it – the default is inclusion and in-support – having the ELL and SPED teachers in the classrooms and supporting the teacher’s instructional practice as well as co-teaching. Second, EL as a model and pedagogy pushes teachers to create learning experiences that speaks to multiple learning strategies and different student strengths.
- Third, in a small school you have one English teacher for all the 6<sup>th</sup> grade students - this is not the kind of school where the students who struggle or come with learning challenges are someone else’s kids – this is not about other people’s kids these are our kids – this is powerful glue for teachers to work and help each child be successful.
- We have talked about this – that every child will be on grade level not 80 or 90% but 100% – there will be real challenges about getting there – some of the real strengths is that the hospital deals with many different populations and cultures –the hospital will be able to help us in this challenges – how do we communicate with different populations in Springfield –how do we relate to their families and their structures.
- This also speaks to how we prioritized the use of our resources starting out - we chose to make the hiring of the principal first rather than the executive director because we know we had rich resources within the organization and didn’t need to translate it to the organization – we know that we need to translate it to the 6th grade classroom and in order to do that we need a principal.
- If you look at the governance elements of the application, we were designing backwards as well – our metrics for our juniors and seniors to have 1550 on their SATs, back it up to MCAS everyone is at or above the state averages, they are going to show up in ninth grade on grade level or above. We understand clearly that what happens in grades 6, 7, and 8 will be a different experience – ANET is there to help us support our student population to take then to grade level to the ninth grade and tenth grade benchmark – We are designing backwards. As a board, Frank Robison is present chair – we have a board committee comprised of board members, ED, EL and ANET probably on the board as well - Balance of insight in board and staff- we want to be sure that our accountability plan, benchmarks and backwards plan are working.

## **2. What are the expectations of student-led conferences?**

- The fact that the end user of data is ultimately not the teacher but the kid – when formative assessment is really working they understand where they stand in relation to the standards and they are able to talk about their own progress or lack thereof towards learning targets that they can understand – the whole arc of instruction from daily instruction on is making sure that kids understand what the goals are how and how their current level of performance relates to that goal and for having a plan of how I close the gap – close the gap of what they are capable of and what their target is – student-led conferences is one manifestation of that but it happens at a micro-level moment to

moment in the class so instruction is structured in such a way that they are aware of the targets and how the task that they engage in relates to the target – they become proficient over time in self-reflection and self-assessing – a great definition for an educated person - student can self-assess whether or not their work is of high quality- student –led conference is one structure that provides a very scaffolded set of tools to help student reflect on their work over time and to articulate that progress to people who care a lot about them, i.e. their crew leader and their parents.

**3. How do we ensure that the teachers understand how to use the data to drive instruction for those students?**

- I visited Springfield Renaissance for a day and choose to observe a classroom where a Special Education teacher was performing math acceleration with students. Teacher asked one of the students to take me to next classroom of my planned visit and the student was discussing with me about her strengths and weaknesses – she was sharing her skill set – it was profound – the teacher was setting the agenda in the classroom – there were learning targets posted on the wall – the teacher had set up for them to do a particular assignment clearly connected to the learning targets and curriculum frameworks - the child clearly knew what her strengths and weakness were and didn't say it in a self-conscious way – she was accurately describing to me– I openly bring it up that it seemed to work beautifully.
- It can become self-fulfilling – if the tone and culture of the school, the leadership of the school, the instructors, the board... If we weren't all confident that that was going to happen then we wouldn't be here –we know where we are starting with these kids because we know the demographics - it is one thing to talk about it but to do this stuff it is hard work – this is not easy - it will be very tough we don't have all the answers going into this thing but we are going to come to solutions.
- The use of the data- that starts here with this group being very conscious about what the data says – What are the demographics? Where are the kids coming in? What is the value added after three months, after six months, after a year? With that focus that is the kind of person we want to hire as a principal and that person does their job every time he or she is sitting down with teachers, teacher leaders or anyone from the community talking about the school they will be using multiple pieces of data to explore or explain what is going on with our school – as a board we are looking that data is connected to our mission and used to identify our strengths and weaknesses and plans to improve.

**4. How does the EL model deal with student discipline?**

- One of the pluses with EL is the crew model and I learned as principal that when you know the children – when you know them and you talk to them and you respect them – you help to influence some of that thinking that is embedded in them from early on – some of that possible impoverished way of thinking and I think in a school where every child is known and cared about intensely by a caring adult – I know from experience, from research that that makes a difference.

- We outline expectations and then the brutal part of getting those expectations transitioned into character habits – the same way we have learning targets we have targets for character traits – then the very painful process of sweating the small stuff – everything little thing is important – nobody says that it will be easy – there will be a lot of work establishing that culture - it really comes down to making sure the staff are supported in backing up those expectations, the students understand what is expected of them and when they don't meet those expectations it is followed up on.
- We start with a strength-based perspective - I don't totally buy the assumption that kids that are coming from an economically impoverished neighborhood don't have strengths – you're throwing at us a deficit approach – so I don't know if I totally buy that - I understand that there are challenges –it is our job to look beyond what people would call the deficits and look at the strengths - look at the families, look at the religion, look at the community – what are the positive things that these children are surrounded with that often people do not recognize - we are looking at the families as a point of strength we are not looking at this from a medical or pathological perspective – I am been too long in this field to ignore the challenges of poverty but on the other hand too often we ignore what is real also all the positive things that I have mentioned: families, religion, and community.
- Those of us who have been middle school principals know that consistency is key – consistency builds predictability and predictability builds safety and when kids feel safe they thrive. First thing to do in any school is to get consistency across the adults – we are firm believers in the twenty times rule - most middle school kids need to hear the same thing twenty different times every day from different people – building an unusual level of consistency and clarity in common language across the faculty – it is central part of our introductory professional development – the structure and tightness of the first weeks of school as we immerse kids and slowly unveil certain aspects of the culture it is based on that consistency and clarity of the staff – through an intentionally and carefully built set of expectations, common language and consistent routines that predictability comes next and then the safety follows. Of course then there is the need to respond to the behavior of individuals who fail to live up to those consistent expectations and that is a matter of consistency and professional judgment – intervene without destroying the relationship you are trying to build with that child and teaches that child something that they are able to hang onto while also holding them accountable in a no excuses mindset of this is how we do things here.
- Structurally, there are some things embedded in the EL model that make total sense for handling the issues and dynamics that kids come to all schools with but can sometimes be exacerbated in urban school districts like Springfield – First, small school is a huge piece about knowing kids well (being able to get into every classroom and speak with all the students in school in 30 minutes) and a dynamic, charismatic good communicating leader to be able to set the tone and that is so huge in a start-up – Second is crew – kids get to know before school starts –that this school is a conversation – this school is not a product that is being delivered to you and you got to eat it - we are building the school together – Three because you are a small school and because it is an ongoing conversation you can

build the type of culture that when something happens in the community and it is going to, i.e. when someone is murdered – you can bring the whole school together to say this happened we are not going to ignore it structurally the school is set up that we know there is a world outside this school and what happen in that world informs what happens in the school – and you are going to actually work with those people who are working with those issues - it isn't isolated – it is all of our neighborhoods – Lastly it is about being able to attract great teachers – great teachers want that – they will come and they will work longer and they will work harder – because they want the opportunity to talk to kids about things that are developmentally important that has nothing and everything to do with MCAS. If they don't feel listened to they are not going to want to learn from me. That is what drew me to the school – That is what draws people to charter schools - here I am a district school principal on the proposed board of a charter school – I am doing it for a reason - I think my city needs another school like Renaissance.

### **School Characteristics**

**1. In addition to Baystate Health and STCC, what relationships have you formed with local agencies or organizations in order to support your mission and educational programming? Have you connected with the workforce investment board?**

- We do have group members with relationships with REB (Regional Employment Board of Hampden County, Inc.). No formal relationships with the school – back to our health care theme – it is a means to an end but our end is still college preparation – students are not going to come out with some professional certification but I'm also not saying that when the students are older, certification programs could be offered in the summer program or programs with STCC but that is not the core of the program.

**2. How are Intensives, Saturday Academy and Summer School programming planned and integrated in the educational programming? Who teaches? Who tutors?**

- After school, Saturday and summers are set times of the school (mandatory) and there is flexibility as to how they get used whether it is involved in acceleration, college readiness opportunities, work readiness opportunities, for internships. The summer we will also blend with teacher professional development. There is a structure around teacher professional development. We cannot let the summers go and make them optional. We watch the students now and they only go if they are failing. If you are an average student, you're not failing, you're not getting a job, there is no engagement. We didn't want that in our structure - we don't want to lose time.
- We will describe how we are going to use this time to families in the broad categories that I have described.
- As part of our recruitment at Springfield Renaissance, since we ask more of our kids than typically kids have to do at other schools, oftentimes families will choose us because of the longer school day and year, there is Saturday support – it is a way to say to folks that

you will be making a commitment to something that is above and beyond - for something different than the typical school experience.

- A lot of kids are at home during summer with instructions from the families to not leave the apartment. We will offer something that is an alternative to that which is supervised and safe that the families will appreciate – critical time to connect student to the next academic year.

**3. Please describe the dual enrollment component at your proposed school.**

- a. What supports will there be for students participating in the college courses?**
- b. Who will be responsible for communication between the college, the college instructors, and the school?**

- The grandmother of all of these middle college high schools is LaGuardia Community College – and the model that they use is that you can deliver a college course with a college professor with an exclusively high school population – the second model is they take a cohort of say six students put them in a college course of 24 and together with the college students, (the college instructor knows ahead of time and supports them), those 6 students meet afterward with a high school coach, third model is to allow a high school student to participate individually as a college student – there is a progression – it is not a jump from high school to college.
- We have a dual enrollment program that seniors can take free courses both semesters and during the summer and works quite well without this model. Our expectation is that when high school junior and seniors are on grade they should be able to begin to take college courses – We have a whole variety of college course that we think would be applicable for them. In addition, you will find students that are very interested in specific disciplines and could take some more specialized courses.
- This is a structural piece that the principal coming on board would manage – my sense from our conversations about this is that it is the second model of students participating in the college course 2-3 days a week and then having support around these courses at the high school - we will have kids at different levels of readiness – some students may be taking the cohort course who will need more directed support while other students with higher levels of readiness may take individual courses. Every single kid has access to the community college because they are right there. There is a mindset and a shift that takes place that says that college is accessible. In BSEP we once taught a college course and it was taught over the course of two semesters, so it offered extended learning time. Multiple models and structures to get students connected to college and access college in different ways.

**Special Student Populations and Services**

**1. How will the proposed school identify, assess, and provide specialized instruction to students with limited English proficiency?**

- Part of the design that the school leader will put through on how to onboard the students into the school – an entry assessment of where kids stand – when the principal and the staff are getting ready for the students that are coming to them they are not just getting ready for hypothetical students but knowing our students...
- We have recognized in our proposal that ELL and Special Education are expertise that are not represented strongly right now within this board – it is a good question and when we interview people we will be looking for...

**2. How will the proposed school identify, assess, and provide specialized instruction to each student in need of special education services?**

- The good news for us in a sense is that we will get many of our students will come to us who will have been in school 5 or 6 years already and there will be a history of this child's learning and development that will follow the children and we hopefully will have access to that information – within the school for instruction there will be teams of peoples who will be able to look at a child's profile and make some determinations about where this child is in terms of testing – new children walking in the door from other countries – we will have staff in place with expertise to assess those children before they get to the school to know what their academic needs are, what their language learner needs are and what their societal needs are.
- Common structure at EL is create an interdisciplinary student support team that would reflect different capacities across the building– the idea here is early assessment and early intervention – the early intervention is not a referral to special education but a softer intervention that isn't about keeping kids out of receiving special services but addressing needs if we can do so without getting there – the role of that team is to bring parents, teachers, and specialists together to identify what the issues are and to put appropriate both social and academic interventions in place to help the children be successful and then cycle back to that plan after enough time has elapsed, but not so much time that kids are falling further behind, to ask are the interventions sufficient to meet the needs of this child or do we need to look at even more intensive interventions. That cycle would perhaps culminate with a referral to the special education child study team to do the thorough referral and development of an IEP aligned with IDEA, etc. That would be the system that we would build.
- That was the question that I had for King – In interviewing 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade students, they were able to discuss their essential learning targets with projects and what they were doing – my question for the staff was how do you get kids to this level of knowledge and sophistication in talking that talk in an authentic way – they have an on-boarding process for their students that gives them the additional preparation and development – the point being that the Learning Targets are not student directed but teacher directed – The other King experience was with their posted schedule. Looking at the schedule they have all these blank spaces where teachers are spending time designing Learning targets and then figuring out how to get that information integrated in the curriculum and then delivered in

a way the student would know it first hand –there are strategies, maybe not in the application, but that we are picking up from the site visits that are not shortcuts but they are ways that you can actually increase the likelihood that folks are going to come in prepared for a different kind of experience and this will be a different experience for students.

**3. How will the school ensure that the community college courses are accessible to students with disabilities or limited English proficient students?**

- Everyone gets to access the college courses – I went to see Ira’s program at Capital Prep – it is co-located with the community college - every single student has access to the community college because they are there – they start acting like community college students – they are immersed in the culture – they start believing that they are college students –what was more important to me than their access to the college courses was there is a shift in their mindset that this is accessible even though everyone in my family has told me college is not accessible here it is all around me – it becomes embedded in them.
- There is another structural solution – an experiment that Peter did with the BSEP students and they bought a college course (Advanced Placement course) to perform extended over two semesters to allow students to participate – extended learning opportunity – there are a variety of ways for students to approach college, multiple models and structures for students to get connected to college – there will be students who will need to access college in different ways – they will all be able to take college courses – we will have the structures to make it possible, perhaps interests in different field or career – manage and counsel to give them the best opportunity to start making that transition... We have a college success course around time management, organizational skills, financial planning, etc. and that every student at high school should take that course.

**Capacity, Governance, and Management**

**1. What are the proposed board members’ expectations about the work required during the first years of operation? For those of you affiliated with the proposed partners Baystate Health and STCC, why have you decided to be members of the proposed board?**

- That is an easy question - this opportunity to create from the ground up a school infused with the type of values discussed today it is enormous – thrilling – there so many aspects of education in Springfield that are appalling this is the opportunity to be able to do something that is really wonderful.
- I would like to note that we are on that training track that unlike a lot of charter schools where the educational leader is already in place and helping drive that, this proposed board is already doing all of that work – we already meet pretty regularly – there is nothing that isn’t being done. One of our challenges was we were decentralized in our process but that is because the entire group is involved (very challenging when you lose

electricity for seven days and your final application is in Google Docs) – bottom line this group is already in training right now and is doing that lifting right now and when someone comes on as instructional leader that will be amazing.

**2. In one word, what qualities do you aspire to have in the proposed school leader?**

- Strategic planning, passion for the students, entrepreneurial, another Steve, data driven, gets it, successful experiences, culturally competent, experienced, character, multicultural, urban environment experience, and works hard.
- The book that I want to write and publish some day is “So you want to be a principal...?” Being a principal, I don’t think I had all the qualities that we talk about but I think that we would be looking for someone who gets it. Who understands how to communicate - how to connect with people, communities, children and has a passion themselves for learning and to teach what they have learned – able to go into any situation and feel comfortable and feel that there is a possible solution for what sits in front of them – it is an all-around person who is not necessarily the smartest or at top of their class but someone who continually shows promise and commitment to the task and knows how to focus him or herself as well as the people around them.
- We are going to have someone who has education experience – we need someone who has worked in the classroom –that has had some type of administrative experience maybe not the principal but vice-principal or department or group leader – someone who really knows this business – not an individual from wherever – someone who has school background for 10-15 years of experience in education – can’t come from another field – need someone who understand education.

**3. Have you gone to the State Ethics Commission regarding some of the potential conflicts of interest that were indicated in the application?**

- Ira Rubenzahl has been cleared – a copy of the written opinion. We (Baystate Health employees and/or board members) have sought legal opinion but since there is no contractual obligation, if anything we are giving money so they didn’t see any conflict of interest. We had a conversation with our lawyer but have not pursued anything in writing from the State Ethics Commission.

**Please describe the different services being provided by your founding partners.**

**i What contractual agreements have been drafted with Baystate Health and STCC? (STCC: co-location agreement?)**

- As I introduced myself earlier, I am the Executive Director for Partners for Health and Community, PHC, a free-standing non-profit, and the Director of Community Health Plan for Baystate Health. I work with Baystate Health through a management agreement and purchase services back from Baystate Health such as personnel, facilities – we operate with our own board of directors – the chair of my board is the director of the REB (Regional Employment Board) – all of my board, there is some Baystate staff but we are



separate and distinct – so we have a formal partnership and funding relationship at the PHC - this model will be significantly different – a free-standing public charter school – putting on my Baystate hat now, we will be providing access to our out of school program the same way we do right now for Springfield public schools, our on-going commitment, which this school will be one of them, just as we work with Steve Mahoney at Renaissance. There will be that whole resource available – there are some obvious benefits in terms of employee volunteerism, shadow, expeditions, we operate that now and we fund that through our BSEP initiative and some is no cost, it really is the organization adopting this mission as a part of their Community Benefit priority and I am the Director of Community Benefits and again so we would expect that this relationship whether formal through contract or informal through the school partnership will continue and will grow. Some of it will be hard money not coming to us but the programs will be in place and we will be able to participate in it, conceivably we could also more formally through a management agreement purchase services from Baystate that might be cheaper and more efficient - We can't envision that yet...

- In our current BSEP model we are co-located with an allied health program at Putnam (Vocational Technical High School) so there is a lot of relationship with support staff and services such as copiers that sort of brass tacks interaction - it is all framed from the Baystate side as a community benefit so it is just a community investment.
- In terms of the college, let me try to divide the question into core academics and instruction and the facilities. We have already a series of relationship with area high schools, I mentioned dual enrollment. Students can come and take one free course for three semesters – we have other relationships with other area public schools – we do contract MCAS training with SPS and the High School of Commerce has used some of our facilities for their IB program - it is happening all of the time – some of these things I don't even know about –we are a public institution and we have public schools coming to use our facilities and our instructors. We do occasionally contract and we will have an instructor teach a course for both public and private schools. I don't think any of that piece will pose a problem.
- The bigger issue for the proposed charter school and the college is the facilities – we would like the school to be co-located on the college- some of the benefits is we have facilities that they would not have to duplicate –athletic fields, library, cultural activities that would be open to the school's students which would not be a burden on the college but then there is this issue of finding space for them – we have a million square feet, we are by far the largest community college in Massachusetts in terms of sq. ft. though not in terms of enrollment – our facility was a former federal armory – we have 200K sq. ft. that is vacant – one of the opportunities we have for a partnership with a high school is we have the space if we can build it out- it is good for the college – from a business model you can look at it as we have vacant apartments and we want to fill them up since we already spend resources on maintaining them, secondly the partnership with the high school part of this school I think can be very productive for our faculty – some of these students will come to us but we hope that most of them will go off to four year college with scholarships quite frankly that is the model we used in Hartford – while they are

with us I think there will be very productive dialogue with our faculty and the faculty of the high school – It has already begun to happen - I've had a group of math teachers looking the math MCAS looks like which is very different from our Accuplacer- I think it would be very productive for us both to have this partnership. We would also not be contracting with STCC – we would be contracting directly with the Commonwealth who owns them not STCC for the lease of the building (#28) as the starting space. We are still going to have a small school and starting with 28K sq. ft. and then an additional 70K sq. ft. in later years.

#### **4. Why have you chosen to contract with Expeditionary Learning?**

- It was prophetic when the analysis was done and explained our experience – Peter (Blain) and I (Frank Robison) made one of our first site visit to the Codman (Square Charter School) and we got a powerful experience of learning what was going on there and were really wowed by a conference between a school in Rochester with their school design person and I was totally blown away because they were to different worlds have the totally same conversation, philosophically, pragmatically, technically about students. The power of this network was really impressive to me because it meant we wouldn't be out there on our own– we would be nested within this national network of experts.
- Last year we had a grant from EPA, (Healthy Environment, Healthy Springfield) so we did an expedition with Springfield Renaissance 10<sup>th</sup> graders – those students produced materials for our grant that we are using today as part of our community risk assessment. Students in that school I know them – we got to meet and introduce ourselves and work with the students for over a year – they are the same students I will find throughout the city of Springfield going to other schools – Same kids at Renaissance as the rest of their district move to 6<sup>th</sup> grade there.
- I have a great understanding of the kids as a past principal at the High School of Commerce in Springfield – there is an additional load of work that has to be done because they do come with poor habits – we were able to put something in place to meet their needs – there is that talk, thinking and planning around this table within the proposed board of trustees about serving those kids at this school – those habits of mind, those practices will have to become engrained in day one so that the leaders, the teachers, the parents, the board – we will all have to be speaking the same language from day one – following the same vision - making sure there is a common understanding – it can be done but it is very difficult work that is very often slow - you have to allow yourself the time to for it to happen – Springfield Renaissance started out with their students the same way we will start out with our students and they were able to develop what we are talking about for the majority of the school where the students are engaged not matter what their background – they are engaged, I believe, because of the EL model – it give them the opportunity to be individualists, to show their stuff in many different areas, to just think outside of the box and the different projects that they come up with are just phenomenal.

**5. How do you account for the variation of student performance at different EL schools? What do you think are the critical elements that aid in the success of an Expeditionary Learning school?**

- I think our national student performance data shows that across our portfolio of 165 schools, our best schools I would put side by side with the best KIPP and Uncommon schools. It is inconsistent with our data to say that it doesn't work with some kids certain populations. In fact the standardized tests scores that we see the greatest impact on our kids who receive free and reduced lunch, kids in special education, African Americans, and Latino students. It is true to say that there is an unacceptably broad range of both results and implementation of our model across our 165 schools. We are becoming vigilant about that the conditions that we know lead to success are present in all of our partnerships. It is those conditions that hinge on leadership but also touch on things like accountability, presence of the board, access to data to make course adjustments, financial resources for a robust partnership to exist, requisite professional development. Those are the conditions that are in place in this partnership and they are the conditions that have led to success in schools across the country. I think it is more a matter of making sure those conditions are in place to assure that the partnership yields results rather than to say it works for some students and not others.
- It is a model and it is a tool and without the leadership of the principal and without the good teachers, you'll get poor results. There is nothing magical about it per se – you have to hire the right people to implement the model – also before we decide that something doesn't work we have to look closely and hard at the implementation, then monitor and assess it.
- I was one of “those” kids that was classified – I wasn't pushed hard enough I believed I could only do so much – streamlined into lower remedial course – when I right the support around me I excelled beyond my wildest beliefs – I had the right mentors at BSEP – knowing that someone cared about my education – I would like to add on to the model –EL, beyond test results, it has shown itself to move past to application of knowledge – it is not just testing for results – moving past the model which is critical if you are going to make the next step.

**Facilities, Transportation, and Finance**

**1. Please explain the steps that you used to develop the proposed school's budget.**

- What we did is we started looking at our needs in terms of what we were doing, in terms of space and staff for example. We had some very interesting conversation around staffing and Steve was helpful in that. We went with a higher Springfield teacher salary. We noticed that in our research of other charter school that the average salary was either at or below the surrounding schools and that they were using the environment to attract the teachers. There was a conversation with this group were we decided we wanted our environment and our salaries to attract our teachers because we are going to be asking a lot of them. We couldn't just talk about it we need things in place to attract high quality

teachers. School leader needs to have the tools to recruit the right staff. You need to have great resources for the principals in order to do their job.

**2. What renovations will be required to outfit the facility for the middle-high school that you are proposing? (Does this building have science labs? Renovation and construction FY14 \$50K, FY15 \$50K, FY16 \$100k)**

- Right now building 28 (the proposed space at STCC) is used for classrooms – it has an arts program and art gallery but a lot of space that is not currently being used. The rooms need some touch up, instructional technology – wiring would be an associated with anticipated costs. It is two floors with an elevator, ADA accessible, and a large room in the basement to allow for community meeting space. We might need to take down storage cages. There are hoods and sinks in some of the classroom for science laboratories.

**3. What transportation services do you anticipate receiving from Springfield Public Schools? How will transportation work for Saturday Academy, Summer School, and Internships?**

- There are two elements to that – one, I have talked to various people but have yet to coordinate with SPS. We are aware of SPS transportation rules and we have to go through that whole process which is part of the action plan. I have also looked into costs for transportation. STCC is along the major bus routes which work for our high school students but not middle school students. We (Baystate Health) buy buses all the time as an institution. It is possible to work with Baystate on getting buses that we can support for weekend and after-school transportation.

**4. Is the financial support from Baystate Health guaranteed? (in-kind/in-cash: at least \$200K planning, \$250K year one, \$300K Year 2, \$350K year 3)**

- Baystate support is guaranteed during the start-up phase – Peter Blain will be doing this work and is on loan from BSEP and will be using that funding to bring on some folks during the planning year. Funding is within the BSEP budget. Baystate is building a lot of buildings and they have something called a determination of need where they have to give money to the community sort of like the Community Reinvestment Act and Frank Robison is the benefit manager.

**5. How will the proposed board achieve their fundraising goals? Will you be able to sustain the fundraising necessary?**

- We discuss a 501(c)(3) foundation in our action plan that will fundraise for the school. We will go outside Baystate for fundraising. We are looking at federal grants and there are a lot of opportunities in health science and STEM education. There are some local foundations. We have access to some great resources. We have a grant writer at our disposal and he's been already starting to look at opportunities. We put those projections past he and he thought they were realistic.