

## Lynn Preparatory Charter School

Questions as derived from panel review

### Capacity

**1. Who of you is planning to be on the board of trustees?**

- *There are three people at the interview who are on the proposed board of trustees. Five additional board members have joined the board subsequent to the final application submission, one of whom is a curriculum specialist.*

**2. How and why did this group come together?**

- We have a common goal and ties to the community. Many of us are connected through the Hathaway School. We have a school-day program and an after-school program. Most parents in Lynn can't afford private schools, and they really need an alternative to the Lynn Public Schools.

**3. In writing the application, how did you divide roles and responsibilities?**

- We have diverse expertise, and everyone has an area.

**4. Who was on the Educational Design Team?**

- The educational design team includes: Heather, Erin, and Joanne.

**5. Are there any skill sets you are missing on the board of trustees and how do you plan to fill them?**

- We have added people with real estate background, civil engineering, experience in human resources and business owners. As we go forward, we may want to add more financial expertise. Even though all of us have strong ties to Lynn, we made sure that all the new board members were residents of Lynn.
- We also plan on including more finance people.

### Governance

**1. What is the role of the board of trustees for a charter school?**

- The role is to make sure that the school director is held accountable to the accountability plan and the goals we have set forth in the application. Making sure the budget is working and making sure the school is a success.

**a. Please give some examples of potential board of trustee decisions versus executive director's decisions.**

- The first board decision will be hiring the executive director. The board will not be dealing with the day-to-day management of the school. The board would be more oriented towards the business of the school. We will keep our eye on the budget. The board will be able to enter into contracts. The board will stay true to the mission. The board will assess the executive director. The executive director will be a teaching specialist and will be responsible for the day-to-day. The executive director will hire other staff members at the school.

**b. What can the executive director not do?**

- The executive director can't sit on the board of trustees and does not vote. The executive director's role is to answer to the board of trustees. The executive director informs the board of trustees. The executive director can't change the mission of the school. The board makes decisions about bylaws. The executive director will help with policies but, the board will approve.

**2. Please discuss the process that was used by this group to make a decision.**

- We are an inquisitive board. Everyone looked at the bylaws, even though we aren't lawyers. We discussed a lot of the issues. We did rely on the expertise of specific people, but we still vote on decisions. The group has a common goal: the mission, vision, and target population. We found each other's strengths. We discussed the accountability plan.

### **General**

#### **1. If the board does grant this board a charter, what are the plans to close the Hathaway school?**

- If we are granted a charter we will close the Hathaway School at the end of this year. We informed all of our parents about if granted, they would need to apply to the charter school and be part of the lottery.
- Almost all of the students at the Hathaway School are from Lynn. There are 78 day-time elementary school students and 30 after-school students. We used to be located in Lynn. Space dictated we move and are now in Swampscott.
- We also did not recruit this year for the Hathaway School; we decided to focus on the charter. Also, in case we do get the charter, we didn't want to involve more families and disappoint more people.
- We are keeping parents well informed. We will help students find new schools.

### **Mission and Vision**

#### **1. What does "success in high school and beyond" look like?**

- Success in high school and beyond...children do have goals and do have dreams and sometimes they are shattered by many things. They need guidance and support; students may want to do a little better than their parents.
- We don't give up on young people. Success comes when you have role models and opportunities. Students need to see people who look like them.
- Success is leaving school to be free to do what they want.
- Success in high school and beyond is about where they are going to high school and how productive they are in their communities. We want them to give back to their communities.
- We want to uplift students. Everyday we will instill in our children the core values. We will help students take pride in what they do. We will help students meet goals they set and build upon them in high school.

### **Statement of Need**

#### **1. Can you describe the needs of the students coming into this school? In the application you talk about the "unique needs of economically-disadvantaged students?" How will Lynn Preparatory meet those needs?**

- We have English language learners. We are committed to making sure we have a director in that position, so those children can advance.
- We find that most students have splintered skills. Some students can't read, math skills are extremely limited, they have no concept of science and no concept of a code of conduct. Many children in the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> grades have huge gaps academically, personally, and have family issues.

- This school will offer an extended day, with added time on learning with smaller classrooms, as one of the main ingredients that will bridge the gap.
  - Our parents say if I can't get into the two good schools in Lynn, then my child will not have a chance. This school can open doors for families and children. Kids need a place to dream and thrive.
  - The Hathaway School is a private school and 73% of Hathaway students are low-income. We see it first hand. We talk with these parents everyday.
  - There are language barriers for parents. They don't know about opportunities. Sometimes socially they are oppressed. Educating kids will educate parents. There is a domino effect.
- 2. Other than parents and students currently enrolled at the Hathaway School, what interest have you found for this proposed school?**
- When we were preparing for the public forum, a lot of our board members and our parents invited us to churches and other school settings to talk about what the charter is all about. We created brochures. We gave our parents brochures had our parents pass along information to other people.

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

**1. Please describe the educational philosophy of the school?**

- The educational philosophy ties in to the mission, exceptional education for everyone. But we are looking at the children to be active learners, motivated, and able to communicate effectively. Those are some of the things we want them to take into high school.
  - a. **What do you mean by 21<sup>st</sup> Century supports “?”**
    - 21<sup>st</sup> Century supports are life skills, technological support, and becoming bilingual (all students will learn Spanish.) We want students to compete in a globalized world.

**2. In the vision statement and the educational philosophy you talk about providing on campus health and social services. Please describe in detail how these services function in the school, including staffing levels.**

- We would like “resources” to be on campus. We will be leasing space to health and social services, including Miles of Smiles, pediatricians, educational testing/assessment organizations, and other social services.
- We currently have agencies come into the Hathaway School to service our children. It would be easier to service students in school so they are not taken out of school for the day. If there was a place on campus, students could walk to the doctor. In order to use the social services they will need to have private insurance or Mass Health.
- We would not get involved with the day-to-day of the health center duties. It may not happen the first year, the director of student services will start looking at how we will make this work. The director of student services could coordinate with parents and the health services.
- We have looked at three sites; one site is the Ford School. We will be speaking with the new mayor in the next five days.

**3. Please describe where you are in the process of developing the K-6 curriculum. How will standards be used in this process? How will it be aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks (MCF)?**

- The curriculum is definitely aligned with the MCF. We don't have the entire curriculum but what we do have is the basis of what it is going to look like. The three core values will guide the curriculum. We have an outline in the final application. The director of curriculum and development will be one of the very first people hired so we can begin to develop the curriculum. We have a person in mind to help with the curriculum development.
- We know this isn't the total solution, but more time on learning and smaller classrooms, in itself will make a difference.

**a. How will you evaluate whether the curriculum is effective and successfully implemented**

- We will use assessment to determine if the curriculum is effective. There will be multiple ways, either through our individual learning plan, electronic portfolios, MCAS; we will also utilize the Iowa Test. It allows us to determine the schools strengths and weaknesses.
- 4. You propose having 4<sup>th</sup> grade students rotate among subject specialists. Have you observed that model in use? How was the transition for rising 4<sup>th</sup> graders?**

- The Hathaway School uses this model.
- We do the looping with the youngsters K/1 and 2/3. Children and parents welcome the transition to rotation. They get a better rounded education. It helps kids who don't sit still. It's been very successful. Effective for kids, teachers, and parents. Helps lessen bullying.
- There is a homeroom teacher, first period teacher. Teachers teach two subjects – math and science, or English and social studies. When we started the rotation, we came up with the Individual Learning Plan for students, so nothing fell through the cracks. It helped everyone keep in contact and keep focused on the total education for each child.

**5. How will professional development needs be determined for staff?**

- The executive director and the director of curriculum and instruction will determine professional development based on the assessments of the students and formal and informal evaluation of the staff. Staff will be able to talk about the areas in the curriculum in which they are lacking, based on the population of students.
- In the first year we know that everyone will need to have training about English language learners. After we start to hire teachers we will learn about the needs of teachers. Also teachers have different strengths and we will use peer observations to learn from each other.

**Assessment, Promotion, and Graduation Standards**

**1. Please describe your performance, promotion, and graduation standards.**

**a. Please clarify “proficiency.” Is it a “C”?**

- The report cards are directly from the MCFs. MCAS has a category that's proficient, but the mastery is not based on the MCAS scores. We will use several assessment tools. There will be an electronic portfolio. We will have a rubric; it's not based on a particular teacher's idea of proficient. The teachers will have input and the director of curriculum and instruction and executive director will develop the rubric and the overall design. They will identify what they think needs to be mastered in the content areas. It is not connected with a "C" grade.
- From March until August, the main drive will be developing the curriculum as a working document. This process will be driven by the curriculum and instruction specialist. New teachers will be trained in August.

**b. Why do you offer a summer school option for Grades 1-3, but not for grades 4-8?**

- Summer school is offered to K-3 because we are particularly concerned that those youngsters in the early grades be ready for the higher grades. During the summer they will receive the overall general curriculum with a focus on reading. We will offer summer courses for 4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> graders in the subjects that they have failed.
- 2. In the vision, you mention teachers, parents, students, and other educational professionals will work together as a team to utilize data and develop an individual learning plan (ILP) outlining benchmarks for success for each student. Please describe that process. How do these benchmarks connect to report cards, promotion, and exit standards?**
- Each teacher/mentor will be assigned 10-12 kids, they may not necessarily be that child's teacher, but they will be another adult in the building, making sure that child is meeting their goals.
  - We will meet with parents and children in August to develop the ILP. It can be specific, it's not just about grades, it's about talking with that child and parents and finding out where they need help. Then teachers will include more specific benchmarks. When we begin we will look at records from other schools. But, we will be using all of the assessment tools. The mentor/teacher will meet with students regularly. In January there will be a heads up about how the student is doing. We may forecast remediation during the summer and work with parents and students to avoid that happening.
  - Between January and June we will review the ILP and decisions will be made about remediation during the summer.
  - Ideally each teacher/mentor will stay with this student through their time at the school. Mentor teachers will meet with students 3 days one week and 2 days the next week on a rotating basis. This is a way to prevent children from falling through the cracks.

**School Characteristics**

- 1. Please illustrate a typical teacher's day. (What are the duties, hours in class, other school-related responsibilities, lunch duty, curriculum development, dismissal, afterschool, tutoring, mentoring?)**
  - a. Please explain how staff receives a 90 minute lunch/common planning break, in addition to the planning across the curriculum from 3:40 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.**

- b. Please describe supports for teachers.**
- Teachers will be working 5.5 periods per day. Teachers start at the 8:00 a.m. community meeting. When students go to specialist times, the other teachers will have prep time. For the most part, administrators and paraprofessionals will cover lunch duty. We can't guarantee that all teachers will have their common planning time directly connected to lunch every day, but there will be a rotation.
- 2. How are you going to establish the school's educational program and culture from the first day of operation? Please describe the:**
- a. mentor program;**
  - b. after school program;**
  - c. tutoring program;**
  - d. health and social service component;**
  - e. community service at this school;**
  - f. and the discipline policy at the school.**
  - g. Also, who teaches during "enrichment" time?**
- Enrichment and tutorial will take place between 3:40 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. We have made some adjustments since the application; the enrichment period will not include art and technology. Art, technology, physical education, etc., will be "specials" during period 5.
  - The teachers coordinate about community service and it works across the curriculum. The community service is flexible and deals with more current events. Our social studies teachers are incorporating current events. We are currently raising money for Haiti.
  - The enrichment period will include mentor teachers working with students regarding the ILPs; teachers will also be in the classroom, paraprofessionals, and volunteers. We see the director of student services reaching out to parents and volunteers.
  - There will be some optional programs during enrichment.
  - If a student needs tutoring, they may schedule that during the enrichment block. If a student needs ongoing tutoring it will be scheduled and they won't necessarily have the opportunity to take enrichment courses like violin.
  - Teachers will be in the enrichment periods and the time between 3:40 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. is included in "time on learning."

### **Management**

- 3. Staffing chart on page 38 doesn't correspond to the organizational chart.**
- a. Where is guidance? Student/parent/community liaison?**
    - Not all the staff are on the organizational chart.
    - We didn't break out all the staffing in the plan. In terms of the budget, it's not there either.
- 4. How will supervision and evaluation work at this school?**
- a. How will the executive director supervise the chief financial officer who is her husband?**
    - We have discussed having a married couple at the school. Everyone understands that roles need to be distinguished. Nothing personal will be brought into the school. We don't anticipate a problem. The executive director is accountable to the board, everyone understands that if there is an issue, it is something the executive director would need to address and if need be a new chief financial officer might

need to be found. To allow for transparency, the executive director will allow the school administrators including the chief financial officer to speak directly to the board, regarding their expertise.

### **Budget**

#### **3. Please walk us through the budget.**

##### **a. What is the \$215,000 federal grant for the pre-operational period and the \$460,196 for year 1?**

- We determined the \$215,000 is for the year one, start-up grant. The other source of income would include new borrowing from Sovereign Bank. In terms of the \$460,196, I didn't know as far as cash flow the actual timing of these grants. The second year start-up grant and Title I monies.
- At least one staff member is not accounted for. The guidance counselor would be full-time. We do have a surplus in the budget.

##### **b. There is no money set aside in the budget for fundraising. Nor do you anticipate raising private dollars. But, grants are mentioned on page 24, 39, 40, and in your action plan. What grants are you referring to? It looks like you are going to start of 501(c)3. Are you planning on fundraising?**

- We are planning on doing fundraising. Board members and parents will get involved with fundraising. If we find that we need to dedicate a person for fundraising, we will address that.
- We are planning on setting up a 501(c)3 for certain fundraising.

##### **c. How did you come up with the instructional technology estimate? Line 37?**

- We are extremely heavy in the acquisition of capital in the start-up. Envision a server based system and it's all purchased at that point in time. The technology portion will cost about \$50,000-60,000. It's much more cost efficient that way. Line item 37 will be for software.

##### **d. Please explain the section on "Other Student Services." What is the breakdown?**

- The other student services include mostly food service and the staff to handle that. Also line 56 would be 1.5 for facilities maintenance.