

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY  
AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

## Executive Summaries of the 2012-13 Proposed Charter Schools

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# PROPOSED ARGOSY COLLEGIATE CHARTER SCHOOL

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Mission.** Argosy Collegiate Charter School equips Fall River scholars in grades five through twelve with the academic foundation, financial literacy, and ethical development necessary to excel in selective colleges, earn professional opportunities, and demonstrate positive leadership.

**Vision.** Argosy Collegiate Charter School (“Argosy Collegiate”) is proposed for the City of Fall River. Educating students in grades 5-12, the school will open with 81 fifth grade students in 2014, use a slow growth model by growing one grade of 81 students per year, and reach full growth span in 2021. Serving a community with tremendous academic need and a significant population of first generation English Language Learners, Argosy Collegiate educates students in middle school through high school to remediate academic gaps experienced in elementary school and accelerate learning in high school, thus preparing every student to succeed in college, manage their financial independence, and access expanded professional opportunities.

The mission and vision are informed by the best practices of the highest performing charter schools across our state and nation. Currently in the Commonwealth, schools demonstrating strong performance are clustered around Greater Boston; we seek to bring such quality and trained leadership to the need in Fall River. Argosy Collegiate has the benefit, training, and network of Proven Provider Building Excellent Schools (BES), a highly respected national non-profit dedicated to the creation of high performing charter schools. Argosy Collegiate leadership and staff bring the benefit of extensive training and support in building a rigorous academic program and achievement-oriented culture, executing impactful instructional leadership, and detailed management of the operations, finance, and governance of a successful charter school. Our mission and vision have been tailored to meet the diverse needs of youth in Fall River and the school’s goals of closing the academic achievement gap, bridging the financial literacy gap, and developing student leadership as our young people prepare for the responsibilities and opportunities of college.

All students, regardless of race, socio-economic status, or home language deserve a quality, college preparatory education, and the foundation for high school must be established in the middle school years. For our most at-risk students, middle school accelerates academic decline into high school failure that must and can be prevented. We provide high-quality instruction within a structured, supportive school environment. Seven core beliefs guide our design:

1. Academic achievement is possible for all students.
2. Exceptional educators deliver exceptional results.
3. A clear code of conduct consistently implemented ensures a school culture of respect, responsibility, and character.
4. A seamless continuum between middle school and high school allows for strategic vertical planning and eliminates common transitional risk factors.
5. Data is systematically gathered and analyzed to inform instruction and student supports.
6. All operational, governance, and management decisions must optimize student achievement and ensure the realization of the mission.
7. Frequent communication with families regarding students’ academic and behavioral performance supports student achievement and character development.

Three years from now, in 2015, fifth graders in Fall River's most underserved communities will have the academic skills, content knowledge, and character to move successfully into the next grade, with measurable achievement results in the core subjects. In 2018, our inaugural fifth graders will seamlessly matriculate into our high school. In 2023, our first graduating class will have completed their first year at the university, and will be examples to all that success is possible. Families will have access to a seamless, structured, high quality 5-12 education for their children; teachers will have opportunity to develop their practice and be part of a mission-driven team; students will gain the opportunity to remediate gaps and accelerate their learning; and Fall River will have the vehicle by which it can realize and demonstrate the success of many diverse learners.

**Need.** Argosy Collegiate's mission and educational program are in response to the significant need in Fall River for a public middle and high school that prepares students to excel in four-year colleges and universities. Fall River remains a chronically underperforming city, and is rated amongst the lowest 10% of districts across the Commonwealth. Four middle schools serve 2,255 students in grades six through eight. On the 2011 MCAS, middle school students average 56% proficient/advanced in ELA and 37% in math. Of the 2,255 middle schoolers, this means that 992 are not proficient in ELA and 1421 are not proficient in Math. Three public schools serve Fall River middle/high or high school students - Durfee, Diman Regional Vocational Technical, and Resiliency Preparatory. Grade 10 MCAS results for 2011 are outlined below.

School	# of students	ELA Proficient/Advanced	Math Proficient/Advanced
Resiliency Prep (6-12)	203	21%	16%
Diman RVTHS (9-12)	1350	84%	74%
Durfee HS (9-12)	2228	71%	56%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>3,781</b>	<b>Average: 59%</b>	<b>Average: 49%</b>

Yet these numbers do not capture a significant and pervasive problem in Fall River – high school graduation rates. High school graduation rates for 2011 were 71%, with rates 67% for low-income students and 52% for Hispanic students. At best, therefore, 7 out of 10 students are graduating, and within the Hispanic community, only 5 out of 10 reach high school graduation. Of those that do graduate, 22.5% from Durfee plan to attend a four-year public college or university; 21.2% of Diman graduates plan to attend higher education. Demographically, 21% of students in Fall River receive Special Education services, 23% are identified as ELL, and 78% are eligible for Free or Reduced Lunch. The student body is 65.3% white, 19% Hispanic, 6.8% African American, 4.5% Asian, 4% Multi-racial or Non-Hispanic, .3% Native American, and .1% Native American or Pacific Islander. Unemployment rates are 13.2% compared to 10.2% for the state. Per capita income is \$20,337, compared to \$33,203 for the state, and 20.2% of residents live below the poverty line. Community excitement and desire for choice and high quality schools in Fall River is evidenced by the nearly 600 parents who have signed a petition of support for Argosy Collegiate. These parents state that they are interested in sending their child to Argosy Collegiate should it open in the fall of 2014. Collectively, these parents have 395 children, 59 of whom are in grades K-8.

**Capacity.** Clear, consistent, and uncompromising leadership is critical to the success of a high-performing school. This includes strong day-to-day management by the Executive Director and oversight by a highly competent Governing Board. The founding group of Argosy Collegiate Charter School is an extraordinary team of dedicated and experienced professionals, committed to the

revitalization of Fall River and the academic success of its students. Lead Founder Kristen Pavao is a proven urban educator and life-long resident of Fall River, and is the proposed Executive Director for Argosy Collegiate. Ms. Pavao is joined by several individuals on the founding team who collectively bring the requisite skills and expertise for strong and accountable charter school governance. Together they are prepared to execute on our college preparatory mission and vision for the young people of Fall River, as well as establish policies that protect the school's organizational and academic success over time and guarantee its success into the future. Argosy Collegiate's founding team is honored by the many business and community leaders who have offered their strong support, and the early and overwhelmingly positive response from local families looking for a quality choice for their child(ren). Together, we stand ready to do what it takes in the planning, development, and sustaining of a no excuses charter school in Fall River – demonstrating that demographics do not determine destiny and that all children, especially those in our gateway cities, can learn and achieve at high level.

## PROPOSED “BROOKE 4” CHARTER SCHOOL

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

“Brooke 4” will be a K-8 school, located in Boston, serving 510 students. The school’s mission is to provide an academically rigorous education to students from the city of Boston 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 three existing Brooke Schools.

On the 2012 Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS), Brooke 2 students in the first year of the school’s existence achieved the highest growth in the state in both ELA and math. With an SGP of 95.5 in math, our 5<sup>th</sup> graders had the highest growth in any grade level on any test. Our fifth graders at Brooke 2 accomplished both greater growth *and* higher math proficiency than any of our prior incoming fifth grade classes at our original Brooke campus, proving that not only can we replicate our proven success from our original campus, but that we can improve on it.

Brooke students at our original campus accomplished the following on the 2012 MCAS:

- Our 5<sup>th</sup> graders ranked #1 in the state in ELA and math.
- Our 8<sup>th</sup> graders ranked #1 in the state in ELA.
- Our 3<sup>rd</sup> graders ranked #1 in the state in math.
- Our 4<sup>th</sup> graders ranked #1 in the state in math.
- On all math and ELA tests on all grade levels, Brooke students ranked in the top three schools in Boston.

The founding group is committed to bringing this opportunity for an excellent education to more Boston 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 78% are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch) and at Brooke 2 (where 95% of our students are African-American or Latino and 75% 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 existing Brooke Schools alone is sufficient to enroll 7 schools of the size we seek in this application. The combined Brooke waiting list in grades K-6 stands at over 4,000 students (our current enrollment policies do not allow for new students in grades 7 and 8).

Opening schools in different locations throughout the city has increased demand over the past years; in 2010 when we originally applied for more charters, our waitlist stood at 1,500 students and now with three campuses, our waitlist numbers over 4,000. Therefore, it is clear that demand is sufficient to fill a fourth Brooke school.

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 existing Brooke Schools. 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 answers to 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.
- **Rigorous Curriculum** - 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 engage in rigorous work that challenges them to think deeply, apply their learning to new situations, and articulate and defend their thinking orally and in writing.
- **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.

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
- Dedicating time each day, each week, and each school year to professional development to help teachers continually improve their practice

## PROPOSED CITY ON A HILL CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL II

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

City on a Hill, a public high school in urban Boston, emphasizes academic achievement, citizenship, teacher leadership, and public accountability. It seeks to graduate responsible, resourceful, and respectful democratic citizens prepared to advance community, culture and commerce, and to compete in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. City on a Hill believes first, and most centrally, not just that all students can learn, but that all students *must* learn in order to address the social, economic, and political inequities of our nation. When students enter high school, they do so with a wide range of skills and abilities. While some schools will track these students according to their skill levels, City on a Hill does not. Regardless of geography, race, or socioeconomic status, *all* City on a Hill students are held to the same high standards as they navigate its rigorous academic curriculum supported by the programs proven successful in helping students achieve. City on a Hill believes that the value of education is not in seat time; students must demonstrate their earned skills and knowledge in order to advance to the next grade level or graduate. City on a Hill approaches students' high school education knowing that they all can and will be proficient and college-ready.

Embedded in all that City on a Hill does is the notion that students must use the community as a place for learning, and give back to their community as much as they gain from it. Citizenship is a key component to a student's experience at City on a Hill, as CoaH not only seeks to prepare students for college, but also to prepare them to advance community, culture, and commerce, and to compete in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

City on a Hill currently serves 280 students in grades 9-12, and is open to all students in the City of Boston. In March of 2012, City on a Hill held its lottery for the 2012-13 school year. For 90 available seats, CoaH received 880 applications illustrating the need – and demand—for additional school choice at the high school level. Boston families want their students to enroll in City on a Hill for its high academic standards and rigorous college-prep curriculum. City on a Hill seeks to satisfy this demand by opening a second campus, and during the 2011-12 school year, embarked on a campaign to gain community support of this project. Over the course of the year, approximately 50 community members volunteered at the existing CoaH, showing their support of the school as volunteer nurses, SAT prep teachers, and as evaluators of oral proficiencies. Additionally, members of City on a Hill's Executive Committee met individually with three state representatives and three Boston city councilors to discuss the need for additional charter seats and CoaH's plans to replicate. The majority of which supported the need for more seats and two directly advocated on City on a Hill's behalf. Finally, two community members serve as representatives on City on a Hill's School Council a body that supports the replication project.

City on a Hill was founded in 1995, and in the 17 years since the original charter was granted, its educational program has been refined, informed by educational research and first-hand experience. The existing City on a Hill has learned from its colleagues in urban education, as well as from its own experience in facing the educational, organizational, and political challenges of urban education, and will use what it has learned to maintain the strength of its own educational program while replicating it in CoaH II. Following a curriculum that aligns with Common Core standards and that incorporates academic achievement, active citizenship, and public service, teachers will use a wide range of instructional methods that match students' individual learning needs coupled with network-wide classroom norms monitored by the Principal. In the classroom, students will be required to demonstrate hard work in classes that focus on building higher-order thinking skills and writing across the curriculum. Students will be engaged in active citizenship through weekly Town Meeting debates,

annual mock elections, school-wide service days, a civics-focused history curriculum, and a required internship for all seniors. Students will be required to exhibit their earned skills and knowledge through written and oral skill and content proficiencies in order to advance to the next grade level or to graduate.

Not only does City on a Hill seek to educate the urban youth of Massachusetts, it aims to close the achievement gap by sending its students to college. The CoaH model will provide *every* student with at least three years of individualized tutorial in groups of two or three; *all* students in their 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade years will attend a junior or senior seminar course designed to guide them through the college and financial aid application processes and transition to their college placement; and *every* student's family will receive one-on-one financial aid counseling from CoaH's college counseling staff. These strategies are designed to ensure that students not only gain and build upon the skills they need to become college-ready, but also to help them navigate the college application process and plan for the financial commitment of attending college. As a result of our carefully planned and executed programs, all of City on a Hill graduates been accepted to college. More important than boasting an impressive college acceptance rate, CoaH has proven consistently successful in student academic growth. When compared to other districts in Massachusetts on the 10<sup>th</sup> grade MCAS exam, City on a Hill excels in student growth. Of the 288 districts calculated, CoaH ranked in the top five for math for the past four years, and in the top ten for English Language Arts for three out of the last four years.

City on a Hill's Board of Trustees, leadership, and staff believe City on a Hill is well positioned to serve the urban youth of Massachusetts and provide them with a quality educational program that will prepare them to succeed in a rigorous college environment. This founding group has spent two years meeting in preparation for the effective replication of the existing school model. Additionally, an extensive search and selection process for the leader of CoaH II has been conducted, and that future leader has spent two years as the Vice Principal of the existing City on a Hill in preparation for her role as leader of CoaH II.

City on a Hill has proven itself as a provider of high quality educational programs to high school students across the city for the past 17 years. CoaH's programs demonstrate the commitment and dedication of its Board of Trustees, faculty, staff, and students to closing the achievement gap one student at a time. In addition, Boston families have demonstrated the need for an additional high quality, college preparatory high school option to serve their children. Of the charters approved in 2011 by the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, eight were middle schools and only four were high schools. Additionally, each of those four approved high schools has a feeder middle school, leaving little opportunity for students seeking to enter a charter high school in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Lastly, after careful planning, the current Board of Trustees not only has the vision and commitment to open a second school, but the capacity, skills and qualifications to realize that vision.

City on a Hill hopes to answer this call for high quality educational programs by extending its existing model to additional students by opening City on a Hill II, balancing its duties to its own students with a commitment to sustained systemic change in public education.

# PROPOSED CITY ON A HILL CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL NEW BEDFORD

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

City on a Hill emphasizes academic achievement, citizenship, teacher leadership, and public accountability. It seeks to graduate responsible, resourceful, and respectful democratic citizens prepared to advance community, culture and commerce, and to compete in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. City on a Hill believes first, and most centrally, not just that all students can learn, but that all students *must* learn in order to address the social, economic, and political inequities of our nation. When students enter high school, they do so with a wide range of skills and abilities. While some schools will track these students according to their skill levels, City on a Hill does not. Regardless of geography, race, or socioeconomic status, *all* City on a Hill students are held to the same high standards as they navigate its rigorous academic curriculum supported by the programs proven successful in helping students achieve. City on a Hill believes that the value of education is not in seat time; students must demonstrate their earned skills and knowledge in order to advance to the next grade level or graduate. City on a Hill approaches students' high school education knowing that they all can and will be proficient and college-ready.

Embedded in all that City on a Hill does is the notion that students must use the community as a place for learning, and give back to their community as much as they gain from it. Citizenship is a key component to a student's experience at City on a Hill, as CoaH not only seeks to prepare students for college, but also to prepare them to advance community, culture, and commerce, and to compete in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

City on a Hill currently serves 280 students in grades 9-12, and is open to all students in the City of Boston. In its lottery for the 2012-13 school year CoaH received 880 applications for 90 available seats, illustrating the need – and demand—for additional school choice at the high school level in Boston. Similarly, there is a demonstrated demand for high quality alternatives to traditional public schools in New Bedford. Currently, there are 500 students on the waitlist for the Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School and 427 students on the waitlists for the city's two existing charter schools. Additionally, in April of 2012, Governor Patrick released his Gateway Cities Education Agenda seeking to eliminate achievement gaps that disproportionately affect children living in poverty, students of color, students with disabilities, and students who are English Language Learners – many of whom are heavily concentrated in Gateway Cities. To answer the Governor's call, City on a Hill embarked on a campaign to gain community support of this project, and plans to open a third campus in New Bedford in 2014 and during the 2011-12 school year. Over the course of the school year, City on a Hill's Executive Director made numerous visits to New Bedford, meeting with current and former elected officials, other charter school leaders, and local businesses and community leaders to discuss City on a Hill's planned replication and garner support.

City on a Hill was founded in 1995, and in the 17 years since the original charter was granted, its educational program has been refined, informed by educational research and first-hand experience. The existing City on a Hill has learned from its colleagues in urban education, as well as from its own experience in facing the educational, organizational, and political challenges of urban education, and will use what it has learned to maintain the strength of its own educational program while replicating it in City on a Hill New Bedford (CoaH NB). Following a curriculum that aligns with Common Core standards and that incorporates academic achievement, active citizenship, and public service, teachers will use a wide range of instructional methods that match students' individual learning needs coupled with network-wide classroom norms monitored by the Principal. In the classroom, students will be required to demonstrate hard work in classes that focus on building higher-order thinking skills and

writing across the curriculum. Students will be engaged in active citizenship through weekly Town Meeting debates, annual mock elections, school-wide service days, a civics-focused history curriculum, and a required internship for all seniors. Students will be required to exhibit their earned skills and knowledge through written and oral skill and content proficiencies in order to advance to the next grade level or to graduate.

Not only does City on a Hill seek to educate the urban youth of Massachusetts, it aims to close the achievement gap by sending its students to college. The CoaH model will provide *every* student with at least three years of individualized tutorial in groups of two or three; *all* students in their 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade years will attend a junior or senior seminar course designed to guide them through the college and financial aid application processes and transition to their college placement, from selecting a school to filling out the application, to what to expect when they first arrive; and *every* student's family will receive one-on-one financial aid counseling from CoaH's college counseling staff. These strategies are designed to ensure that students not only gain and build upon the skills they need to become college-ready, but also to help them navigate the college application process and plan for the financial commitment of attending college. As a result of our carefully planned and executed programs, all of City on a Hill I graduates been accepted to college. More important than boasting an impressive college acceptance rate, CoaH I has proven consistently successful in student academic growth. When compared to other districts in Massachusetts on the 10<sup>th</sup> grade MCAS exam, City on a Hill excels in student growth. Of the 288 districts calculated, CoaH ranked in the top five for math for the past four years, and in the top ten for English Language Arts for three out of the last four years.

City on a Hill's Board of Trustees, leadership, and staff believe City on a Hill is well positioned to serve the urban youth of Massachusetts and provide them with a quality educational program that will prepare them to succeed in a rigorous college environment. After careful research and analysis comparing the lowest performing 10% of districts in Massachusetts in the categories of need, cost-effectiveness, ability to staff, demographics, and community openness to charter growth, City on a Hill's Board of Trustees have selected New Bedford as the best fit for a City on a Hill campus in a Gateway City. The founding group of CoaH NB is made up of members of the Board of Trustees as well as staff members of the existing school. This founding group has spent two years meeting, as the school's Strategic Planning Committee and in collaboration with the school-based Executive Committee in preparation for the effective replication of the existing school model.

City on a Hill has proven itself as a provider of high quality educational programs to high school students across the city for the past 17 years. CoaH's programs demonstrate the commitment and dedication of its Board of Trustees, faculty, staff, and students to closing the achievement gap one student at a time. In addition, New Bedford families have demonstrated the demand for an additional high quality high school option to serve their children. Lastly, after careful planning, the current Board of Trustees not only has the vision and commitment to open a second school, but the capacity, skills and qualifications to realize that vision.

City on a Hill hopes to answer this call for high quality educational programs by extending its existing model to additional students by opening City on a Hill New Bedford, balancing its duties to its own students with a commitment to sustained systemic change in public education.

## PROPOSED INTERNATIONAL CHARTER SCHOOL OF BROCKTON

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Mission:** The mission of the International Charter School of Brockton is to provide students with the knowledge, skills, thinking ability and leadership qualities they will need to achieve college acceptance and succeed in life. We will accomplish this mission by providing any child who enrolls in our school – regardless of his or her background, socio-economic status, prior academic experience or other factors – with a world-class and proven college-preparatory public education in a student-centered setting that emphasizes community, civic responsibility and personal development, as well as academic rigor.

**General Overview:** International Charter School of Brockton will be a commonwealth charter public school of choice serving a diverse student population. We wish to open with grades K-5 and grow one grade per year until we are a K-12 school in year eight. For the initial charter, the plan is as follows:

School Year	Grade Levels	Total Student Enrollment
First Year	K-5	540
Second Year	K-6	636
Third Year	K-7	738
Fourth Year	K-8	840
Fifth Year	K-9	942

Consistent with state law, we will accept on a first-come-first-serve basis all students who apply; we will hold a public lottery if applications exceed available spaces. We will serve students with disabilities and English language learner (ELL) students consistent not only with state law but also with our philosophy that all children can learn and will be challenged to grow academically and personally while in our care.

We plan to retain the services of SABIS Educational Systems, which also manages highly successful charter public schools in Springfield and Holyoke. SABIS is a 126-year-old company with close to 80 public charter and private schools across the world, including 15 charter schools in six states.<sup>1</sup> SABIS-managed charter schools employ the exact same model used in its successful private schools worldwide.

The descriptions of the mission, educational philosophy, curriculum and instruction, assessment system, and school characteristics in this application purposefully mirror the descriptions included in the Commonwealth Charter Public School application for Lowell Collegiate Charter School, which was approved in February 2012 and is scheduled to open in Fall 2013 under the management of SABIS. SABIS currently manages two highly successful charter public schools in Springfield and Holyoke, Massachusetts, both of which are marked by strong academic achievement, robust waiting lists and dedicated teachers with tenures longer than typical at most charter schools. Our goal is to replicate an established and effective educational model in a community with similar characteristics and needs as those in which SABIS currently operates. As it does in other communities, SABIS will, as appropriate, adjust the model to meet local needs.

The SABIS school model is highly intentional, logical and purposeful; it is designed to focus all efforts and attention on maximizing each student's ability to master the knowledge and gain the personal skills necessary to win admission to college. Through the use of regular formative assessments and detailed data analysis, gaps in student learning are detected and addressed immediately so no student falls far behind. In addition, student leaders who assist their less-capable classmates in the course of daily learning are identified in each class. These student leaders are given the title Academic Prefect.

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<sup>1</sup> Nine charter schools are direct-managed and six are self-managed yet are using the SABIS educational program under a licensing agreement.

In addition, teachers are freed to focus on what is most critical to student learning and success – to teach students. That's accomplished by removing the numerous non-instructional duties that consume the off hours of the vast majority of teachers in American schools. Those other duties – test development and grading, parent meetings, lesson planning and curricula development – are performed either centrally by SABIS or by the school's director and senior academic officer, known as the Academic Quality Controller (AQC). This approach addresses teacher burnout – a chronic problem faced by other charter schools. Effective teachers at SABIS-managed schools tend to stay longer; a more experienced, quality teaching staff leads to better instruction, stronger classroom management skills and, in the end, a better-educated student.

**Community Need and Support:** The essential purpose of the International Charter School of Brockton is to offer families and students a highly successful and proven college-preparatory K-12 program of choice in a community in which access to such options is extremely limited. By creating this school, we hope to strengthen the economic and social fabric of our community in the short-term and into the future. Currently, no Commonwealth charter schools exist in Brockton. There is significant opportunity for a rigorous college-preparatory charter school in a district performing in the lowest ten percent of the state.

SABIS manages schools in districts with similar characteristics and performance. These schools have generated significant and consistent community support and maintained full enrollment since opening.

**Founders Capacity:** The founding members of the board of trustees are an experienced, professional, highly qualified and diverse group of community and business leaders. The group includes members who are educators, financial experts, business owners, civic leaders and a board governance expert. The trustees are community residents who are as ethnically and culturally diverse as the community and students we expect to serve. This depth of cultural, civic, legal and financial expertise gives this founding group the capacity to effectively govern and oversee this school.

**Educational Program:** As mentioned above, our board wishes to contract for management and operational services with SABIS Educational Systems, Inc. Our school will fully implement the SABIS program, including its assessment system, instructional methods and school management model. The program is designed to challenge students to exceed state and federal performance standards; the curriculum is designed with the intention that all students obtain those skills necessary to be successful in higher education, work and society. The program provides a well-rounded, student-centered education with heavy emphasis on the core subjects of English and mathematics but also strong attention to science, world language, social studies, art, music, health, physical education and computing.

The program to be offered at our school is identical to the programs SABIS offers at its highly successful schools in the U.S. and at acclaimed private schools across the globe. SABIS manages schools in 15 countries, serving 60,000 students from pre-kindergarten through high school. The SABIS program was founded in an all-girls school in Lebanon in 1886 and has been refined over the past 126 years.

Our school's program is based on the simple fact that college admission requires a student to have mastered particular knowledge and skills. The SABIS curriculum breaks down those items into concepts and places them in a logical sequence that governs the class day and year. The curriculum essentially "walks back" that sequence from the final day of 12<sup>th</sup> grade to kindergarten and creates academic programming for each subject in each grade and for each week of each school year. Weekly assessments indicate whether a student is mastering those concepts. If not, the student is given special help to close learning gaps. Conversely, students who can rapidly advance are allowed to do so.

The curriculum also provides many enrichment opportunities, including academic leagues, activities during the Student Life period and opportunities for advanced work. Also, critical to the school culture in each SABIS-managed school is the Student Life Organization, in which students learn leadership skills by taking responsibility for various aspects of student life, under the guidance of an administrator.

## PROPOSED PHOENIX CHARTER ACADEMY SPRINGFIELD

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*“Despite so many obstacles – immigrating alone at sixteen, raising a child, and navigating a new language – nothing is going to stop me from going to college.”*

*– Maira Murillo, Phoenix Charter Academy Chelsea Class of 2012*

#### **Our Mission**

Phoenix Charter Academy Springfield’s (Phoenix Springfield) mission is to challenge teenagers in Springfield, Holyoke, and Chicopee with an academically rigorous and individually tailored curriculum. At Phoenix Springfield, talented students, some who have not succeeded in other schools, have the support, resources and training needed to succeed academically in high school and college, and become economically secure in their future. Named after a mythological figure of strength, healing and renewal, we believe in the capacity of our students to regain control of their academic future and recast themselves as strong, independent and self-sufficient adults.

#### **Our Challenge**

Across America, students are dropping out of high school at an alarming rate. According to *Education Week’s 2012 Diplomas Count*, “Nearly 1.2 million students from 2008’s high school class (the most recent year for which data was available) failed to graduate with a diploma. That amounts to 6,400 students lost each day of the year, or one student every 27 seconds” (23). Among students of color, this problem is particularly prevalent: only 57% of Latino students and 57.6% of African American students from the class of 2008 successfully finished high school, compared to 78.4% of white students (*Diplomas Count 2012*, 23).

Dropping out of high school has severe economic and social consequences. The unemployment rate of high school dropouts is four times that of college graduates, and high school dropouts are disproportionately likely to be incarcerated, homeless, or recipients of government services (Kazis 2002, 4). On average, each dropout costs the United States nearly \$300,000 in lost earnings over the course of his/her lifetime (Rennie Center 2011, 1).

Phoenix Charter Academy Springfield’s target communities face the reality of the dropout crisis on a daily basis. In the 2012-13 school year, Springfield, Chicopee, and Holyoke had five-year graduation rates of 56.1%, 71.2%, and 56.1%, respectively, all significantly lower than the statewide four-year rate of 84.7%. As in the nation at large, the costs of dropping out of high school reverberate through the Massachusetts economy: the average high school dropout in Massachusetts makes \$10,000 less annually than a high school graduate and \$34,000 less annually than a college graduate (The Boston Foundation, 2010).

#### **Our Strategy**

Phoenix Springfield will be the third school in the Phoenix Network of high-accountability alternative schools for at-risk students. The Phoenix model, developed at Phoenix Charter Academy in Chelsea over the past six years, partners challenging academic work with comprehensive socio-emotional supports to enable all students to gain the skills necessary to succeed in college. Phoenix schools target students who turn to alternative education when traditional school systems fail, often including students who have dropped out of school, have struggled with truancy and chronic absenteeism in the past, are involved with the Department of Youth Services or the Department of Children and Families, are pregnant or parenting children of their own, and/or are recent immigrants to the country.

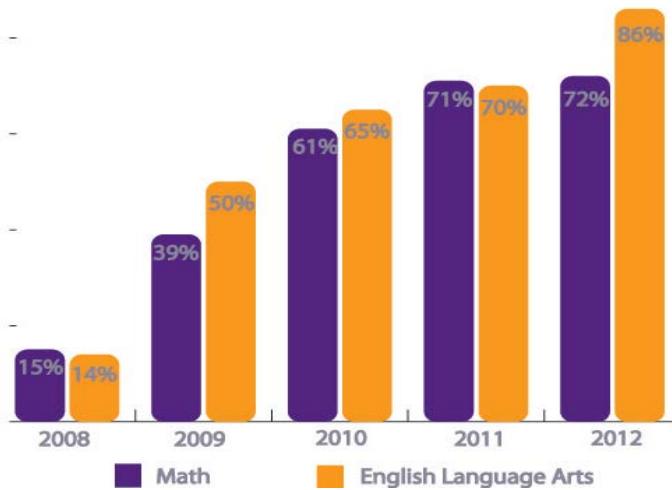
To help these students excel academically – including passing the MCAS, graduating from high school, and succeeding in college – Phoenix provides students with a rigorous curriculum that prepares them for college-level work. We expect our students to achieve at high levels: students attend school from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. for 190 days each year, must earn a C- or better to earn class credit, must demonstrate mastery of upper-level math, science, and humanities classes in order to graduate, and are required to receive a

college acceptance letter prior to graduation. Our College Services Department, Phoenix Through College, works with every student to help him/her map his/her course through high school and college. While holding our students to high academic expectations, Phoenix schools also provide students with the socio-emotional supports they need to overcome obstacles they are facing outside of school. Our comprehensive student support services include a student support center that serves as a resource for students who need coaching to model the characteristics of a scholar, on-site social workers who connect students to collateral supports in the community, an on-site childcare center that offers services to teen parents, and outreach workers who tirelessly endeavor to keep students connected to and engaged in school. These non-traditional supports, necessary for a non-traditional population of young people, help students manage external struggles so that they can focus on academic growth in the classroom.

## **Our Results**

Over the lifetime of Phoenix Chelsea, we have seen the impact of our instructional and student support programs, and believe we have developed a powerful model for reaching and retaining high-risk youth. In 2012, 86% of students scored advanced or proficient on the English Language Arts MCAS exam, as did 72% on the math exam, beating all but one of the school's sending districts. Additionally, 77 students have now graduated from Phoenix, and 100% of those students have been accepted to college. The following chart details our students' proficiency rates on the MCAS exam over the past five years:

**Phoenix Charter Academy Chelsea MCAS Proficiency Rates, 2008-2012**



## **Our Vision for the Future**

As mentioned briefly above, Phoenix Springfield will be the third school in the Phoenix Network, following Phoenix Chelsea (chartered in 2005; opened in 2006) and Phoenix Lawrence (an in-district school operated using the Phoenix model, opened in August, 2012). The Board of Trustees of Phoenix Charter Academy, galvanized by the success of Phoenix in Chelsea, is eager to bring our model of high accountability and wraparound support services to Springfield and surrounding communities. With the opening of Phoenix Springfield, the Phoenix Network will be serving nearly 500 students, many of whom would not have finished high school, let alone gone on to college, without Phoenix. Our strategic five-year plan, described in more detail later in this application, lays out a comprehensive strategy for developing the capacity of the organization to support the opening of schools across the Commonwealth. We are not satisfied with the educational options currently available to young people who have struggled academically, and believe our work can serve as an example of what high-risk youth can achieve when provided with high expectations and relentless support.

## PROPOSED PIONEER CHARTER SCHOOL OF SCIENCE II

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The mission of Pioneer Charter School of Science (PCSS) II is to prepare educationally under-resourced students for today's competitive world. PCSS will help students to develop the academic and social skills necessary to become successful professionals and exemplary members of their community. This goal will be achieved by providing the students with a rigorous academic curriculum with emphasis on math and science, balanced by a strong foundation in the humanities, a character education program, career-oriented college preparation, and strong student-teacher-parent collaboration.

PCSS-II will replicate the successful model of the PCSS (the flagship school) in the cities of Danvers, Lynn, Peabody, Salem, and Saugus. PCSS is a successful nonselective STEM based school located in Everett. On the MCAS, PCSS students have surpassed their sending districts and the state averages in all the grade levels that they were tested in. PCSS ranked as the eighth highest district in grade ten mathematics and tenth highest district in grade ten science in 2011. Moreover, PCSS eighth graders were the first in the state in mathematics for student growth and the tenth graders were the fifth in the state. In 2012, PCSS was recognized as the second highest growing district in 10<sup>th</sup> grade mathematics. Recently, Boston Magazine recognized PCSS as the fourth highest ranked charter school.

PCSS has been making a real difference in the lives of its students. The first graduating class of PCSS started the school with the same dismal MCAS mathematics scores that were reflective of the sending districts. By the time they reached high school PCSS students increased their performance by 59 percentage points (almost three times more than where they started), while their peers in sending districts increased their performance from 19 to 35 percentage points (and the increase for state average was only 26 percentage points). PCSS students had the second highest student growth results in the state for grade ten mathematics. The difference for the class of 2013 is 64 percentage points.

Our graduates have done well too. 97% of our first graduating class have been accepted to colleges. The amount of scholarships raised by our first graduating class was \$94,000 per student on average. The class of 2013 is on its way to beat the success of their schoolmates. Already a remarkable 76% of this year's graduating class qualified for the state's prestigious John and Abigail Adams Scholarship. College readiness has become the norm and part of the school culture at PCSS. About 70% of our current juniors and seniors take at least one Advanced Placement course.

PCSS-II will be established as a regional school within the districts of Danvers, Lynn, Peabody, Salem, and Saugus. When fully operational, the school will serve grades 7-12 with 360 students at maximum. The development group consists of the current Board of Trustees and administrators from PCSS (the flagship school). The applicant group is recognized as a proven provider by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

The applicant group is motivated with the idea of helping today's students to have a better future in the proposed region. They are united for the same ideal that all children can learn and strive toward their highest levels of capability as long as they are given the opportunity. The faculty and staff of PCSS-II, in collaboration with parents, will provide this opportunity in the proposed region by creating a learning atmosphere where each student will learn how to use their potential. Our students will strive toward their highest levels of capability with an education addressing their individual learning styles. Upon graduation from PCSS-II, our students will be equipped with a solid math and science background and will have developed the essential academic skills, social skills and ambition to pursue their education at prominent colleges. PCSS-II will engage students through home visits, tutorials, peer study groups, and

individualized instruction. Through the character education program at the school and support from the parents at home, our students will build good personality and will develop into responsible citizens with high moral values. Our teachers will also endeavor to be role models for the students in character education. Our parents will establish stronger relations with their children and the school community through various programs at the school. PCSS-II will collaborate with local universities, community agencies, and educational institutions to share resources and to build community assets. PCSS-II will create science initiative programs to provide opportunities for internships, projects, and participation in local, national, and international science fairs and competitions. PCSS-II, including the faculty, staff, students and parents, will be an example institution in all aspects in the society it serves. Our students will be of good character and will have high academic performance. They will become exemplary pioneers in their community.

PCSS-II is envisioned as a charter school with the following four guidelines:

- 1) A rigorous curriculum with emphasis on math and science
- 2) Career-oriented college preparation
- 3) Character education
- 4) Individual attention through the student-teacher-parent triad

PCSS-II will implement a campus-wide Character Education Program that will help students build good character, personality, and leadership skills; improve academic performance, general behavior, and attitudes; and reduce discipline referrals, dropouts, expulsions, crime rates, and drug use. Students at PCSS-II will be encouraged to take responsibility for their actions, seek positive role models, and to develop into good citizens with high moral values.

A maximum faculty-student ratio of 1:15 and a total enrollment of 360 students at full capacity will ensure that each student will receive adequate individual attention. This will enable us to determine each student's needs and problems and, therefore, provide each student with the necessary tools and programs to help them to succeed. Each full-time teacher will mentor a cohort of students, monitor their progress in each subject, and contact their parents regularly.

Our plans to support our curriculum include, but are not limited to:

(a) University Collaboration Program, (b) Field Trips, (c) Volunteer Work, (d) School Project Fairs, (e) Peer-tutoring and Mentorship Programs, (f) Athletic Program, (g) Role Model Initiative, (h) Character Education Program, (i) Student Clubs, (j) School Magazine, (k) After-School Program, (l) Awards and Prizes.

PCSS-II will combine the nationally proven instructional methodologies that have been successful. These include problem-based learning, project-based learning, direct instruction, and collaborative learning.

The school will be in session for 200 days. There will be orientation for the new staff and staff development in the second and third week of the August. Parents will be invited to meet with the teachers during these weeks as well. The school will start at the beginning of the fourth week of August. There will be one-week vacations in December, February, and April.

The sample school day will run from 8:00 a.m. to 3:35 p.m. and is followed by after-school programs until 5:30 p.m. There will be 40 periods of instruction per week. In line with PCSS-II's emphasis on math and science, the majority of hours will be spent on these subjects. Students will also spend a considerable amount of time with a range of activities such as computers, foreign language, fitness, music, and the arts.

PCSS-II has a dress code policy to create a safe and orderly environment, instill discipline, eliminate the competition and distractions caused by varied dress styles and reduce the pressure of brand-name dressing, which may affect students from low-income families. A dress code policy will also ensure that students enter into school mode even before arriving to school. The thinking in the morning as they put their uniform on will not be “what will I wear today” but “I am going to school”.

## **PROPOSED PIONEER CHARTER SCHOOL OF SCIENCE IV**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The mission of Pioneer Charter School of Science (PCSS) IV is to prepare educationally under-resourced students for today's competitive world. PCSS will help students to develop the academic and social skills necessary to become successful professionals and exemplary members of their community. This goal will be achieved by providing the students with a rigorous academic curriculum with emphasis on math and science, balanced by a strong foundation in the humanities, a character education program, career-oriented college preparation, and strong student-teacher-parent collaboration.

PCSS-IV will replicate the successful model of the PCSS (the flagship school) in the cities of Medford, Melrose, Saugus, Stoneham, Wakefield and Woburn. PCSS is a successful nonselective STEM based school located in Everett. On the MCAS, PCSS students have surpassed their sending districts and the state averages in all the grade levels that they were tested in. PCSS ranked as the eighth highest district in grade ten mathematics and tenth highest district in grade ten science in 2011. Moreover, PCSS eighth graders were the first in the state in mathematics for student growth and the tenth graders were the fifth in the state. In 2012, PCSS was recognized as the second highest growing district in 10<sup>th</sup> grade mathematics. Recently, Boston Magazine recognized PCSS as the fourth highest ranked charter school.

PCSS has been making a real difference in the lives of its students. The first graduating class of PCSS started the school with the same dismal MCAS mathematics scores that were reflective of the sending districts. By the time they reached high school PCSS students increased their performance by 59 percentage points (almost three times more than where they started), while their peers in sending districts increased their performance from 19 to 35 percentage points (and the increase for state average was only 26 percentage points). PCSS students had the second highest student growth results in the state for grade ten mathematics. The difference for the class of 2013 is 64 percentage points.

Our graduates have done well too. 97% of our first graduating class have been accepted to colleges. The amount of scholarships raised by our first graduating class was \$94,000 per student on average. The class of 2013 is on its way to beat the success of their schoolmates. Already a remarkable 76% of this year's graduating class qualified for the state's prestigious John and Abigail Adams Scholarship. College readiness has become the norm and part of the school culture at PCSS. About 70% of our current juniors and seniors take at least one Advanced Placement course.

PCSS-IV will be established as a regional school within the districts of Medford, Melrose, Saugus, Stoneham, Wakefield and Woburn. When fully operational, the school will serve grades 7-12 with 360 students at maximum. The development group consists of the current Board of Trustees and administrators from PCSS (the flagship school). The applicant group is recognized as a proven provider by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

The applicant group is motivated with the idea of helping today's students to have a better future in the proposed region. They are united for the same ideal that all children can learn and strive toward their highest levels of capability as long as they are given the opportunity. The faculty and staff of PCSS-IV, in collaboration with parents, will provide this opportunity in the proposed region by creating a learning atmosphere where each student will learn how to use their potential. Our students will strive toward their highest levels of capability with an education addressing their individual learning styles. Upon graduation from PCSS-IV, our students will be equipped with a solid math and science background and will have developed the essential academic skills, social skills and ambition to pursue their education at prominent colleges. PCSS-IV will engage students through home visits, tutorials, peer study groups, and

individualized instruction. Through the character education program at the school and support from the parents at home, our students will build good personality and will develop into responsible citizens with high moral values. Our teachers will also endeavor to be role models for the students in character education. Our parents will establish stronger relations with their children and the school community through various programs at the school. PCSS-IV will collaborate with local universities, community agencies, and educational institutions to share resources and to build community assets. PCSS-IV will create science initiative programs to provide opportunities for internships, projects, and participation in local, national, and international science fairs and competitions. PCSS-IV, including the faculty, staff, students and parents, will be an example institution in all aspects in the society it serves. Our students will be of good character and will have high academic performance. They will become exemplary pioneers in their community.

PCSS-IV is envisioned as a charter school with the following four guidelines:

- 1) A rigorous curriculum with emphasis on math and science
- 2) Career-oriented college preparation
- 3) Character education
- 4) Individual attention through the student-teacher-parent triad

PCSS-IV will implement a campus-wide Character Education Program that will help students build good character, personality, and leadership skills; improve academic performance, general behavior, and attitudes; and reduce discipline referrals, dropouts, expulsions, crime rates, and drug use. Students at PCSS-IV will be encouraged to take responsibility for their actions, seek positive role models, and to develop into good citizens with high moral values.

A maximum faculty-student ratio of 1:15 and a total enrollment of 360 students at full capacity will ensure that each student will receive adequate individual attention. This will enable us to determine each student's needs and problems and, therefore, provide each student with the necessary tools and programs to help them to succeed. Each full-time teacher will mentor a cohort of students, monitor their progress in each subject, and contact their parents regularly.

Our plans to support our curriculum include, but are not limited to:

(a) University Collaboration Program, (b) Field Trips, (c) Volunteer Work, (d) School Project Fairs, (e) Peer-tutoring and Mentorship Programs, (f) Athletic Program, (g) Role Model Initiative, (h) Character Education Program, (i) Student Clubs, (j) School Magazine, (k) After-School Program, (l) Awards and Prizes.

PCSS-IV will combine the nationally proven instructional methodologies that have been successful. These include problem-based learning, project-based learning, direct instruction, and collaborative learning.

The school will be in session for 200 days. There will be orientation for the new staff and staff development in the second and third week of the August. Parents will be invited to meet with the teachers during these weeks as well. The school will start at the beginning of the fourth week of August. There will be one-week vacations in December, February, and April.

The sample school day will run from 8:00 a.m. to 3:35 p.m. and is followed by after-school programs until 5:30 p.m. There will be 40 periods of instruction per week. In line with PCSS-IV's emphasis on math and science, the majority of hours will be spent on these subjects. Students will also spend a considerable amount of time with a range of activities such as computers, foreign language, fitness, music, and the arts.

PCSS-IV has a dress code policy to create a safe and orderly environment, instill discipline, eliminate the competition and distractions caused by varied dress styles and reduce the pressure of brand-name dressing, which may affect students from low-income families. A dress code policy will also ensure that students enter into school mode even before arriving to school. The thinking in the morning as they put their uniform on will not be “what will I wear today” but “I am going to school”.

# PROPOSED SPRINGFIELD COLLEGIATE CHARTER SCHOOL

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Mission.** Educating students in kindergarten through grade eight, Springfield Collegiate Charter School develops the academic and character foundation necessary for success in high school, college, and life.

**Vision.** All students have the right to an excellent education regardless of race, socioeconomic status, home language, special education need, or zip code. We propose a highly structured K-8 college preparatory school that offers a rigorous academic curriculum, data-driven instruction, comprehensive academic supports, a focus on positive character development through our PRIDE values, and a joyful school culture attained through frequent celebration of student achievement and growth. Under the training and support of Proven Provider Building Excellent Schools, Springfield Collegiate Charter School (“Springfield Collegiate”) draws from best practices used by the nation’s top performing urban charter schools. We believe college preparation must start on a child’s first day of primary education and that all students have a right to be prepared to succeed in academically rigorous high schools and colleges. We therefore provide a seamless K-8 education within a single school.

Springfield Collegiate adheres to eight core values that define our educational philosophy.

- 1. High Expectations, No Excuses.** We will do whatever it takes to make sure all of our students are prepared for academically rigorous high schools and colleges. We expect all of our students to work hard, behave well, and succeed, and we provide the supports they need to do so. We create a joyful and engaging learning environment, in which achievement is continuously celebrated.
- 2. Character matters.** Success requires more than just academic achievement; it requires students to be good people. We devote time to explicitly teaching our PRIDE values – Preparation, Respect, Integrity, Determination, and Enthusiasm – so that our students can be successful in and out of the classroom.
- 3. Our college preparatory mission drives everything.** Our college mission drives all academic and organizational decision-making. All financial, human resource, and curricular decisions are made with the goal of effectively remediating academic gaps and accelerating student achievement.
- 4. Literacy is our priority.** Reading is the most powerful academic skill students can acquire. We offer multiple hours of targeted literacy instruction every day to ensure that students can read with comprehension and insight and analyze and effectively respond to texts across the disciplines.
- 5. Excellent teachers drive exceptional results when joy and rigor permeate the classroom.** Effective, mission-aligned teachers are the key determinant for student achievement, and teacher quality is the most important factor driving student achievement. We invest in recruiting, retaining, training, and supporting game-changing teachers who can transform our students’ lives, and who infuse joy and rigor into every lesson.
- 6. More time on task is critical.** More time in the classroom is critical for students who enter school far behind their more affluent peers. We view instructional time as sacred and reinforce this message by providing a highly structured classroom environment. We plan our lessons meticulously, pace them appropriately, and teach procedures explicitly so that no amount of instructional time is wasted.

- 7. We assess often, use data strategically, and intervene aggressively.** Frequent analysis of student data informs key instructional and operational decisions. We analyze all data on a frequent, ongoing, and strategic basis to determine how our students are performing and where we need to provide remediation or acceleration.
- 8. Families are our most important partners.** Strategic and active family engagement promotes strong educational outcomes. We provide multiple avenues to develop strong relationships with parents and we open our school doors to families to participate in academic and co-curricular events and to celebrate student achievement.

**Need.** The need for quality educational outcomes for Springfield students is pressing and urgent. Currently, 41% of students in Springfield Public Schools (SPS) perform at grade level in ELA and 27% are proficient in math. Further, 53% of SPS students graduate from high school and proficiency rates show that a majority of those are academically unprepared for college. Springfield is one of the poorest cities in Massachusetts and has the second highest rate of low income students in Massachusetts; 85.6% of Springfield students receive free or reduced price lunch – a rate higher than that of comparable urban centers like Boston, Worcester, and Lowell.

Proficiency rates in Springfield's elementary schools show chronically low achievement that plagues students as they progress into the upper grades. In grade 3, for example, when students transition from learning to read to reading to learn, 60% of children in Springfield's public schools *cannot* read proficiently. Fifth graders enter middle school poised for failure and middle schools struggle to provide remediation. Springfield has the lowest eighth grade proficiency rates of any Massachusetts district in math and the third lowest in ELA.

The South End of Springfield is severely economically depressed and lacking in strong educational options for its children. Notably, there is no elementary school that serves this neighborhood of 4,386 residents, 417 of whom are students in grades K-5. The South End struggles with a high poverty rate (63%) and 96% of South End families with students that attend SPS schools are low income. Meetings with parents in this community indicate a strong desire to have a school that they can access easily, and which provides their children with a high quality education. Of the 417 South End students in grades K-5, 25% attend the Daniel B. Brunton School, which requires a 45-minute commute and where only 38% of third graders are proficient in ELA and 47% are proficient in math. Other students are dispersed across more than fifteen schools, none of which demonstrate strong academic performance, and six of which are designated as Level 4 schools. A strong school, using a seamless K-8 model and providing rigorous instruction from the first day of Kindergarten, is desperately needed in Springfield and in the South End neighborhood in particular.

Our community outreach with Springfield's professional, philanthropic, business, and educational leadership, and to parents of SPS students, especially those residing in the South End, indicates a strong desire for an elementary school in the South End. The need for strong educational options for Springfield's families is urgent. We answer this call for quality education at the K-8 level.

**Capacity.** Strong leadership with the ability to set high expectations, pursue them with zeal, and execute at a high level is critical to the success of a high performing school. The Executive Director must provide diligent, focused, and effective day-to-day management and the Board of Trustees must be mission-driven and provide careful oversight. Lead Founder and proposed Executive Director William Spirer is a trained and experienced educator and leader informed by and networked to the strongest charter school leaders locally and nationally. The founding group of Springfield Collegiate is a high capacity team of professionals with the diverse skill and experience to lead and govern a public charter

school. It has the expertise to lay a strong foundation for the school and establish policies that will ensure its success and organizational and financial viability well into the future. The Lead Founder and proposed Executive Director, Board of Trustees, and school are supported by Proven Provider Building Excellent Schools.

Over the past six months, the founding group has met monthly, laying the groundwork for its preparation of the final charter application, planning and executing its extensive community outreach efforts, and developing the vision and strategic plan for the school. In these early stages, the group has benefited from its expertise in law, real estate, finance, accounting, marketing, and education, and has diligently built on its existing relationships with the residents of our target community. The founding group approaches the work of education with seriousness and urgency and is poised to successfully guide Springfield Collegiate through its formation, development, and growth.

# PROPOSED UP ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL OF DORCHESTER

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

UP Academy Charter School of Dorchester (UP Academy Dorchester) will open its doors to an estimated 546 students in fall 2013. The school's launch, a collaborative effort between the founding team, Boston Public Schools, and Unlocking Potential, represents the restart of a struggling K1-5 Boston Public School. UP Academy Dorchester will increase the school size one grade each year starting in year two, until the school operates as a K1-8 in 2016-2017.

In addition to enrolling 54 incoming kindergarten (K1) students in year one, UP Academy Dorchester will aim to serve all students previously enrolled in the Marshall Elementary School (the Marshall), an underperforming district elementary school that BPS intends to close after the 2012-2013 academic year.<sup>2</sup> The restart strategy – closing an underperforming district school and opening it as a Horace Mann Charter School – is consistent with BPS' relentless and innovative efforts to raise student achievement in its lowest-performing schools. Our school's founders believe that a successful restart represents the most effective and efficient means to close the state's achievement gap.

**Our Mission.** UP Academy Dorchester 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 Program.** UP Academy Dorchester's program will utilize the practices of the highest-performing urban charter schools, BPS, 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:

- **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.
- **Seamless and detailed operating procedures.** Our operating systems will be wide-reaching, encompass every imaginable aspect of school operations, and 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.
- **Rigorous, standards-based curriculum, instruction, and assessments.** Our educational program will be designed to help students build a strong foundation of core content and skills by 8<sup>th</sup> grade, while simultaneously preparing them for the intellectual demands of rigorous middle school and college preparatory high school programs.
- **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 identify the underlying skill deficiency and then provide systematic supports to address the issue.
- **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.
- **An atmosphere of enthusiasm and joy.** Our program will be designed to ensure that teaching and learning become exciting and fun.

<sup>2</sup> Per state regulations, the proposed school will hold a lottery for all of the school's seats.

**Impact on Students.** UP Academy Dorchester 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 any student currently attending the Marshall who wishes to join UP Academy Dorchester, including the school's population of students with disabilities and English Language Learners (ELLs). Going forward, we intend to enroll students reflective of the demographics and learning needs across the BPS system. Within four years, we intend for at least 75% of these students to be demonstrating grade-level proficiency in math and ELA, thus having secured a place on the path to college.

**Community Support.** BPS' desire to work with UP Academy Dorchester's founding team on this endeavor signals the district's belief in the school's ability and vision. Further, the office of Boston Mayor Thomas M. Menino, existing BPS families, existing BPS teachers, and other community stakeholders are enthusiastically advocating for UP Academy Dorchester. Moreover, members of the school's founding team have demonstrated an ability to develop deep relationships and partnerships with local community members and organizations when launching a restart school.

**Our Capacity.** UP Academy Dorchester has the capacity that is required to achieve its mission. Notably, the school will be governed by the existing board of UP Academy Charter School of Boston (UP Academy Boston).<sup>3</sup> This board will contribute invaluable knowledge about charter school governance, launching an autonomous school with the BPS system, and preparing to transform a chronically underperforming district school. Other founding team members will contribute insights from having managed and worked in some of the highest-performing urban public schools in the United States. BPS will contribute its vast accumulated knowledge of district-wide best practices, including those prescribed to serve the city's most at-risk elementary learners. And Unlocking Potential, a non-profit school turnaround organization which will provide voluntary in-kind support during UP Academy Dorchester's pre-operational year (the 2012-2013 academic year), will contribute its unique intellectual capital gained through supporting the launch and operation of UP Academy Boston.

Acknowledging that some members of the founding team have expertise that rests in middle school education, Unlocking Potential has hired Lana Ewing to serve as Principal-in-Residence during UP Academy Dorchester's pre-operational year. Lana has extensive elementary school experience, having taught 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> grades in both a district public school in New York City and a charter school in Boston, as part of the founding team of Edward W. Brooke Elementary School in Roslindale, Massachusetts. We have also hired Whitney Ryan as the Associate Academic Achievement Manager to co-lead UP Academy Dorchester's academic program development during the pre-operational year. Whitney has well-rounded experience with both elementary education, having taught 4<sup>th</sup> grade at Edward W. Brooke Charter School, and with students with disabilities, having worked most recently as the Special Education Coordinator at Brooke Mattapan. Additionally, we have hired a Director of Operations-in-Residence, Kristen Linnenbank, who most recently worked as Director of Operations & Systems for Jumpstart, overseeing internal communication, systems implementation, technology strategy, and customer service for the organization's national network. The elementary school team will utilize their strong elementary school partnerships to incorporate the instructional, operational, and cultural best practices of high-performing schools nationwide.

Private philanthropic funders are confident in the team's ability to leverage its experiences and expertise and have already pledged more than \$400,000 specifically to support the launch of UP Academy Dorchester.

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<sup>3</sup> UP Academy Boston, which was able retain 85% of the students formerly enrolled at the Gavin Middle School, and serves a student population that includes 30% ELL, 30% special education, and 91% low-income (as defined by free and reduced lunch), has had very strong initial results. 2012 MCAS scores increased dramatically in each grade and subject in the first year of turnaround. The school's median SGP in math was the highest in the state of all public middle schools.

# PROPOSED YOUTHBUILD ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Lawrence Family Development and Education Fund, Inc. (LFDEF) proposes to open YouthBuild Academy Charter School (YBACS), a Commonwealth independent charter high school in Lawrence, Massachusetts.

YBACS will specialize in the academic and social development of youth and young adult residents (ages 16-22) of Lawrence, Massachusetts who have previously dropped out of high school, and re-engage them in a rigorous course of study based on the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks grades 9-12 leading to a high school diploma. It will also cultivate leadership and personal development through community service for career readiness and post-secondary matriculation.

YouthBuild Academy Charter School will be located in and serve students from Lawrence, Massachusetts, a city founded in 1847 to build textile fortunes with immigrant labor. As one of Massachusetts' true "Gateway Cities," Lawrence has been home to more than five generations of immigrants who speak more than 60 languages, and today is home to almost 80,000 residents of whom the great majority is Hispanic who struggle against the barriers of poverty, English language fluency, unemployment and a failed school system currently in State receivership. The city remains vibrant, culturally-relevant and holds tremendous unrealized potential given its links to the global understandings that can make a difference in the sustainability of its resources—human and natural.

This new academic program expands the Lawrence Family Development and Education Fund Inc.'s Proven Provider Status for high expectations and culturally-relevant, student-centered experiences which foster academic achievement and self-advocacy. LFDEF was founded in 1992 to create a management and fiscal structure for the Lawrence Youth Commission, then a public board developing new initiatives for youth in Lawrence. Core to all of its programs is the mission and vision of the organization: "strengthening families and building community through education." For the past twenty years, LFDEF has acquired property, formed partnerships and demonstrated experiences to create educational opportunities which improve the knowledge and skills for its stakeholders and the community: children, young adults, parents and families. The YouthBuild Academy Charter School will build on this experience and expertise with a rigorous high school program for young people whose futures have been placed "at risk" because of life and educational conditions or needs not met.

Edweek.org data indicates the national average graduation rate is 71.7%. The City of Lawrence graduation rate for all students is 32.4%. This is almost 40% below the national rate. A review of data on the website of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education demonstrates the magnitude of student dropout and graduation rates in Lawrence. In the 2010-11 school year, 2.7% of Massachusetts' students in grades nine through twelve dropped out of school. A dropout percentage in Lawrence of 8.6%, relative to 2.7% in Massachusetts, is a concern for these students and for the City of Lawrence. The four-year cohort graduation rate (2011) increased for Massachusetts' public high schools (83.4% from 82.1%). In Lawrence, the 2011 four-year cohort graduation rate was only 52%, relative to the state at 82%.

The Turnaround Plan for the Lawrence Public Schools states: "The graduation rate was 31 percentage points below the state average. 24% of ninth graders failed to be promoted to 10th grade, more than three times the state average; 8.6% of LPS students drop out each year. The district's retention rate, the

percentage of students repeating the grade in which they were enrolled the previous year, is 5.2%, in comparison with a state average of 2.1%. Low baseline of performance: Of 24 “Gateway City” districts identified by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Lawrence ranks 22nd in academic achievement on MCAS across all grades in both Math and English Language Arts (ELA). LPS is ranked in the bottom five districts in the state in Math and ELA MCAS proficiency as well as graduation rate. In 2011, less than 30% of tested students were proficient in Math MCAS and only 41% of students were proficient in ELA MCAS.”

YBACS will recruit dropouts and provide academic preparation and support so that its students move successfully to post-secondary education, training or careers. By adding a pathway for a high school diploma, YBACS builds on the seventeen year academic and job-training success of YouthBuild-Lawrence, which has prepared more than 400 youth/young adults for the GED and provided counseling, career direction and construction skills in the building and renovation of homes for low income families. To provide opportunities to earn a high school diploma and explore career pathways, the YBACS expands the current GED program offering and construction skills training with a separate but complementary academic program. After student enrollment, to address students’ mental and physical readiness for re-engagement in an academic program and community service, YBACS will use a 2-week Transformation Orientation program along with a standards-based academic curriculum.

While providing additional time needed for credit recovery, individualized instruction and accelerated coursework, a trimester schedule of classes, a 200-day per school year calendar and support services will address issues surrounding retention and the development of academic skills. Within small class settings, the curriculum, focused on Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks grades 9-12, will motivate and re-engage students. Attention to each student’s goals and progress will allow them to demonstrate competencies that are learned. These goals, and each student’s progress will be tracked using a 1) Personal Success Blueprint, 2) ePortfolio, and 3) Student Academic Achievement Plan. The school will implement a Response to Intervention (RTI) high school model that will assure adequate, effective classroom intervention strategies that are embedded into instruction. Student progress will also be monitored through cross-disciplinary teacher common planning sessions. This will assure that all students, including those with special education and English Language Learning (ELL) needs, receive the necessary and appropriate support in order to obtain academic proficiencies.

Collaboration with post-secondary institutions, employers and community partners will impact the education, welfare, safety and economics of the YBACS students and the community of Lawrence at large. Staffing will be experienced educators and student support staff who are knowledgeable in their respective fields of: academic standards, the challenges of previously disengaged students’ re-entry into secondary education, instruction for successful attainment of the requirements for the high school diploma, and transitions for entry and retention in post-secondary and employment settings. The use of technology will extend opportunities for individualized instruction and facilitate assessment methods. Communication with support service professionals and family (relevant and sponsoring caring adults) will holistically extend the opportunities of the academic program and help to ensure that students successfully move forward on a path to careers and college.

A governance structure will include board members from LFDEF, education professionals and area experts in academic, skills and career clusters. The board will also include a student, selected to serve on the Student Policy Council, whose voice and experience will provide authentic points for program development. The founding group is purposely composed of individuals who possess as much educational experience as significant exposure to high school youth—including individuals who were classified as “high risk” while in high school. The founding group and those recommended for the

founding board represent committed stakeholders which ensure the success of this school and the lives of the students it serves.

YBACS anticipates enrolling 60 students in the first year with an anticipated growth of 40 students annually for each of the next four years, reaching a maximum of 173 students by the spring of 2017. The YouthBuild Academy Charter School will offer more than a “second chance” at earning a high school diploma. For many students it will offer their first chance at a rigorous academic program designed to engage their potential and build their future.