

UP Academy Charter School of Springfield Interview Summary

Questions derived from review panel and documentation review

In Attendance:

Delcie Bean – proposed board member

Jack Dill – proposed board member

Ashley Martin – proposed board member

Katie Rae Mulvey – proposed board member

Rachel Romano – proposed board member

Kwame Webster – propose board member

Allison Balter – Director of English Language Learning, UP Education Network

Samantha Cohen – Chief Academic Officer, UP Education Network

Jennifer Lopez – Chief of Staff, UP Education Network

Casey Ngo-Miller – Director of Special Education, UP Education Network

Tim Nicolette – President, UP Education Network

Superintendent Daniel Warwick – Springfield Public Schools – *via conference call*

Absent:

Awilda Sanchez – proposed board member

Faithfulness to Charter & Organizational Viability:

1. Why is a Horace Mann charter school the ‘right’ turnaround model for one of the middle schools in Springfield?

- I think that a Horace Mann charter school model is the right model for a turnaround effort in Springfield because it brings together the district and UP Education Network—in collaboration, which I think really helps to address this very sobering need in Springfield to create more high quality schools. The Horace Mann charter school model still allows for the school-based autonomy that schools need to effectively turnaround an existing school.

2. As a school turnaround, you are intending a dramatic shift in school organization, climate, and culture. Tell us about the ways UP Education Network has operationalized this type of transformation.

- UP Education Network has a strong track record being able to use the autonomies provided by the Horace Mann governance model to help create rapid turnaround that has dramatically increased student outcomes in a very short period of time. You can see that track record at the existing schools in Boston. UP Academy Boston (UAB), the first UP Education Network School, had proficiency rates in the high-20s and the low-30s pre-turnaround and now three years later the proficiency rates are in the mid-60s. Student growth rates have been very high, including the mid- to high-80s in math; at or close to top of the state. When you look at the second Horace Mann that UP Education Network has had, UP Academy Dorchester (UAD), formerly the John Marshall School in the Bowdoin-Geneva neighborhood in Dorchester, their students had proficiency rates that were 13 and 14 percent in English and math, respectively, prior to turnaround. After one year, the English proficiency rates across the school were 41 percent and the math proficiency rates were 60 percent. It was one of the single largest gains in one year for a turnaround in state history since the advent of MCAS. I think there is a very strong track record of results, but the way that we have achieved those results and really systematized them is actually through the six different core features of the program model of the school. So those six core program features are consistent across each of the schools. They include things like consistently high expectations, both academically and behaviorally for all students; includes having a seamless and aligned curriculum, instruction, and assessment system for students; supports for all learners; and an obsession with data and regularly using data to understand and monitor student needs. I won't go through all of them now, they are in the application and I know you guys know them well. Those six core program elements of the school are what helps it achieve that rapid turnaround.
- There are three that I would like to dial in and spend some time talking about in greater detail- the first one is about relentlessly having high expectations. So, we are very clear that when we enter a school the students and the families have tremendous potential. That potential is not necessarily being actualized and realized and we want to hold expectations as high as we would hold them for students in affluent neighborhoods and in schools that are striving for excellence all of the time in Massachusetts. So this notion of high expectations is what we do to kind of invite families and students into the Network, to ensure that they are successful. So this starts through our recruitment processes to get families interested in retaining their student in the school if they are a 7th or 8th grader or inviting families to be a part of our Network if they have the potential to be in 6th grade. There are family orientations to this, the first week of school for our middle school would be an introduction to these expectations; learning the practices, routines, and building the types of rapport the students need to have with their teachers and their colleagues. We feel really strongly that relationships are essential. So really making sure that every one of our students has a very strong relationship with at least one adult in the building is essential. As Tim [Nicolette] mentioned, another piece of this is just having an aligned curriculum. We take really seriously the notion of making this transition from MCAS to PARCC. We think that the expectations that PARCC is setting around critical thinking, rigor, and just problem solving-analytical skills are things that all of our students need to

be able to reach at really high levels. We believe that our students can do that. So we are building from the curriculum that we are primarily using at UP Academy Boston, but that we have an expanding academic team. We have gone from having two academic team members at the Network level, to this year having a team of seven team members. We are spending tremendous time currently building out what our curricular program will be and this is going to be hugely foundational for thinking about opening UP Academy Springfield. The third thing that I want to say, that Tim mentioned and I want to underscore more deeply, is just this obsessive nature focusing on data. We think that there is tremendous data we have on our students when they walk through the door, given their MCAS data, their data from our Special Education students from their IEPs. We want to use that data initially, but we also want to make sure we are giving diagnostic assessments during those very beginning weeks of school and using that data to then modify and tailor the instructional program to meet students where they are without changing our expectations. But just making sure we are able to map the plan from where our students are starting, during, and towards the end of the year. I'm happy to share more about any of our key tenets, but I wanted to make sure that I provided a little bit more detail. We have six core features, but I wanted to highlight these three.

3. **Tell us about what will be provided to teachers at the school by UP Education Network for instructional use, including curriculum, and assessments. What would the board be purchasing from the management organization?**
- The thing that we want to make sure we have aligned across our Network is just high expectations. So what they are purchasing is making sure there is clarity around assessments. So we currently partner with the Achievement Network, with ANET; so they would be connecting with the ANET broader network but also our school network to be giving interim assessments. Those interim assessments set some of the foundation and some of the bar from where we want our students to achieve. So that's part of our assessment design. They also would be building any kind of connection to our other middle schools—the scopes and sequences being delivered there; unit plans; and unit assessments. Those that have a wide array of types of features, so some of those will be performance tasks, some of them will be our more traditional assessments, and that way we will be able to look across the Network and see how are our students are doing in 7th grade science at all of our UP Academy schools. So those are some of the curricular materials. The other thing that I would say they are “purchasing” is the thought of what does it look like to support our teachers. So we have a very specific model where we have Deans of Curriculum and Instruction [DCI] that are at each of our schools. So we have a Dean of Curriculum and Instruction that will be overseeing the humanities and a Dean of Curriculum and Instruction that will be overseeing more of STEM [Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics], and so our Deans of Curriculum and Instruction have the ability to engage with their colleagues across the Network, both for building curricular tools—whether we are thinking about daily lesson plans, exit tickets, performance assessments. But also being able to build their professional gravitas and their professional knowledge and skill through engaging across the Network.

4. **UP Education Network will provide coaching and support for members of the leadership team (principal, director of operations, DCI, and dean of students) as part of its services. Tell us about the implementation of these types of support currently at UAB and UAD. Taking into consideration the geographical distance, how will both parties ensure effective support will be provided to UP Springfield? What do the specifics entail? Are you going to open a home office in Springfield or are you going to travel? Very briefly describe how you are going to deal with that distance.**

- The one thing that I want to share, first of all is yes, of course, Boston and Lawrence are closer together. But I also think it's provided us a really important starting point to think about how to support schools that are not in Boston and that we can't just be at. The things that we are pioneering this year are how are we using more web-based technologies, more teleconference to be connecting different staff members in different roles across this year. For example, Allison [Balter] and Casey [Ngo-Miller] are bringing together our coordinators for English Language Learners [ELLs] and Special Education [students with disabilities]. They are doing that at times in person, but they are also doing it at times through a virtual medium. So Springfield wouldn't provide a barrier in that regard.
- The drive time from Lawrence and Springfield to Boston are about the same. And this time of day, it's about half the time.
- The second thing I am going to say is that internally, the Network is building a knowledge management platform. So that we are going to be able to share in a more robust, virtual, and 21st century way. Resources, ideas, and those types of things. The third thing to say specifically, to answer the nuts and bolts of your question, is we do intend to have a team that will be based in Springfield and depending on what our long-term growth will look like, we will determine what the size of that team needs to look like. But we will surely have those on the ground—we think not just to support the curriculum side of things. But we think if we are going to be in Springfield, and what we heard from our potential board members, is that we really want to be closely connected to them, the community, and the families in Springfield. And so, that's non-negotiable.

5. **[UP Education Network] Based upon the experiences in Boston and Lawrence, what do you consider to be your greatest challenge in the successful implementation of your model? What expertise do you have to address these challenges?**

- I would say that one of the challenges that we face as a management organization is the demand and the need for this type of turnaround is really high. I think that, if Scott [Scott Given is the Chief Executive Officer of UP Education Network] were in the room, one of the things he would say is that there have been certain points early on in our tenure where we were growing because we saw the real need for providing these services, but our Network office capacity was always catching up to that growth. And so, in some sense, our expansion of schools, our Network office has been sort of chasing to catch up to provide the full, robust capacity that we've needed. So I think, in part, one of the lessons that we learned from that is that we are actually trying to be really thoughtful and intentional about this expansion to Springfield. And that's why we are intending to go for the fall of 2016, as opposed to the fall of 2015. That has allowed us to make some of the

investments in our Network office, like Samantha [Cohen] described in the building out academic team so we can offer more robust academic supports, both UP Academy Springfield and to all of the schools across our Network. It has also enabled us to really engage in thoughtful conversations with the founding board members and also with other partners about things like human capital needs for a school in Springfield. How will we ensure some of the partnerships and the pipeline to both really attract a great team, but also to really support and develop that team where they are there as well. That timeline has enabled us to both build our capacity in our central office, but also to be really thoughtful in the planning to increase our odds for success.

6. How will you identify the school? Do you have a sense of how it will be identified?

- My understanding is that in the early fall, once the data comes in, a school will be identified.
- There is a precedent in the market. Back in 1993, SABIS International Charter School came to charter, essentially took over the lowest performing K-5 school in Springfield, the Glickman School. At that point MCAS wasn't fully instituted, but I just remember them going from the lowest performing school to the second highest performing school in year 2. So, I believe that leaves a precedent for the school committee and the Superintendent, you know, historically.

7. What factors will be taken into consideration for the identification of the school? Or what has the district shared with you in terms of their priorities for which school to be a fit?

- I think it's best to talk directly to Superintendent Warwick about this, because ultimately it is the district's decision. I think that in terms of criteria, as you know there's some challenges across multiple middle schools in Springfield and there's this move towards the empowerment zone. I think that he has been very intentional with us about wanting to focus on those that are among the lowest performing. But, I would leave it to him to speak about any additional criteria that he is considering.

[See page 13 for follow up with Superintendent Warwick who joined by phone during the interview.]

[Follow-up: Does the Board or the Network have any other considerations about the schools, in terms of "we will not do X, Y, or Z"?)

- I think that we are sensitive to the fact that the district, because we are not opening till the fall of 2016, needs to be careful about announcing a specific school. Because they have a whole academic year they need to get through, they have teachers they need to retain. And I think that we are sensitive to that need and I think that we are cautiously waiting for that moment in time when they can choose a school. But of all the schools in Springfield, I think any of them would be a great candidate. I think we are excited to help out with whatever one they choose.

- I think if you look at UP Education Network and the schools that it serves the student population looks very similar to that of Springfield. Which makes us feel confident that if we were to engage with UP Education Network that they will be able to support whichever the schools the Superintendent decides to work with.

Capacity and Governance:

8. [Board] For those of you with experience in charter schools, how will your knowledge and experience make you an effective board member for a Horace Mann charter school?

- I think my experience leading a charter school in Springfield will lend itself really well to serving as a board member for UP Academy Springfield. As the Executive Director of Veritas Preparatory Charter School [Veritas], I work as an ex-officio member of our board, so I'm really familiar with governing structures and they are very similar to the proposed bylaws that we have put forth to you for UP Academy Springfield. I think, probably, the most value that I would bring is really deep knowledge of the Springfield community, of families, of the challenges that we face at Veritas Prep, the challenges as a teacher of middle school in Springfield Public Schools. So I think that wearing the hat of a board member, I think that those experiences will be really valuable as a founding board member for UP Academy Springfield.
- As a student who was educated by the public school system in New Orleans, my personal experience would help. But also my professional experience, I was the founding science teacher at Jefferson Chamber Foundation Academy, an alternative charter high school, right outside of New Orleans, Louisiana. I became the curriculum coordinator of that school and we also expanded into a new site. So, not only with my background, but the mission alignment of the schools that I've worked with would also help. But in addition to that, just understanding the process of expansion; taking culture as the school expands and making sure that faculty members, administration, staff, and students, all understand what is the general culture and what is the goal that we are driving towards. In addition to that, in my role as the Managing Director for Teach for America Western Massachusetts, I had a lot of experience getting to know a lot of the students in the schools, teachers, as well as leaders in the Springfield community. So, I think the combination of all of those with the other talents of the board will help UP Springfield become a really great school.
- As the Executive Director of the Massachusetts Network for Achievement Network, we work with both charters and district schools. In my previous life I worked at a charter school and in district schools in Washington DC. When I moved to Springfield seven years ago I worked in states with an experiment with turnaround called the Commonwealth Pilot. So those multiple experiences with charter and different places with district school with charter-like autonomies and my current experience, being able to see across the state of Massachusetts—district schools and charter schools that are and are not working—and grateful for the national perspective as well, because we work in multiple networks across the country. I think helps me understand some of the challenges and opportunities for a Horace Mann charter. Also, I lead a team that works both in the “East” and the “West” of Massachusetts. One of the things that I am especially excited about for this partnership with Springfield is an opportunity to bring together the East and

the West here in Massachusetts. So, I think that experience that I have had leading a remote team in the eastern part of the state with the western part of the state can be helpful too, as we try and tap into the wealth of experience of the UP Network.

9. [Board] For those of you who are new to charter schools and boards of trustees, what do you consider your role and responsibilities as a board member?

- First and foremost, serving on the board, our responsibility is to manage the public funds effectively and responsibly. We will make sure that those [funds] are being used to drive the education improvements for the students in the school that we end up working with. It is also a core part of our responsibility as board members to select the principal who will be leading this school and to determine whether or not we want to engage with UP Education Network to help to manage that principal and the school's staff on a daily basis to implement the charter as designed in the application. So both holding the school leader and UP Education Network, if selected, accountable, but also providing key supports. So, developing policies to guide their work; managing the budget, making sure that everything is executed in a responsible way; setting the academic guidelines for this school; and being sure that we are able to be a resource that they can tap into as needed.
- I'd add to that from a more holistic standpoint our main responsible is to the students and to give them every possible opportunity that we can give them to really unlock their potential, as the name implies. As we talked about earlier, kind of holding them to higher standards and not starting off from the perspective that we have to make excuses or make exceptions. I think that our responsibility is to give these students the chance they deserve.
- This is my first charter school work opportunity. Although I have been invited to I think every other charter board in Springfield. But I have a close observer of the charter school movement since I was a founding director of Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education. I was involved in all of the writing of legislation in the early 1990s. Springfield has had a number of charter schools and some of them have been successful and some haven't. I think observing that is one of the reasons I think this is very likely to be successful is the quality of board members, besides me, who have a real deep knowledge about UP Education's works and commitment to it. But more importantly, experienced professional management, some of those will have to work so well, including Horace Mann School, whose board is trying to serve the function that a redesign serves. So, I do have a lot of board experience from organizations valued in the multi-thousand to multi-billion. So I have some sense of what the role of the board is and how the governance ideally should work. And just as UP believes in data around student performance, I think the board should be focusing on those same data points and making sure we have the real facts. And that the board's decision, as they manage the management organization moving forward. My small contribution to the board moving forward is my governance experience.

10. [Board] What metrics of school performance will you use to evaluate progress towards the school's mission and the quality of services provided by UP Education Network?

- We have several metrics, and other folks feel free to jump in, around academics and our academic goals—would be one. Monitoring how the school and how the Network overall is doing towards that, but particularly UP Academy Springfield. Metrics around the culture. So culture is trickier to measure, but some of the things in place that we will tap into from the Network are surveys given around climate, communication, teacher and learning, and that goes to stakeholders. So that's super important. Formalize data points that happen during the year. Metrics around the finances which I think I will defer to Delcie [Bean] to help talk about that. So those are some examples of the metrics we would use to monitor. Our intention is to use a dashboard—and Katie Ray [Mulvey] can elaborate here—to help us monitor those metrics during the year. At minimum, quarterly, looking in depth at all those metrics. And I'm assuming more frequently each month, diving into some more deeply than others. And then, yearly, as a Network, the thing that I'm really excited about is that we will get together with the other schools within the UP Network to look at our metrics together and collectively. "Oh, this school is doing better with their ELLs, okay maybe we need to do more there" and using the Network and the other schools to help us really push our thinking around what's possible around those metrics.
- One of the first things that we will be doing as a board is setting up an accountability plan that will detail precisely what those metrics will be that we'll use to evaluate the engagement with UP Education Network, as well as the school. And in the meantime, we will be using the application that we submitted to the state to guide it, but as Ashley [Martin] said, it will mainly be based around academics, culture, operations, and then finances.
- Then monthly, the finance committee will be looking at cash flow projections. We'll be looking at budget vs. actual. We'll be looking at various other reports in school finance to determine if we are on track, if we are where we are supposed to be, if there's challenges, and if so, what those are and what's going on.
- We will engage an independent auditor. The scope of that engagement will be critical. We will be relying upon that as another metric.

11. [Board] What conversations have you had with the board of trustees in Boston that governs UP Boston and UP Dorchester? If you have had conversations with them about the quality of services that have been getting from UP Education Network?

- We have not had those conversations. But we absolutely will, assuming this gets passed. Rachel [Romano] in the past has had conversations with them.
- I mean off-the-record, informally, I've spoken with them. But as a whole board we have called up to do like references and get information from them, which I think we plan to do that before we make the decision to formalize our agreement with UP Education.

12. [Board] Tell us about the proposed board's involvement in reviewing the charter application, reviewing the proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the district, and the management contract with UP Education Network prior to submission in November.

- Based on our individual areas of expertise and our professional experiences, we have divided up the application and MOU into sections to really dive deep into the details of each; because as you've seen it's quite extensive. While we as a group have a strong understanding of the core components of the entire application. We really each gone deep in one certain area based on our experiences. And I think we all will dive further into the details of the contract with UP Education Network before we decide to whether or not to formally partner with them in the work around UP Academy Springfield.

13. Tell us about the process of developing the draft MOU. What role will the proposed board play in the development of the MOU submitted to the Department, if chartered?

- So the MOU is not totally finalized. So I think we would say it's around 95% finalized. Scott [Given] and the [UP Education Network] team really led those conversations, keeping us informed around that. I think we are excited about the Superintendent's willingness to really partner together. There are some things in the MOU that are important for us around autonomies with special education, in particular. A couple of the things that are outstanding, a little bit, are around some of the legal and insurance stuff. That needs to get fleshed out. I think this MOU, this is a new thing for Springfield. I think Dan [Warwick] would talk about this to really be engaged with a partner like UP Education Network and this board who are really willing to be a real partner. I was totally inspiring to be at the school committee meeting and to see Scott [Given] in partnership with the school committee and the Superintendent and the union folks and the audience of proud parents are unified around the spirit of this MOU. We are excited and confident that we can work out the rest of the details.

[Follow-up: The Horace Mann experience is not entirely new to Springfield. In fact, they had a Horace Mann that closed due to underperformance and other factors as reported by that board, including difficulty with working with the district with respect to the MOU. This did crossover into the Warwick superintendence. Talk about how this MOU is reflective of the understanding of the past experience in Springfield and to what extent the board has worked with the district to ensure that those prior factors do not come back into play?]

- I think one major difference is, I don't think you'll find a superintendent who is as passionate or outspoken as his excitement for this project. I don't think he... he inherited it, he didn't start it, he didn't found it; the level of interest and devotion are different and in many ways he inherited something else. In this case, he has publicly at school board meetings, in the newspaper, and in other occasions said how excited he is about this project. He has participated with us on this board. He's been very actively engaged and I think that, as obviously the champion for the district and the single highest point in the district, I think that in and of itself speaks to a much different relationship. I'll also

say, though, that at the school board meeting where the MOU was being discussed and the permission was being given to the application, the school board was incredible excited about this application in a way that they even noted was in a way they've never been excited about before. And I think that that all lends itself to a much different relationship.

[Follow-up: To what extent does the MOU, apart from the individuals involved in the genesis of something like this, address either the structural issues or relational issues? How are you going to protect against a Horace Mann MOU constricting the autonomy that the school needs to actually achieve its mission?]

- Tim [Nicolette] can give more detail. My perspective on the details of the other Horace Mann charter is limited. But, some of the things that are striking in this MOU are super detailed expectations around responsiveness, which I am assuming as a person who is in the Springfield schools that has sometimes, you know, the issue of responsiveness from a district team is a real issue. So I appreciate the details in here around some specifics around when we commit when we will get back in touch with each other around certain issues. I think the specifics around special education issues is important.
- So I would add, Delcie [Bean] talked about the Superintendent's commitment and also the school committee's deep involvement in actually reviewing sort of line by line the MOU and providing their own feedback on that. I think the one other part that we haven't talked about is involving the senior leadership team for the district as well. I think we, as a network, have learned from past experience that if we are just having MOU conversations with the Superintendent, sometimes when it comes time to actually sort of live out the commitments made in the MOU, sometimes because Superintendents are very busy and they have a lot of things on their plate, not all of the contents of what's in the MOU gets communicated to the staff that are actually responsible for carrying it out. And so this time we did things differently—where we met, yes, with the Superintendent, but we also met with the entire Superintendent's leadership team. And we actually divided up UP Education Network leadership team by functional area and we sat down with each of our counterparts within Springfield to walkthrough specific parts of the MOU and specific autonomies or commitments that we would need before the actual MOU was actually written. So there was actually a detailed understanding and commitment, not only from the Superintendent, but also from his senior leadership team. That helped to form the foundation of the writing of the MOU.
- Having observed the slow failure of the other charter school that if you are doing real post-mortem evaluation, that contract would be in the top five objective reasons why that school failed. It could be an excuse, but I think it's more symptomatic than causal.
- I think the management routine of getting together with UP Network and the Springfield team like every, we committed to weekly 45 minutes is important. This is some language that we use in another part of the charter application, in a communication-less environment then things can kind of just spiral out of control. I think the proactiveness and trying to be preventive of some of the problems that UP has seen or experienced in some of their other experiences running Horace Mann and what Springfield has

experienced has helped inform that particular management rhythm and some of the details here.

14. Who will be participating in the weekly phone calls between the school and the district? What are the expectations regarding communication and coordination about services amongst school leadership, UP Education Network, and Springfield Public Schools based on the experiences you had in Boston?

- Typically we have identified a point person within the district who is senior, who has authority across various departments and who also deeply believes in the school. We have a regular rhythm of either every week or every two weeks. Having a standing call, where if the district has any issues or challenges with our school that's an opportunity for them to raise it and for us to sort of listen, learn, and respond. And also similarly, if we are running into any challenges at the school level or living out the MOU it's an opportunity for us to raise those, to be able to share them, and also to develop a response. We have found from experience, from both Boston and in Lawrence, that this sort of proactive identification of issues while they are small has been really critical to building a positive partnership with the district. So that way, things don't get too far down the stream and become worse. I think that's also created a mutual environment of learning and collaboration. So, based on that experience, our intent is to do something very similar with Springfield and I think so far we have found, I think, a real eagerness and enthusiastic response from the district.
- I think we have found them to be incredibly helpful with Boston and Lawrence, the one additional commitment that we haven't utilized in Boston and Lawrence is the principal being a part of those calls. Because we will be in a single school in Springfield to start, and we want to be very much thinking about anything from parental challenges to student challenges to things that have more to do with finances or operations. We want to make sure that the principal is involved and so therefore, both the principal and whoever our key liaison in Springfield, identify who else needs to be a part of this call, is the focus of this agenda—is the focus related to something about curriculum and instruction or is the focus about something in operations. So, who do we need to rally on each side of the table, so to speak—to have one table.

15. Tell us about the development of the formula for the per-pupil tuition. What conversations were had with the district regarding a minimum level of funding that you would expect, in order to be able to implement this program faithfully and successfully?

- My understanding is that we are in pretty good shape with the formula, but there are still some details to figure out there around that. The message that we heard multiple people talk about and that we are committed to as a team is ensuring that we can operate the school off of the per-pupil funding that we receive.

16. How does this funding compare with the other UP Horace Mann charter schools?

- So obviously the cost of living is different in Springfield and also the salary schedule is as well. I think that we have tried to take the lessons from Boston and also from Lawrence to ensure that we are able to achieve the school's goal of being able to operate successfully on the public dollar. I think that the funding formula that agreed to with Springfield will enable us to achieve that goal.

17. [District] What lessons has the district learned from the experience with New Leadership Charter School that will impact positively the successful implementation of this proposed school?

- I think the lessons from the Horace Mann model in Springfield, in reference to New Leadership, I think the folks that came forward with the proposal at New Leadership had no experience running schools and didn't have a record of success and quite frankly, didn't put the people in leadership roles that had school experience. Consequently, it led to the issues that happened with New Leadership.

18. [District] What metrics will be used to identify the proposed school?

- We would be looking at the data from our middle schools and see where the need is and make the decision based on the data from that school. We think that UP [Education Network] with their record of success and again, with their experience, that they could do the most good. Looking at their assessment scores from the schools that they've taken over in Lawrence and Boston, their track record is just incredible.

19. [District] Tell us about the development of the formula for the per-pupil tuition and used for determining the UP Foundation Budget and UP General Fund Allocation. Tell us about your commitment to fully fund the proposed school and any discussions you have had with the proposed board.

- We don't have any problems with [the formula]. I don't think the problem with New Leadership was ours. Their financial model was as bad as their educational model. I think there were mistakes made going in and there were a lot of issues relative to the funding—their lack of documentation. I think Scott [Given] and his team and my team have agreed, we understand the formula and don't think that there's any issue at all with the funding mechanism. So we are glad to have Scott [Given] and his team here. We actually reached out, so this is something that will benefit our kids. I don't sense any problem at all with the funding mechanism.

[District Follow-up: In regards to the identification of the proposed school, I would like to get a better sense to what you mean by “need” and how you are making that decision.]

- Primarily data driven, based on the data from the school. We will look at all the data, so CPI, the proficiency, the level of accountability, the student growth percentiles. Most of the schools we’ll be talking about are in that very, very high poverty range. So there’s a great deal of need, relative to the demographics, relative to the high percentage of Special Education [students with disabilities] and ELLs. So the schools that we’ll be looking at will have those variables in play, but this will be the school that we perceive at the time of the decision, would need this type of intervention the most.

20. [District] Once the school is identified, how will the district support families and district employees during the school’s transition to a charter school?

- We work hand in hand with Scott [Given] reaching out to the families. I think the families are, quite frankly, going to receive this news well given the record of success. I think Scott [Given] talked about making home visits to the families. We would have meetings that we would work with Scott [Given] to share the news with the families. But quite honestly, I have families that think this is going to be good news for whichever school we choose for this.

21. [District] How will the district support district employees during the school’s transition to a charter school?

- We’d work with the staff as we have within the level 4 model in the past. We would conduct joint meetings to go over everything and work with the staff. We certainly want to be fair to our staff because the folks in these schools, the teachers and staff, are not the issue. We’d want to treat them fairly and we’d reach out to do that as we have in the past with level 4 schools.

22. [District] As a superintendent, what are your expectations for receiving information about the performance of this proposed Horace Mann?

- We would be getting all of the data reports with the school. Scott [Given] and I have a great relationship, so we’d be going by to see the school and working hand-in-hand to see how we could support Scott [Given] and his team to make sure the school is a success. So there will need to be open lines of communication. Obviously, we’d want to be looking at all the data to make sure that all of kids are getting what they need to get. But I have every confidence in Scott [Given’s] team to deliver an exceptional product, because not only have I looked at the data extensively, I visited one of the schools in Boston and one in Lawrence, and I thought they were terrific environments for the kids besides delivering a high-quality program. I went to a lot of classrooms and again, the data, I think, speaks for itself.

23. [District] In terms of the MOU, what is your understanding of how special education programming and programming for English Language Learners will be delivered at this school?

- Unlike in-district models, there's more flexibility for Scott [Given] and his team to deliver those models in conformity with the laws and regulations. We actually looked at some of those programs in Boston and Lawrence and it seems like those youngsters are doing well. We are comfortable with the capacity to deliver. But, unlike our district models, our only piece is that they would have to comply with the regulatory requirements.

[District Follow-up: Superintendent Warwick, is your expectation that the school will not be partaking central office services with respect to special education and ELLs?]

- Well that would be up to Scott [Given] and his team to determine what services they want to participate in and what they feel they can deliver themselves. We would work with them either way. I think some combination of that would be in play.

[District Follow-up: Are you prepared, at the district level, to absorb some of costs if the proposed school chooses not to partake in central office services? This would be funneled through per-pupil instead of in-kind contribution.]

- We understood that going in and I'm very comfortable with that. Because again, of the outstanding results that they will have for our kids and the kids that they've served. We are very comfortable with the model.

24. [District] How will the Horace Mann play a role in the broader district plan to create an Empowerment Zone to address the specific challenges of the middle schools in Springfield?

- I see the schools with the greatest need are in the Empowerment Zone. Everything we have done within the Empowerment Zone has been done with an eye towards UP [Education Network] being a part of the team. We are just really excited about that. Again, I think that Scott [Given] can add a lot relative to best practices and be a really integral part of our team. So, we are looking forward to the opportunity to be working with Scott [Given] and his team. I think we had great meetings with the financial team and then looking at how they deliver services in the schools. I think there's something we can all learn from that.

25. [District] What are the expectations of the district regarding dissemination from the proposed school to other district schools?

- I think that is something that in the past has been part of the charter model, but quite honestly, probably hasn't played out as well as it probably should. I think that is something we can all work on together, how to disseminate the information. But Scott

[Given], I'm sure, is willing to share and we certainly are going to take a close look what they are doing to see if we can learn for our other schools. And quite honestly, I've been through some of the schools and I seen some of the best practices. So there's already been a learning process for my team and I.

[District Follow-up: What are the expectations of the district around student recruitment and enrollment at the proposed school? We would like to hear some clarity about what would happen after the initial year. We would like to hear your understanding of when students come into the district mid-year and the commitment from UP Academy Springfield to fill vacant seats.]

- We do all of our enrollment through our PACE center. We have some city-wide magnets and we have neighborhood school zones. So we work through that. One of the most appealing piece of Scott [Given's] model at UP [Education Network] is that they hold on to a lot of the students and serve the students from the neighborhood schools. Unlike a lot of charters throughout the Commonwealth, where you look at the poverty, the percent of ELLs, Special Education students, etc. they have a better track record of serving the kids that would be more reflective of what we have in our zone schools. And the outreach to the families, again, our hope is that that would continue so that the kids that live in that neighborhood would be able to be serviced in the school. That is something they wanted and he has a good record of doing that. We are hoping that something would pass that would allow preference to be given to students within a neighborhood and allow charter schools to enroll students based on current district enrollment practices. That would be something very positive throughout the Commonwealth, so we are hoping for that. Again, I think reaching out to the parents in that catchment zone, as Scott [Given] has done, so that option is available to those parents. And hopefully there is some kind of preference for those students to go, if that was their choice.
- Exactly as the Superintendent is saying, on the legislative side, we would like nothing more than Horace Mann's to actually follow the local student assignment mechanism of the respective district. We are deeply committed to partnering with the Superintendent and others who share that same interest to actually try and get a legislative fix. But, until that happens, we are also committed to doing local outreach and student recruitment efforts. So that, exactly as the Superintendent said, we can draw students in the local catchment area for the student district's assignment policy.

[District Follow-up: What about backfilling the upper grades? The policy states you will comply with the law, but the law only requires in this case 7th grade. What is your commitment in terms of filling those vacant spaces, from attrition into the 8th grade?]

- UP Academy Springfield, from our perspective, would accept mid-year arrivals. So if there are students who arrive in the middle of the year and we have a space open, then we would gladly welcome them.

[Follow-up: How do you know how many spaces will be open, in terms of the maximum enrollment?]

- To be totally transparent, we put the 800 number in because it was the maximum size of any middle school in Springfield. And since the district hadn't yet identified a particular school for us, we wanted to have the flexibility to say yes to whatever Superintendent Warwick asked us to do. So that's why you have the 800 upper bound. But when we were looking at the middle schools and also sort of thinking about the particular model of our schools—where we have pairs of homerooms that are paired together into cohorts—and when we have multiples within a grade, we had to sort of use the 650 number more as a planning number and as an estimate. We would obviously adapt the enrollment to the particular that the Superintendent wanted us to operate.

[Follow-up: So the model is adaptable up until 800, in terms of how you structure teacher cohorts, etc.? Would you establish the number based on the facility that you are assigned?]

- Yes and the key concept is that we pair homerooms together. But we would really want to be a partner with the district in terms of serving whichever school the district deems is most helpful.
- From our [the district] end, we would want to work with Scott [Given] based on the size of the building, the needs, and then work with them on the enrollment based on that number—a collaborative situation.

26. Have board officers been identified?

- Not at this time.

27. How do you intend to identify officers?

- I think we will look at the unique background and experiences. We have a very diverse board, with very, very diverse backgrounds and experiences they bring to the table. So I think, that no matter, looking at what shoes need to be filled, who best has the experience needed to fill them, and then staffing it that way.

28. Why opt to manage all aspects of programming related to serving English Language Learners and students with disabilities rather than utilizing district resources?

- I think I can speak for everyone in saying that we are all here because we know that Springfield needs high quality schools and we know that Springfield students need results. So, to me, the short answer is that UP Education Network has seen great success with special education students and ELL students in the schools that are currently operating in Boston and in Lawrence.
- As we were discussing earlier, the MOU will be completely finalized and there may be a decision to retain some services, there may be a decision to retain none. I think it's going to come down to what's best for the kids. And if UP [Education Network] and the board

feels like we can do better on our own than we'll take the funding and we'll do it on our own. If we think that there's a happy compromise, where some services are provided and we create the rest, then we'll do that. I think it's all results driven and looking at who's got the best track record and who can serve the kids.

- I would also add from an ELL perspective, one of the great opportunities of having a network of schools is that we can bring folks together who have similar functional responsibilities to provide professional development, to talk about best practices, and share ideas. As Samantha [Cohen] said earlier, just this past week, Casey [Ngo-Miller] and I had special education and English Language Learner leaders from our different schools together doing those types of things. And I think that could have a really great opportunity for all of our schools, including UP Academy Springfield, to be a part of. But, it's also been really important for us in our current school to have really working relationship with folks in those departments within the district. So we want to be able to have that as well.

[Follow-up: Tell us about finding service providers.]

- I can say what has been a real advantage to us at our other schools' autonomy with regard to service provision, is that we are able to a) be creative about how we provide our service our students, but b) really align our practices with best practice. For example, a related service providers, special education coordinators, those who facilitate the IEP meetings, ensure that we are compliant with the state and federal regulations are building based. So what we have been able to do is not just have them service students on IEPs, but also be a part of our intervention model. We utilize a Response to Intervention framework at all of our schools, and so our speech therapists, our occupational therapists, to some extent our school social workers and school psychologists are able to serve the students who are deemed at-risk, but not necessarily on IEPs. We hire in-house—at least in Boston and Lawrence. As part of our autonomy, we are able to hire and manage our own individuals. Keeping in mind with service provision, one thing that we are really proud of and have seen success in is our ability to have the flexibility and creativity to move students long sort of this continuum of services and placements. So, if you are in a sub-separate classroom, you are not there the entire day if you show that you are actually able to be educated in a gen education classroom for part of the day or all of the day. So we are seeing more and more students who are able to be included more in the gen education environment and I think that's a lot because of the autonomy that we have.

29. Please describe the current methods used by UP schools to support students with limited English proficiency and students with disabilities during the school day, and to support teachers to meet these students' needs. Who oversees implementation and monitors the delivery of services? Describe your own assessment and evaluation of your work thus far at UAB and UAD in these areas.

- I'll start, but would love to turn it over to Casey [Ngo-Miller] and others to answer this. I think, when you look at the MOU, one of the core autonomies that you see protected is staffing autonomy. The reason is this is very specific work—it's turnaround work. The working conditions are different than many of the other schools in the district; longer

day, longer year. It's sort of a very specific model. So, I think part of our experience in Boston, which led to our current situation where we actually have the autonomies to provide these services ourselves. With all the other positions in the school, we had staffing autonomy, where a staff member would say, "I want to work in this school. I want to do turnaround. I want to do the longer day. I want to do the longer year." But, for these positions, for some of the special education positions, and for some of the English Language Learner positions, we were getting people who were centrally assigned by the district, who may not have been interested in doing turnaround, who might have been unhappy about doing an extended day, and who might have been very unhappy about doing an extended year. So, say nothing about a "no excuses" model or some of the other educational philosophies in our approach. When we think about having the autonomy to select our staff here, how we came about to it is we thought kids will be served best by adults who actually want to be in the building and buy into the mission and vision for the academic program for the school. That's not to say that there aren't those adults in the district who could do so, but it just gives us as a management organization and the school the flexibility to sort of interview candidates and determine who will be the best fit. I think as Delcie [Bean] has said, it could very well be a district staff member that could be the best fit to serve a child's particular needs. But also, it might not be. This just gives us the flexibility to the determination and ultimately to make sure that whoever is providing services to our students with disabilities and English Language Learners really deeply believes in the mission and vision of the school and is also committed to living out the working conditions of it as well.

- To answer your question about oversight, we plan to have two individuals who are school-based. One is a Dean of Curriculum and Instruction of Student Supports, who will oversee implementation of the special education program—specific to curriculum and instruction. And then on the regulations, a special education coordinator, who will facilitate all of the IEPs meetings, but just ensure that our schools are following what the IEPs dictate for our students. Those are probably the two main folks that I talk to at each of our schools on a very regular basis. Sometimes, depending on the crisis, it's an hour by hour basis. But, usually it's a weekly basis.
- And that's the same model as well that we have for English Language Learners. We have the same DCI support who will oversee that department and there's an ELL coordinator who both, manages compliance.
- Both the coordinators report to the single DCI of Student Support.

30. [Board] How will you monitor the provider's performance in support high-quality programming and providing services to students with disabilities and English Language Learners?

- I think there are a couple of ways. As I mentioned before, looking at our academic and ASPIRE reports—our proxy for our culture—is critical and by subgroup. This is one commitment. I think, also paying attention to attrition and students exiting and entering the schools. That is something we are paying attention to because we want our school to look like the demographics of the district. We don't want to be that kind of charter school that doesn't have any ELL or special education students. So, I think paying attention to

the number of students enrolled in our school is important. As well as, how many are getting out of districts placements, paying attention to those. Not sure what the right word is; a form of attrition, I guess. Numbers is important.

- It is very important to us and one of the principals is to view his or her professional development with that DCI who is working with student support and to understand attritioning out of the program. But also understanding the programmatic structure and for us also to weigh in, based on our experience, if we see a gap. And also to praise that person if they are doing a really great job. In looking at the internal structure of the school, the Network is already providing and for us as a board to weigh in and lean-in on that as necessary.

31. What talent recruitment systems are already in place at UP Education Network and how will you leverage those resources to recruit the necessary qualified staff, including those with multiple licensure, to implement the proposed school in a new city? What are the anticipated challenges for recruiting your ideal teacher in Springfield?

- I think one attractive aspect of the Network is their broad pipeline of folks who are in the organization already. We hope to rely upon that as an initial pipeline to identify quality applicants. Then there's a pretty strong process of submitting resumes and materials and other resources. For certain staff members there will also be a task. Before that there would be an overall evaluation of the materials. Then there would be a task that the board and the Network would evaluate. The Network would then provide to us, after an interview, a candidate that would like to move forward. This is in regards to the school leader.
- UP Education Network is part of group of education reform organizations that exist in Massachusetts and actually, as Strategic Grant Partners, we are very committed to organizations like UP [Education Network] and Achievement Network to be really successful as they go out to Western Massachusetts. So, one thing that we've been doing really recently is having conversations with programs like Teacher for America and Veritas and other charter schools that exist out there to understand what are the unique challenges of building that pipeline and how we, as a foundation and other resources in the state, might be helpful in supporting their work. And so, I think over the next year and a half, as we as the board are preparing to launch this charter school, but other reforms efforts like the Empowerment Zone are getting ready to launch, we are going to be thinking about what we can do from using our resources in the east to support the work out there. So the specifics of that haven't been defined, but it's a key priority of ours right now as Strategic Grant Partners in supporting those like UP Education Network to be successful. I think there are going to be a lot of forces at work to help build that pipeline in the coming year.
- There are also colleges and universities in the region and [Springfield School Volunteers] recently put out thirty quality math tutors. And through a contract with the school system, I think 120 qualified math teachers will receive a stipend. I was surprised to find out that at the end of the first year, last year—the pilot year, about 20 to 25 percent of those fellows moved on to permanent positions at Springfield Public Schools, as first year positions. So sometimes the pipelines are where you not expect it. We do have resources

apart from the resources in the “617” area. We do have people who can speak, read, graduate from college, get certified as teachers and live in western Mass.

- I think the last thing to add is that because we are not doing fall 2015, we are doing fall 2016, that extra year is really going to allow us to find that pipeline and develop it, to work with the colleges in the area—from University of Connecticut to University of Massachusetts and all those smaller schools—to really build that pipeline.

32. [Hypothetical Situation] At the end of the school year, the school leader/UP Education Network reports to the board of trustees that 32% of faculty have resigned and will not be returning to the school for the upcoming school year. What steps does the board and school leadership take in response to this report?

- I would actually start with one of the competencies the Network has, which is creating an atmosphere of joy and enthusiasm. I think that extends, not only to students, but also to staff. So as a board, I think it would be very important for us to monitor metrics when it comes to staff retention and attrition and be both supporting and advise the folks on the ground when it comes to that. I think, additionally, there is a pretty rigorous staff evaluation that the Network is already working with and operating. I think that includes a lot of evaluations and check-ins and I would hope that with our partnership with the Network that they would be doing a really great job of, again, letting us know of any trends that may be arising. And then being able to lean on us, who have community ties, to help address some of those issues. That would probably be our initial start.
- I think also in replacing the teachers that are lost once the school is operational, there's a great deal of people who are going to want to be a part of something that is this successful and new and interesting and exciting. Especially in Springfield where there aren't that many options. So I think, as this school takes off, as Veritas continues to thrive, and as Teach for America gets off the ground I think we are really going to see western Massachusetts attract some of this talent. We can market ourselves as a place where you can come to work here, there's multiple opportunities, there's great jobs, and there are great schools that are really doing something different. I think that will help us keep that pipeline active as we deal with inevitable attrition.
- I think that something else that's important to get back to that Tim [Nicolette] mentioned earlier, is just, our previous track record—where we have seen, in some instances, really strong retention in our earlier years. We've seen retention as we are not as proud in this last year that we want to just acknowledge. But I think it is tied to the biggest challenge that Tim [Nicolette] mentioned around the pace at which we grew and the capacity we had in our Network. And I think two things are really important to note, 1) is that our Network team has grown tremendously this past year, both on the academic side of things and on the operational side of things. And when you dovetail that with the fact that we've been very deliberate about not wanting to expand into Springfield in the fall of 2015, but instead in the fall of 2016, I think it gives us the year and a half to continue to leverage the talent that we have brought on to the Network. While also giving us a runway to being ready to be taking on the work over in Springfield. Notwithstanding, all of the answers everyone has shared around the Springfield talent, but I think it something we are very acutely aware of at the Network level.

- I would also like to just point to my experience in Springfield is that it has been really challenging to recruit people who are ready to come into a “no excuses” environment and execute on a model like the one we’ve proposed. However, unlike the school that I lead right now, I think what feels very good about proposing a school that would be managed by the UP Education Network is the depth of leadership and capacity within each school, not to mention within the Network, to grow teachers. And that is what has helped us be successful at Veritas is to grow teachers, which UP Academy Springfield proposes a school where there are three DCIs and a principal and a Director of Operations. I think starting with a leadership structure that is deep is what it’s going to take to launch a successful school and to grow talent, which is what we’ll have to do in western Mass.

33. [Board] Describe the board’s role in the support, supervision, and evaluation of the school leader. What role will UP Education Network play in the evaluation of school leadership? Describe the process of how UP Education Network will provide recommendations to the board.

- The principal will be evaluated by the Network and basically a summary of that evaluation will reside with the board. Basically, we will have the final decision on continuing our relationship with that principal, based upon the evidence and recommendations from what the Network basically has told us. That is, in essence, the structure for evaluating our principal.
- From a Network perspective we have two different structures, one is that we have a principal-in-residency program. We currently have a one-year principal-in-residency program, but we are contemplating expanding that to a two-year principal-in-residency program so that we are building talent from in-house. Both to ensure that we are developing strong talent from within our organization or that we are recruiting from outside our organization and focusing in on the year or two years of development of competencies of what we think make up being a successful principal ought to look like. So that when they become a principal on day one, sure they’re going to have a growth and learning curve, but we’ll be diminishing some of that learning curve that is needed by way of who we are bringing into the principal pipeline. The second thing that I would say is that on our Academic Team we have a principal leadership, who is the day-to-day manager, supporter, or coach for all of our principals. We actively have someone in this position, who has been a principal, and this is somebody that is really important to us that we are providing the day-to-day coaching and management for our principals.

34. Tell us about the current coaching and support for the members of the leadership team, the principal, Director of Operations, DCIs, and Dean of Students at UAB and UAD. Taking into consideration the geographical distance, how are you going to do things differently for UP Academy Springfield?

- I would say this is certainly evolving, especially as our team has grown. But, what it concretely looks like is that each of our principals has this manager who is working with them on a weekly basis. So he has weekly check-ins with them, has observed in them in their leadership team meetings and their classroom observations and is providing on-the-

ground coaching around instructional areas of expertise and then around more broad staffing and management foci. The principal is the direct manager of our Deans of Curriculum and Instruction. So our principals are our instructional leaders and that is one of the things that we take really seriously and why we have this two-pronged leadership approach—having a Director of Operations and a principal. So our principals are providing the weekly coaching to our Deans of Curriculum and Instruction on the straight academic side and then the special education student support side. We also bring our principals together on a monthly basis. There's a corollary structure that's the same on the operations side of things. So we have the Director of School Operations who is meeting with and checking in weekly with our Director of Operations and provided that coaching and feedback. And then they're coming together monthly for professional learning around operational issues. Or on the principal side of things this year we are focusing very heavily on student rigor, preparation for PARCC, and what an involved, intellectually rigorous classroom need to look like. Why I led with saying this is evolving, because this is the model we have had in place. As we have expanded our academic team we have a commitment to this year taking a big step forward and bringing together different roles. So whether, it's our coordinators of English Language Learners and Special Education, whether it's our Deans of Curriculum and Instruction on the math side of things, on the English Language Arts side of things. So our commitment is to starting to pilot what this looks like in a virtual space and in an in-person space this school year from January to June and build what it's going to look like beyond. So that we are going to have this mix of hybrid personalized, blended model of what professional learning and development and sharing best practices will look like. Dovetailing with work that we are currently doing, to be building out a Network knowledge management system. So, currently right now, we heavily rely upon Dropbox and sharing materials within Dropbox. This has its advantages. It also has its disadvantages. So we are wanting to build a far more robust platform for uploading videos, for dialogue around what is happening in classrooms, for identifying problems of practice and being able to have either conversations on a web-x type of meeting or a teleconference, but also being able to do some of that just on a blog. That is something we are committed to doing and being able to launch for next school year. So certainly in advance of being able to launch in UP Springfield.

35. How do you prepare new hires, specifically DCI, for the challenges of their positions? Are you promoting teachers from within to fill these DCI roles?

- That's a great question and one that has definitely been front of mind for us. Historically, our DCIs have been a mix of coming internal as well as being recruited externally. I think, what we have found is that if we are actually able to recruit them internally and also prepare them along the way that our success is much higher. And that the quality of coaching that our teachers will get is much better because the DCI already understands our model and hopefully already has had some additional supports to help prepare them from, not just being in the classroom, but being in 15 to 20 different classrooms with a range of teachers with a wide range of abilities, but also styles. And so, we have currently a partnership between our talent and our academic team that is working on what we called our rising leaders program, which is how we prepare future DCIs. So that is a

critical role for us and something we are actively working to help great teachers make the transition from being a great individual classroom teacher to being a great teacher coach and teacher manager. That transition from a great individual contributor to being a great manager is a challenging one and is one that we know we need to support folks in a pretty robust way.

Academic Program:

36. How will you support and ensure teachers deliver high-quality instruction? How is teacher collaboration supported?

- I can start at pretty high level; teacher development is an incredibly important to us. Once our teachers are hired, we have a commitment to having a couple of weeks before school even starts. That has primarily been at the school level and the Network has provided so guidance around the types of cultural learning that should be a part of that and some of the curricular pieces. As we are evolving and as we are growing we are thinking about more of a shared practice model. We are also contemplating about what this is going to look like, such that our academic team is doing some of this teacher coaching and teacher induction across the Network. That is a critical piece of the teacher's beginning part of their time with us. At UP Academy Boston this year they utilized a model where their beginning teachers were on one track and teachers who were returning or were more veterans were on a different track. Such that they were able to differentiate the model and we found that to be incredibly effective and we want to make sure that we are replicating that type of thinking that we are personalizing our approach to the individual teacher based on what they need. A second piece of this is that we take professional learning incredibly seriously. What that looks like at the team level, is each of our teachers has at least one period, but on one day a week they have three class periods where they have planning time. They are planning with their departments. If I am a math teacher I am planning with the 8th grade math team. So I have that time four days a week, regardless of what is happening. And then one day a week our students have a half-day. Then in the afternoon our teachers are able to have professional learning. What that block of time tends to look like is a cohort time, because as we were talking about numbers our teachers share a subset of students. During cohort time, the cohort is 1) thinking about what is the trends they are seeing across their students; from a culture perspective this is where they are also utilizing the RtI [Response to Intervention] model and prioritizing talking about individual students, how those students are excelling, how they are struggling, what types of progress monitoring they need to be doing, what types of course adjustments they need to be making as a cohort team. And then the second part of professional learning, if it's a two part type of day, is either whole-school professional learning or again content-specific professional learning that's either led by the DCI or lead teacher. So, professional learning is kind of determined in that way. And then the third piece, I think is self-explanatory, is just the DCI's day-to-day coaching. So our DCI are in our teachers' classrooms at least once a week. They are sitting down and having a coaching conversation. They have a very specific focus area that the teacher and the DCI have prioritized to identify for a focus area. Our DCIs are coming intentionally to observe instruction around that point in time around whatever professional learning opportunity is

and then our teachers are getting ongoing feedback and coaching around that particular area of need.

37. How is the common planning time monitored for effectiveness?

- It depends on the particular group of teachers in the school. But, for example, if there is a group of ELA teachers meeting together during a particular time, often the DCI or the principal will be able to participate in that meeting—facilitating it or supporting a lead teacher in facilitating it. Such that they are ensuring that they're producing what they need to produce and ready to put it before students.
- The common planning time is grade-level, content-specific planning time. We're fortunate at UP Springfield to have a starting point with curriculum, being able to use UP Academy Boston's. But, it will need to be refined based on the needs of our students in Springfield. All the curriculum unit plans are turned in to the DCI that supervises that content area at least two weeks prior to that unit's starting point. And then there would be, probably, more iterations of those curriculum documents based on the feedback from the DCI. So it's really the DCI supervising that.

38. Tell us about the differences in responsibilities between the principal and DCIs regarding oversight of the educational program and its implementation. Tell us about how they might work together in the oversight of the educational program and its implementation.

- The principal is the instructional visionary for what the school is striving towards. So if the schools focus is on our six core tenets, but they are specifically dialing in that year on a data focus and they are identifying that math is a big focus. The principal is making sure that they are thinking that all things related to scheduling, to RtI, that they are seeing the big picture. Whereas our DCIs, I think, play the day-to-day instructional role of leading and facilitating instructional delivery and design for their teachers and for their students. I would say there's a difference in terms of how many feet above the weeds are our folks are operating in. So our principals are not designing our unit plans, but our DCIs may be supporting the teachers in those designs of the unit plans. However, what will look very similar is if you were to walk into a building at 9 am, you would see DCIs and principals observing the classrooms or sitting down and talking with teachers. And whether that's jointly, whether that's separately will certainly depend on what the teacher need is and what the DCI need is.

39. [Board] What are your expectations for instructional methods and differentiation within the classroom? In terms of instruction, what do you expect to see when you walk into a classroom?

- I think our instructional model maybe doesn't fit every lesson perfectly, but that we use as certainly a guide for most of our instruction is one of direct instruction, followed by some guided practice, followed by independent practice. And within any classroom, I would expect to see differentiated supports for students. For example, during direct

instruction, you might see a student or two students with guided notes during that time. That's an example of differentiated support, but I think that differentiation is really key to supporting all of our students and the RtI model. Those tier 1 differentiations might look different depending on the kids in the classroom.

- And the time of day. So I think, if I were entering during the end of the day during the tutoring block, I would expect to see evidence of differentiation in that a teacher would have a small number of students that he or she is working with around particular or set of standards; exit tickets or more formal data demonstrated more kids needed help with. Whereas, there might be a larger group over here that is more self-guided, doing a study hall under the supervision of an adult. But doesn't need that small group kind of pullout. That's, I think, another example of the kind of flexibility that we want to see our schedule allowing for teachers and leaders to have.

40. [Board] What are your expectations around discipline, specifically for the use of in school and out of school suspensions at the proposed school?

- Number one, our discipline approach is grounded in our commitment to ensuring that the academic environment is safe and allows kids to take intellectual risks. So to that end, we really sweat the small stuff. There are a lot of rules at this school, but there are reasons for them. So that is one that we would definitely be spending time with parents, helping to set those high expectations around behavior. That's one thing. The other thing is the value on one-to-one relationships with adults—that is critical. Thirdly, a code of conduct. So we want to make explicit and clear, to all stakeholders, what the expectations are for kids. Making sure students, parents, and teachers understand the “why” behind some of the small stuff that is happening. And this is all intimately tied into ASPIRE and our reporting around ASPIRE, which is our character and habits of mind. That incorporates attendance and behavior. And to ASPIRE, which stands for the character that we are trying to grow. So, I think, we are trying with those systems to ensure that students can be successful in meeting our high behavioral expectations. I do know, and Rachel [Romano] can speak more to this, that our intention is to create classrooms where students can learn. We also understand that we want to keep students in the classroom. I know the shift in the law recently has generated a lot of better thinking among schools about how do we keep kids in class. We want to do that to the extent that it's not disrupting the experience of other students. So, putting in a lot of the preventative measures that I described about helping people to understand to expectations, taking time at the front end of the year to teach students about habits and routines; helping them when they fall down and don't meet an expectation; to reflect on why, so it's not repeated; are examples of the ways that we are trying to help kids meet our high expectations and remain in the class.
- I think you did a great job. I think our philosophy of sweating the small stuff is to make sure that bigger stuff doesn't happen. We want to maximize the amount of time on student's learning. That's sort of our bottom line. I think also, all of what Ashley [Martin] said about discipline and from that perspective, and also one of our core design elements of creating an environment that's joyful and fosters enthusiasm creates that kind of space where a kid wants to be there and they want to be a part of the learning environment.

41. [Board] What type of review of the management contract with UP Education Network has occurred? What negotiations have occurred between the proposed board and UP Education Network regarding the management contract?

- I think given the fact that we have not signed the proposed contract and formally decided that we will partner with up is meant that we haven't gone through a really in-depth negotiation process. That will happen if, and when, the charter is approved. We will then have to decide whether or not we want to partner with UP Education Network. We have developed an initial understanding of what with this partnership will look like by developing this preliminary contract. A big portion of this is deciding on what the evaluation of our partnership with UP [Education Network] would look like. In particular, knowing that we would have ongoing, regular communication, especially through our board chair and Scott Given, the CEO of UP Education Network, continually talking and understanding, giving feedback on both sides and what's working and where there may be opportunities for improvement. And also us collecting data through the formal academic assessments and the surveys to understand what is going on in the school, how things are progressing, and through a formal, yearly evaluation determining whether or not we want to continue the partnership.

Finances:

42. [Board] What is the service fee? Please clarify the percentage determined and which sources of revenue will be subject to the service fee? The Service Fee identified in the management contract is 14% of tuition or up to \$650,000, but the financial narrative states that the service fee will be 8% of tuition and federal and state grants.

- I think in the first year, right now we are looking in the ballpark of \$575,000.
- 14% or the lesser amount up to \$650,000 and this money would be coming from the reoccurring student funds from the Springfield Public Schools.
- Total operating revenue for the first year, including federal and state grants is \$8,000,000. So, it would be coming out of that \$8,000,000. A big challenge is a lot of these numbers are still up in the air. We don't know the number of students. We don't know the exact tuition per student. We don't know exactly what our operating costs are going to be. We are still negotiating this. As we said, we haven't actually signed any of the contract yet. So I think some of this is still being worked out and figured out as we go a little further.
- It's also important to point out that starting charters needs a lot of resources, other than revenue from the system. Our understanding is that UP would be investing a half-million dollars into the startup of this enterprise, which is pretty critical in my view. I live in a world of contracts, we do a couple hundred a year, and skin in the game is always a really good test of professionalism of this organization.

43. Please clarify the source of the \$500,000 loan? UP Education Network or from the other Horace Mann schools in Boston?

- It would be coming from the management organization. This is something specifically to address the oddities and timing of disbursement of funds. Where the school would open the fiscal year July 1, but wouldn't actually have dollars then. So UP Education Network would issue a loan, so that they could do critical things like buying supplies for day one or paying some initial costs. All of the things that are needed to be ready for the first day of school.
- There's also a \$100,000 in 2016 before operation, just for getting prepare to handle opening the school as well as up to \$750,000 of in-kind support [from UP Education Network] during that period of time.

44. Who developed the cash flow projection and the budget? How were these developed? To what extent did the board or any members of the board review the budget prior to submission of the final application?

- So the budget was developed kind of in concert with the Springfield school system. So working very closely, working with UP [Education Network] and their prior experience. And then the board. I've reviewed extensively the cash flow projections, the budget, where the money is coming from, the variabilities that still exist that we are still trying to pin down, and understanding what methodology went into creating these numbers and where did they come from.

45. The cash flow projection does not accurately reflect the first year budget. Please clarify the order of events that took place in developing the budget prior to submission.

- I think we started with the budget; tried to get that finalized and turned it a cash flow statement. And because these conversations are very much ongoing, including MOU still being a draft, there's been a lot of adjustments and tweaks and it's possible that not every adjustment has been made in every document to kind of align them all up. But, that we are still working on tying up and trying to create those timely documents that we could use to run the school.

46. What is the source of projected revenue if you do not get the SRG [School Improvement] grant? What financial commitments have been made by other resources? What is the fundraising capacity of the proposed board?

- We have a couple different options. One is that we budgeted very conservatively, including a couple of different numbers that we could have control over whether or not we spend or not. And in addition to that, we've factored in a surplus each year that helps to absorb the loss of that funding if it's not achieved. But in order to actually make up for it, we've identified and number of targets within Springfield that would be fundraising opportunities that we could partner with to try and handle that for the first three years, which is all we are forecasting to having it for anyway. To make up for that \$500,000, we

haven't gotten anything, obviously, in writing at this point because we are talking about 18 months from now. And it's a huge question mark. But there are very strong resources, like the Davis Foundation—that is one that we would lean very heavily on. They have been incredibly supportive throughout this entire process, from day one. And one that, I think, we can count on to at least kick off raising that half million if we deemed we want to raise all of it. As I said, we have some other options at the table to decrease spending in order to reduce the need to fulfill all \$500,000.

- Just to add a couple of specifics in terms of the numbers there. So there's a \$250,000 contingency that's built into the budget in year 1. In addition, there's \$400,000 that's reserved for furniture. Not all of that may be needed. Also, exactly as he mentioned in terms of the surplus, for each of the first three years the surplus ranges from a low of \$100,000 to as much as \$450,000. So, I think that exactly as he articulated, by combining any school specific savings with additional private dollars that would be your SRG backup plan.

47. [Board] What are your expectations of the commitment the Network may have in fundraising for this specific proposed school?

- The specific money that we just discussed is \$100,000 grant for the first year in addition to a lot of in-kind support to recruit and hire professionals and get the school up and running. Beyond that, we've discussed an operating line of credit, to put it in simple terms, that would allow us to cover the differences in time between when revenue comes in and when expenses are incurred. That will hopefully be a line of credit that is reduced and then eliminated over time. But always there as a support network. I don't think we've talked about specific fundraising that they'll need to do on our behalf. But again, we are still trying to nail down a lot of these numbers and get to that point.

48. Is there an expectation that once the school reaches 665 or perhaps higher that the school, ultimately, will be financially on the public funds that it receives?

- Absolutely. The expectation is to achieve that point as possible and quite possibly even before the three years are reached. Where we are able to pay back the line of credit, reduce it to zero; consider it a safety net, but not be using daily operationally. The school will be entirely self-sustaining even if purely on the state, federal, and Springfield disbursements, without that \$500,000 that we talked about earlier for the grant—if we don't get it.

49. What happens after year 3? The budget does not shift much from year to year. What is startup versus what is operation?

- One of the key priorities is going to be to use, if we receive the \$500,000, to use it carefully. So to use it for things like capital improvements that are not going to be ongoing operating expenses. That when it goes away we will not have some sort of cliff that we are going to have to recover from. It'll be spent of things where we spend them and we get a long term investment out of them and we are not re-spending those dollars

and therefore missing them. But in addition, that's exactly why we created the very aggressive surplus, was to build up that residual income that when that cliff first happens, we can use the surplus in the previous three years to step down, as opposed to dropping down. If we were to get the \$500,000 and then therefore, lose it in three years.

- From a Network perspective, this is a situation that our other schools have gone through and are going through. And so, if you look at UP Academy Boston, they have already lost their School Redesign Grant and we are preparing for UP Academy Leonard to do so for next year. I think, just more at a conceptual level, the earliest years of turnaround are where some of the most intense remediation needs to happen. And so you are resetting a school culture with very different academic and behavioral expectations. You are doing intense remediation for students who are multiple grade levels behind to catch them up. So, if those investments work, and we are confident that they can, it enables us to consider things like, are two Deans of Students needed after the culture is in a better place after three years? Do you need the same level of staffing to support the small group tutoring that is needed in the beginning when students are multiple grade levels behind? I think there are some staffing changes that can be made as the school continues, and as the students continue to make progress, and when coupled with some smart financial management, helps sort of ease the SRG cliff.
- I observed that in the Horace Mann schools that the city provides the facility relief, which is usually a very big problem and can be a very high cliff as enrollment builds. That is usually 10-16%, something in that range. **CC:** But that should already be embedded in the assumptions.
- I'll add to that also, from our school's operational expenses, payroll is being handled by the district. So our major cost, the one that is the most scary, the most dangerous, isn't actually within our own finances. So we have to maintain everything else, but that means that we have a lot of discretionary items and we can make some decisions that are strategic as needed to handle the funding from a short-term cash flow concern, if there was ever an incident or something we'd need to deal with.

50. Cash flow management and human resources matters, particularly payroll, were identified as challenges for the first UP Horace Mann in Boston. What strategies have been identified to avoid similar challenges early on in the relationship between the school and district?

- I would say that there are several things. So one is the conservative budgeting that Delcie [Bean] mentioned. So building in the surplus from the very beginning to avoid the issues with the cash flow crunch. I would also say that recognizing from a Network perspective that there's this need for this up front \$500,000 to help with initial cash flow crunch is a lesson learned from experience as well. In terms of working with the district, we already alluded to sitting down with the various department heads to go over the specific terms of what a partnership would look like before making it. I think that has been one lesson learned. Another thing that is sort of embodying that is the specific commitments in the MOU, in terms of response time that Ashley [Martin] referred to earlier. And then the third, the payroll part is hard and the onboarding part is hard. We are talking about possibly having 70 staff be on boarded at once, just for a single site. I think it's getting

ahead of this early and often and when we are hiring staff, ensuring that they are doing everything they can to ensure that the district has the paperwork it needs to actually get them on-boarded. But with all that said, I would not be surprised, sort of first time doing this together, that there will be bumps in the road and hopefully the second year will be better than the first. All school based staff will be run through Springfield payroll.

- We won't be running any payroll at the school level.

51. [Board] What fiscal controls and financial management policies will you use to remain informed of the school's financial position?

- We have an idea of what that is going to look like. The first step is we need to elect a treasurer. We will then a finance team. The finance team is going to work with the Director of Operations to build out that manual that we were describing. So it's going to be a manual that basically details what our financial controls are what our checks and balances are. But some of the loose structure of that is that we created a couple of key things where the Director of Operations will be the one approving invoices. But the checks will be written by the principal. So we'll have a check and balance built in there. Any check over \$5,000 will require a member of the finance committee's signature; we'll have a good understanding of what's going on. The board will also see monthly, and especially the finance committee, cash flow projections, income vs. projected. Kind of what's going on at operational level. And then we will also be in charge of bringing in an auditor once a year to evaluate the school, to evaluate the budget and the finances, and then report to the board what they are seeing. And then what action, if any, we need to be taking to correct. Beyond that, we would expect the principal and the Director of Operations to submit a budget to us. That will obviously be assisted by our Treasurer and the Finance Committee. The Board will have the ultimate approval of that budget. And then, we will also have the resources of UP Education Network and their experience, and their other board's experiences, and giving us kind of best practices and benchmarks and things that we should be looking for and looking out for.

52. Who will be responsible for maintaining the school's financial records and who will have access (QuickBooks)? How will the Finance Team of the UP Education Network support the Director of Operations in maintaining accurate records?

- The books will be maintained by UP Network. They will responsible for maintaining those books. We will be, the school, at the operational level, the Director of Operations and principal will be approving and signing checks and authorizing. But everything will be going back to UP to maintain the books. The Treasurer, the Board and the Finance Committee will be overseeing those kinds of trends and looking at the reports as they come out. There are steps being taken to given access to those reports in more of real-time sense. Whereas right now, we request them and they would be provided. The plan is to get it to a point where the Board and the school can gain access to that data in a more real-time fashion. So that we can understand what's going on when we need to see it. The generation of the financial states is the responsibility of UP Education Network on behalf of the board.

Academic Program:

53. Tell us about your experiences in parent engagement at UP Academy schools. What are some lessons learned about ensuring meaningful and effective parent involvement?

- We deeply believe that parent involvement is best started before the school actually opens. So at the time when the Springfield district identifies which particular we'll be operating, it is at that moment that we actually begin extensive outreach to those families and to the community. I think as Jennifer [Lopez] has said earlier, this really involves every single family that is at the existing school—all 6th graders, all 7th graders. That can be through home visits, which can be through phone calls, it can be through letters that are translated in a family's native language. But, what we really try to do in those initial home visits is two things; one is just really to understand what families' aspirations for their child and what they've liked about their existing school, but also what the challenges have been. And so, it's really just to listen to care. The second thing that we try to do is based on what we are hearing from families, we try to connect the vision for the school will be with what their aspirations are for their child. To really encourage them to complete the very simple, one-page application where they put their child's name on a piece of paper and then they automatically have the change to re-enroll their child at the school. So, that's where outreach starts. But it doesn't start there. During that pre-launch year we have a series of ongoing meetings with families and the community that discuss a variety of aspects with the school, whether it be the academic program, whether it be services for students with disabilities or English Language Learners, whether it be the behavior and discipline and sort of the fact that our school has uniforms. And we really try to engage extensively with families. And then there's the parent orientation that happens in August where we really do extensive outreach to invite all families in. Then there's the student orientation that happens. We usually have some sort of back-to-school event, where it's more of a celebration where families and local organizations in the neighborhood can come together and just sort of kick-off the school year with a very positive, fun event. Then there's ongoing family communications. And that involves several things, I think several times we've talked about the ASPIRE scores. So families weekly receive home about how their child is doing. They also receive daily homework for their students as well. Also, their progress reports probably every two weeks. With those, we really want to give an update to the family about how their scholar is doing, but also find ways of proactively engaging them as partners in supporting their child's education. Then there are also a couple of nights over the course of the year where we invite families in for conferences with teachers. But then, we invite them to arts events and other events as well. We really have an open door policy where we want families to really see the school as their own and to be welcome in the school whenever they want to come.
- I think the application mentions that because we value parents and parents as partners, is having them be a part of the board as well, as a representative of the board. So their voice can be heard because they are representing our students. I'd like to add to that that we'd have a school site council that meets on a monthly basis that would be able to talk about the different issues that are going on the school side of priorities and how to help support the school. Also like what we talked about earlier, the surveys that are going to be provided so that the parents can actually let UP Academy Springfield and the Board

know how we are doing in terms of communication, how we are doing in terms of school climate, how we are doing in terms of academic performance with their children.

- I know Awilda [Sanchez] is sad she can't be here. It's so inspiring to hear her story and already see, even though this charter has yet to be approved, the commitment that already exists on the part of parents. Awilda [Sanchez] took a group of folks from Springfield to visit one of the UP schools. She speaks in a compelling as a grandparent and a parent of children in the Springfield Public School system and that desire of other parents that came out to our public hearing in Springfield to talk about the great need and excitement, since it's a possibility, they feel about this school. I think all of those systems and structures are super important, combined with that spirit of commitment. I mean, Rachel [Romano] has seen that too. More people on the waiting list than can be served by the stronger schools of Springfield.
- Talking about Awilda [Sanchez], I have had a couple of interactions with her where she has truly empowered her families to truly understand the system. Because this is a very complex system, she truly gets our parents to understand, whether they speak English or not, she gets through to really understand how to advocate for their child. So I know for a fact that she will make sure that our parents will understand that we will have these level expectations for our families, but she will make sure that they reach that expectation and surpass that. So I think that she is incredibly passionate ensuring that all kids in Springfield deserve a quality and excellent school. Particularly for our middle school students where there is a lacking of good schools in Springfield. I think that is something that she is very committed to. So I am really sad that she is not able to be here and be able to express that. But I think that folks that were there at the public hearing could really hear it from the parents, speaking in Spanish, really brought me to tears to see the powerful that you have in these parent voices and ensuring that there's changes there.

54. What current systems and strategies are implemented to effectively track performance of alumni from schools currently managed by UP Education Network?

- UP Academy Boston, our first school has graduated eighth graders who have gone on to high school. So we have partnered with Boston Public Schools to see how those students have actually done when they've been in high school. Because, true to our mission, if we are going to be preparing students for success in high school and ultimately in college, we need to ensure how they are doing. So we've looked at a variety of measures, be they attendance, be they course grades, and so forth. And if you can help us get the most recent data from BPS, we would be very thankful.
- We ask repeatedly, many times, sending notes.

55. What conversations have you had with Springfield about creating a better process?

- This is one of the things that we committed to in the application and as Board we have tried to figure out. What are our goals around trying to track this, in conjunction with UP Education Network? That's the extent of the conversation at this point. On the to-do list. There are other places that have come before us. There are other schools that have attempted to do this, so I think learning what has and hasn't worked is a part of that process.

56. How will the Board ensure that 8th graders are ready for high school and on track to college completion?

- All eighth graders will have a high school transition class. So to prepare and help them make a successful transition. So as, eighth graders, while they are still in our school, they will have a class that will help prepare them. That's one very concrete way. I think just our model in general and its intense focus on building the core academic foundation for our students with that balance between the remediation piece with the two math classes—one focused more on computation and skills they have yet mastered and the other focused on the higher level concepts—that will get them high school ready. So the same approach with ELA, in those early years teaching reading, teaching writing. So I think that our model will really build that strong academic foundation that as they move into the eighth grade it allows for them to be engaging in rigorous and college-tracked curriculum.
- And eighth grade graduation is a big deal. We ask students to write an essay reflecting on their experience and how they've changed academically, in terms of character, and habits of mind. The ASPIRE report continues to be a critical piece in that end mark in that time of their school, as well as passing their classes. So there's a certain percentage expectation, 70% or 75%, average academically plus the ASPIRE score, which is 80% of above, and then the essay. Kind of the three technical requirements to graduate.