

Springfield Preparatory Charter School

Questions as derived from panel review

NOTE: Interview text in italics indicates a response provided by a member of the proposed management organization.

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

1. How have your experiences living and working in Springfield led you to want to start a charter school in Springfield? What do you think are some of the challenges you may face? What skills and knowledge does the founding group possess to address these challenges?

- Let me kick it off – My wife and I moved 35 years ago to Springfield by choice – we raised a family here. I am active both politically and socially in the city. I have taken a great interest in it over the years. Springfield brings the board together. One of the most difficult aspects of living in Springfield is to hopefully do something to make the public education system in SPS work better. In the last 35 years, I have seen a number of smart superintendents but the results haven't been where they need to be. The bright spot has been charter schools. Charter school gives families a choice that they want. People don't want to get up and leave. Even with good superintendents and people working so hard, the results haven't been where they need to be. We believe that charter schools are the answer. At SABIS International, the results have been outstanding.
- I am a first generation college student. I was born in Puerto Rico but raised in Springfield. The opportunity to have a college prep school in addition to SABIS International is key to my involvement. It provides financial relief for families –In Springfield, we have over 27% Latino, over 21% African American. It is another educational opportunity for these families.
- As a senior administrator here at STCC but also on behalf of the college, we are excited about the possibility for Springfield Prep. We have roughly several thousand students and roughly 3000 new students each year. Roughly 70% of our new students test into remedial math and/or English. We as a college therefore are heavily involved in re-work – we have watched the success of SABIS International. We believe selfishly for our success and the success of Springfield, we are seeking to deliver students ready for college work.
- As a police officer, I have seen it in good times and at its worst. There are many neighborhoods in Springfield that make up the city. Part of my job now is to go to these various neighborhood meetings across the city. The two hot topics in these community meetings are crime and education. No one has come to me in these meeting and say that they are leaving the city because of crime –I'm confident in our police department - the statistics show crime is going down - but people say they are leaving because of they don't have choices in education. My daughter didn't get into SABIS International until 6th grade. She entered as a borderline student and graduated with honors and a college

scholarship. I have seen it work from the inside and I want to keep people in Springfield. I am very passionate about our city. When I was asked to be on this board, I jumped at the chance because I know what SABIS can do for Springfield.

2. Why did the proposed board choose SABIS? Tell us about any other EMO/CMO that you considered.

- As a parent, I have four children and I have seen what SABIS has challenged the parents and students. There is testing every week. Parents can check and monitor their grades on line. There is free tutoring each day and on Saturdays. They will bus students to the school to better these kids education-wise. I have seen the difference of how my daughter was in SABIS, starting from K versus starting from 5th grade. I have seen the difference for my kids. I am a gang officer and I have lived in the city for 44 years and I never plan to leave. When parents ask me why there are 3000 kids on the waiting list – why can't we have more choices? People that love the city leave the city because of the education not because of crime. Great stat I read this morning – it made me excited. The city of Springfield is looked at as the top crime rate in America. SABIS has the number one minority graduation rate in the state. As a parent, my daughter got challenged – my second daughter is at Johns Hopkins. Not only do I do this, I am a gang liaison to the Mayor. It is about education – it is about to get great schools. They got challenged in Holyoke for two years but they beat it and now they have the data to prove it. We have to give them – if you won the Olympics for our city this is the Olympics for our city – our families in Springfield.
- Nothing breeds success like success – we are in Springfield, a minority majority school system. SABIS has the number graduation rate for that configuration school system. The instant success, they may not think so but for those of us who have a longer institutional memory, the success that they have enjoyed in Springfield is legendary. It was an easy pick for us if we have the number one school why would we go down the list to look at number two or three.
- From a parent's perspective and now that I am in higher education, what has struck me was the direct instruction from teachers – the teacher led then the practice in the classroom setting. Once she or he teaches, the student gets to practice and then students assigned as prefect get to assist the students. He was pushing himself academically so that he could help correct other students' work. Every student can be a prefect in different areas not just academic. The AMS is weekly, the periodic is about every 4-5 weeks. They are constantly being tested and they won't move until the student s are comfortable about being taught.

Note: Of the board members present, 3 indicated that they have children who attend and/or attended SABIS International in Springfield.

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

- We have a Facebook page to disseminate information. We have received questions through there. I have received a lot of feedback that way and we have had a lot of word of mouth to reach out to folks in the community. There is a tremendous demand for a new charter school.
- We have a full court press ready to start immediately when chartered which will include everything from door to door, media, letting everyone know that we have another opportunity. We will start all over with the lottery and aren't just targeting the 3000 who are on the waiting list.
- From the college's perspective, our president have frequently discussed the charter school initiative with faculty and staff – 500 part time and 500 full time, many of whom are Springfield residents, and we have discussed this at length with the board of trustees of the college. The college has been talking about and promoting the concepts of collaborating with a charter school.
- Anytime I do community engagement - I have been talking to everyone in the community. They have a lot of questions that I can't answer but I have been promoting a lot.
- We just felt until the charter is granted that it is not appropriate to do a lot of outreach but we have our plan in place for when the charter is granted. We will be able to get started right away.

Educational Philosophy, Curriculum and Instruction

1. How does the founding group define academic rigor?

- The college is excited because there is indeed a proven track record at SABIS International. SABIS brings a pedagogy that it brings to the partnership that is consistent across the board, across the network of schools. So to graduate, to be able to boast a graduation rate for a majority minority population that is number one in Massachusetts, it speaks for itself. Clearly there is an academic rigor that travels with the student, which speaks to that graduation rate. We have a teacher here...
- Academic rigor is in the curriculum. On the board at the beginning of the class are the points of the class, what they will cover in the period. There is mastery of point one before you move on to point two. The entire class must understand the points to move on to the next point. How do you measure that understanding? Through teacher analysis and the prefect system where the students will go around and check other students' work. Direct teaching everyone is facing the board. At the end of the first point, when that instruction is given, the prefects will check their peer's work and give immediate feedback back to the teacher until there is a thumbs up in the whole room. It is very

difficult to check every single student's work every time I teach something. I can't do it in the period of time. The perfect system allows for that. The weekly AMS testing, periodic testing, the end term tests, there is also a comp test. There is no room for gaps. We will not know two weeks from now but we will know that week. Depending upon those teachers and the AQC and they will fill in those gaps.

2. What is the role of teachers in the education philosophy?

- I would say a key role when I was there was the teachers loved SABIS – they loved the philosophy, they loved the teaching method. When you have the teachers on board, it is a lot more likely that when you have teachers on board with the philosophy, that it will be transmitted to the students. Teachers are not only excited about the curriculum but the whole culture. There are uniforms. There is a non excuses mentality. Grades aren't inflated – they are numbers based. Other aspects of the student's behavior are also monitor and reinforced.
- There is continuous conversation with teachers and other departments. What it does in a positive aspect is it reduces the anxiety and it reduces their concerns. They become used to the testing and when they get to the college level, they are not more anxious and more prepared.

3. How will the school ensure that teachers are proficient in delivering the chosen instructional methods? What oversight will the board provide in this aspect?

- I can answer that from a parent's perspective – SABIS always hires the right teacher. They always find the right teacher at that school. There will be some veteran teachers from the other school coming to this new school if we are awarded the charter.
- The experience that I have had dealing with SABIS for 12 years or more is that I see SABIS already doing a great job doing that. Whether 24 or 34 years old they come very qualified and with passion. As a parent I trust them.
- What you have touched on is probably the most tenuous relationship between the administration and the board. As a board, we are not here to run the school; we are here to see the school runs well. We are here to see that SABIS adheres to our charter. The two big obligations to adhere to the charter, which includes things like their commitment to professional education and to make sure that the state money is well spent. These folks are employees of the board but they are managed by SABIS and this is where we expect SABIS expertise to come to the board. We will become suspect when in grade 4 or 5, all of a sudden there is a problem or multiple problems. That is when the board has to step in. The director will come in on a monthly basis, we will show some accountability there, if changes aren't made to our expectations then go to contact person at SABIS to discuss the problem.
- Professional development is embedded. SABIS has a background and track record of investing in developing teachers, both the academic and social aspects.

4. How does your educational program address college readiness, persistence, and completion? How do your academic standards facilitate college readiness?

- One of the keys is the academics and to get these kids both socially and their desire for education. We are trying to change a mindset. The nuts and bolts and the hard core testing is going to be there as part of the system. What is not there about the system is how it changes their life and makes the students eager learners – not just college readiness but our goal is about success in college. We expect admittance into college as automatic but we also expect success for each student. Anything less we would be talking to SABIS about that.
- Not only get kids ready for college but also life skills so that they are ready for the world. That is what I love about SABIS. You come to work to learn not to hang out. SABIS takes kids all over the world – they take them out of the box and get them ready for the real world and teach life skills.
- The prefect system, the way that it is designed prepares them to take leadership roles very early as they are developing. They build their confidence and learn how to respect themselves, the school, their peers, and the world. They grow into stronger students.
- Peer pressure is strong at these age groups. Peer pressure to do something negative is destructive. What this model tries to build is a mindset among students, maybe not all at first, to do the right thing and study hard. The testing - these aren't challenges but opportunities to demonstrate what you know. The peer pressure reverses itself to a very positive peer pressure. You will have kids under the prefect system but the teachers' responsibility is not absolved in this system I think it is heightened. The teacher is always responsible.
- Making good neighbors is a major part of the SABIS philosophy not just students who can perform in college or at a job because that is a mentality that we try to create as teachers. I was there for five years. It is honorable to be a prefect whether academic or non-academic and that is created from the beginning. I had one student who was extremely timid they ended up adjusting. They saw it in other peers performing as academic prefects and choose to participate later. I didn't pressure them. They saw what it produced in their classmates and they wanted to do it. No one is forced to be a prefect.
- College readiness – everything is always I think hits us first as personal. I attended private school through 12th grade but I wasn't ready for college. I did ok but I did not really appreciate where I was going and what it was all about. Ira Rubenzhal & I went to SABIS International school a few years ago at our request and they accommodated us and I was struck by this. This is the first place I've been at where it is cool to be smart. I got this sense walking around at SABIS International. Our interest what we decided when we met with SABIS representatives was that we want interventions so that college readiness isn't graduating from high school. College readiness is being able to appreciate what it is you want when you get there, having a sense of what it is that you want to accomplish when you get there. We have built in visitations and interventions that will be

regular to see what college is about. It will be discussions with financial aid counselors and career counselors because STCC has 87 different degrees and certificates. With our frustration in students testing in remedial English and math even though they are high school graduates, we even found in our research - why not offer the Accuplacer test to high school juniors and then they developed interventions to these juniors that didn't test so well so that they could have greater success. We took idea to the school districts in the greater Springfield area and only one school district embraced it out of the six or seven (and it wasn't Springfield) and unfortunately within a year that Superintendent has left and we propose that this will be done at Springfield Prep.

5. Please describe the dual enrollment component at your proposed school.

- Students will not be sent there unless they are ready to do it which gets to the assessment part. They will certainly not be forced to do it. If the mindset is prepared when they get to the level, when they are eligible to do that.
- STCC, we already have dual enrollment funded by the Commonwealth – we provide it free to students for every guidance counselor that allows them to attend our institution. The thinking is let them be exposed to college and our college. That is already in place. From that perspective, I don't know that we have to create anything; it is in place.
- *Actually one of the reasons we and the board decided we will start with middle school is to allow us some time to first, get to know our students and to allow us enough time to get them ready to participate with college level work while still enrolled at Springfield Prep. The relationship with STCC will kick off right away in a bunch of other aspects. We will involve college students coming to the school and Saturday academy. We will develop the relationship with STCC early on before our students can academically access the programs at the college. It hasn't been fleshed out because we don't know the needs of our students yet. We will have several years to figure it out. It is new to SABIS.*
- Exposing them to college life and the campus. I speak also from my experience at Westfield State University which students from STCC have transferred from - we partnered dual enrollment with the high schools in Springfield. Part of the curriculum would be to offer a three college credit course and during that time to also do a trip to the campus and visit to allow students to experience life in a college setting attending multicultural events.

6. What is the status of your partnership with Springfield Technical Community College (STCC)?

- It is a relationship between Springfield Prep and STCC. STCC board and president of the college has already endorsed it. The actual details of how this will work need to be further developed. The application spells out conceptually and programmatically. It will largely depend on readiness of the students. We will not do anything that will jeopardize our students' ability to meet the requirements of a high school diploma from the SABIS program. The program will be meshed together so as to not water down the high school

graduation requirements of the rigorous, demanding SABIS program. Where we can supplement, we will. A lot of this will have to be worked out. This is why we have given ourselves a number of years to grow to the high school so that we can do this in a smart way to review other programs that we can adopt from or create ourselves.

- We will not rush to propose something now that might not be feasible. The board of trustees of the college and the college president are committed. This is a major commitment by the STCC community to be part and parcel of the proposal.
- The school will be located across the street from the campus of STCCC with those opportunities to access college life.

Assessment, Promotion, and Graduation Standards

1. Describe the elements of the SABIS assessment system that result in a ‘well-rounded assessment platform.’

- Because it is very consistent assessments – the weekly assessment and then also periodic testing then end of term cumulative testing. There are multiple ways. The assessments are tests in that respect but they come at different times. There are different eyes that also look at the student data. The director, the AQC, and the teachers – different people are all analyzing the materials on a consistent basis. The weekly (AMS exams) processed by scanning and the periodic exams are graded by teachers. I did a lot of exam grading. There is a revision period also for the periodic and end of term exams. It is not just the assessments, a multi-day revision week is where the accumulated materials are reviewed – not only looking back at what their grade was but also a solid opportunity to review to prepare for the assessment.
- The well rounded nature, Dan has spoken to the academic part, but also assessing the youngsters under the whole program – their behavior, their attitude, their attendance, their tardiness, things of that nature. That speaks to the overall well-being of the student – to the academic and personal side of the student’s growth.
- On a personal side, I micromanaged that piece and it helps. We want a well-rounded kid and to get them ready for the real world and college.
- It is not just the assessments or the test but also you have to go back to the perfect system – there is constant assessment in the classroom. I am an adjunct professor at Elms College as I said earlier. I do use the point system in the classroom as a teacher. As a college student, that when I take other professors’ classes they don’t necessarily do that. It is extremely effective – students appreciate that a whole period, day or week will pass by and they don’t have to worry that someone won’t stop by their desk to see how their work is. I know as a student that is what I went through where the teacher had no idea what I was up to. There is no room for that.
- We are very interactive by design. Parents have access to all assessments online.

- HW is checked but not graded.

2. How will SABIS assessments be modified to accommodate the needs of students with disabilities and students with limited English proficiency?

- The assessments are essentially – First of all the biggest key is the initial diagnostic testing to find out where the needs are and to what extent. At that point, there are different ways that SABIS handles these things. They can modify textbooks, modify individual instruction, provide tutoring, a little extra class time – each of these situations is unique and different. The key is to assess the individual student and then set the course for what the additional help or what needs to take place.
- If I were in that situation, though I have been the board chair at a technical college, I am considered a speed bump on the information highway at home. Most of these parents as a practical matter will do what I would do and ask their child to help them get online to see the student's data. We are taking steps.
- As a parent, if I said I don't have access to a computer they will make copies for me in either English or Spanish.
- The periodic assessments are sent home for the parent to sign off that show percentages.
- At these meetings with SABIS teachers I listened to what the teachers are offering to parents. I am at these meetings listening and if a parent doesn't take advantage of that it is not SABIS' fault but I understand what you are saying. What is I don't know how to read my child's report? The teachers offer to help; you can call to set up meetings. If you need translations, they offer that too.
- In my memory I was constantly in the AQC's office, explanations in at least English and Spanish about the assessments and who to contact and explaining the report to parents were provided with the reports. The AQCs are extremely accessible – not just at an IEP meeting but even just meetings with concerned parents. We are not educational police either; we give them as many opportunities to parents as possible to find out what the academic issues or whatever they are, of their children are, to know that SABIS has wide open doors for them to come in.
- *To add a piece that the board may not be aware of because it is very operational. We don't wait until it is report card time to communicate issues to parents. As parents, if your child had issues, you would be the first to know from the AQC that you need to come in and that we need to discuss an issue whether academic or behavioral. There is always a proactive effort on the part of the school. We also know that to be fair to our students, we cannot depend on parent support at the home – reality is that some parents may not be present or they may be working three-four jobs to put the food on the table and others may be able to and that is a plus. To level the playing field and the chances for our students, we cannot rely on work being done at home we want to be sure that work is done at school.*

- Parents also sign a contract that is not enforceable –that is the first contact with the parent – it is another component that you add.
- *Any IEP that has any modification is implemented by the school. The special education coordinator and the teachers will work and obviously with the parents to assure that students are assessing students in accordance with whatever is contained in the IEP. We have been in Massachusetts for 17 years and we are quite comfortable. Massachusetts has one of the country's more rigorous regulatory regimens in place and we are very knowledgeable about all of the requirements that have to be in place at a public charter school.*

3. Explain the promotion criteria.

- They have to have a 60% average. They have to pass each course but particularly English and Math. If not passed in either English or Math then it requires summer school, then if they fail both, the student has to repeat the grade.
- My understanding is math, English and the Modern Foreign language are the core subjects which requires 60% mastery to move to the next grade level. There is a formula to factor in history and science and other courses. It is incorporated into the overall assessment of the general average.
- 60% is a minimum standard. I feel confident about it because it is not about proficiency but mastery in a rigorous academic program.
- I understand the point but we have to deal with students with a variety of capabilities so we have to set the floor. The anticipation is that the vast majority of these youngsters will be far beyond that in term of mastery and there will be a number of students that will struggle. It is more of a remedial number. It is not the expectation that this is where you should be at 60% but as a practical matter we have to have a number.
- *From a design standpoint of the curriculum, I know where you are coming from. We could say 50%, we could say 80%. The number in itself is not going to really communicate what the actual outcome is. We do not curve grades so I can communicate numbers to you but to get a real understanding you have to look at where do these assessments come from. They are standards based exams every single week that the teachers do not write – they do not know what the questions will be. Like the MCAS, they are coming to them from the outside. When you review these weekly exams, you are assessing the scope of the curriculum with tests. You are minimizing testing bias to a great deal because the writer and the evaluator are not the same. There is that level of objectivity. 60 % is the cutoff – this is not by any means our expectation. It is just like we have minimum graduation requirements. Seldom do our kids stop at the minimum. If our students only met the minimum then they would not go to John Hopkins, Smith College, Harvard or MIT. The reality is – let's take us around this table – we are not of equal ability. There are the As, the Bs, the Cs, the Ds and maybe the Fs among us. There is a scope. What we look at in our promotion policy other than the 60% which is just a*

number is what the 60% represents. When you look at all the computer corrected exams every week, you are building an academic database for each student over the course of a year. You are able to determine what that 60% really represents. It could be that they have mastered 100% of the essential concepts within that 60% or they have mastered 90% which means they are missing that 10% - the number alone doesn't communicate whether they are absolutely solid to move on to the next level. It is about the content covered because it could be an essential piece of the curriculum that they haven't covered to make that determination. We have student who get 80% who go to remediation because they are missing an essential concept identified by the assessments.

School Characteristics

1. How will parents and families be engaged in their child's education and the success of the school?

- I never heard a 60% in my life dealing with SABIS until right now because they are beyond that. They never mentioned 60% as the minimum requirement because they are always pushing the bar to get these kids to college – to better themselves. I am honestly shocked. I went to a meeting for my son – your son got a 37 on his math – they grabbed him out of gym, I talked to him about how he had failed me, his mother and his teachers who work so hard. Honestly, I never heard 60% before in my life. When people ask me where my kids go to school, I tell them SABIS and they say your kids are all set because they go to SABIS.
- Everything about the culture and the climate that is created through the Student Life and the student academics.

2. How does the Student Life Organization (SLO) “empower” students?

- My oldest daughter she got involved to go to Minnesota twice. She got to travel and meet people all over the world. SABIS teaches people how to look them in the eye and to talk to adults and get them ready for the real world. College trips and go to college campuses – kids need to walk the college life, feel the college life, get ready for the real world. How to speak to someone and how to eat properly. SABIS takes them out into the world. How to promote themselves –the Debate team – to debate with other kids from all over the state. I love Student Life. I got invited to be a speaker at a SLO event as gang liaison.
- There is a Parent Connection organization.
- Student Life engages students to head up different areas. It creates leadership responsibilities for those students – help with their overall development. The students set the structure of what they are going to focus on going forward.
- When kids have an idea and they let the student run with it. To produce events and activities that they are responsible for – prepares them for the real world.

- It is our life and our day to day. When you walk into an environment that looks and feels safe, it says it all. I have walked in high school that even with great teachers and principals, the infrastructure is so poor you don't get that energy. Starting with that basis is positive.
- The relationships that are formed with the person that is responsible for that. It is great outreach. I was talking to the head of Student Life for the SABIS International School last week – he has kids coming to visit him when they are being called names or things like that because of the relationship that has been established they will reach out to him and he provides social support.
- Some parents don't have access to a car and they can't take their students outside of the box and SLO takes these students out a lot and that is very important.

3. What is the schedule for the proposed school? (teachers will rotate between classrooms)

- *Essentially that is the model but you will have high school students that move because of the different levels and split into different levels in math or world language so will move in that situation. There are other courses where the whole class is taking a course and taught as a class, history or biology.*

4. Please describe the extended learning opportunities.

- Some kids are pulled out of their regular classrooms for Intensive session when they start to fall behind and the idea is to get them back quickly on track once they are back up to speed. There are other learning opportunities available.
- The afterschool program is designed to be a convenience for working families. Parents can opt to keep the student in the school but they will have to pay for it because it is off budget and outside the regular programming.
- For \$10/week, it is a choice that we are offering families; we are talking about extended day that is more activities based, more of a day care program.
- Curriculum support afterschool is free – even Saturday is free. Any additional academic tutoring support is free.

5. How are Intensives implemented for students and staff?

- When it is identified that a student is falling behind through the rigorous assessment process, that student is focused on and they are enabled to access the resources to support them.
- Teachers are constantly available for tutoring sessions whether afterschool or recreational periods or during lunch, also options to go to Student Life for either teacher or peer tutoring. It depends – varies – they occur during the regular day.

- *SABIS has taken the curriculum and boiled it down to essential concepts and non-essential concepts. Through the rigor of the regular weekly assessments, if we identify students who have just fallen behind and developing real major learning gaps that will prevent them from following along the lessons in class, students get pulled out to small classes of 10 to 12 kids, it can vary. We call them Intensives because they focus just on the essential concepts, the prerequisite knowledge they will need to get back into the classroom and follow along.*
- In all the times the assessment system, students see the assessment as a diagnostic tool. We build that culture – it is explained that that is what it is – it is not explained as a punishment.
- We have something called advising period in the week where we go and listen to the students and talk to the students. I was born in Lebanon. I go into the class and I start speaking Arabic to the students and nobody understands a word. I ask them why do you think you don't understand – it doesn't make you dumb it just means that you didn't learn what I am sharing with you. The same applies to Intensives – we are very frank with our kids. These are the gaps - we get them from the academic database – they are quantifiable. They are very manageable. We are not waiting until the end of the year to tell you how far behind you are - we are only waiting a few days. This is the plan we pull you out to Intensives to focus on these essential concepts and get you to fill those gaps, assess to verify your learning so that you can go back into the classroom. There is no shame in that. The shame would be in allowing them to fall further and further behind.
- Students take advantage of that opportunity when they are placed in Intensives. You can't expect every child will perfectly understand that it is not punishment that it is something positive but you do the best job that you can in explain that with that long term goal in mind of college. Every gets to graduate and everyone gets to go to college. Everyone will be in the same place in the long run. We give them that long term goal and create that culture. They will look at it as an important and not a stigmatizing experience.
- My daughter was an 8th grader when she got into SABIS and she was way behind – she was a veteran of Intensives, Saturday, and summer school until she caught up. The school was with her every step of the way. She was not perceived as stupid. Everyone was with her every step of the way. She graduated as one of the top of her class and went on to a college education. My son is in kindergarten at SABIS. We are prepping these kids for college at Springfield Prep. We have a great opportunity combined with STCC – this is exciting thing that I see for citizens Springfield.
- My daughter has never felt that way...

Special Student Populations and Services

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

- Assessed at the beginning and see where they are and put the plans in place to really support them being able to succeed as students.
- There is a survey sent to the home in addition to the testing and the services are similar to the support services that we have already engaged in conversation about in other topics - the tutoring, the afterschool program or the Saturday.
- There will be a total immersion English language program for English language learners.
- Based on the results of the survey and the assessment will put them at a different level so they would go into I don't know if it would be something similar to the Intensives, this is my first time hearing about the Intensives, and when they are proven to be at the level they will be mainstreamed into the regular classroom. It is during the school hours.
- We have had a number of conversations as a board about this. We wanted to be sure we were really clear about our budget and everything. We wanted to make sure that we had the resources that we needed to serve these students. We will not know until the lottery is conducted what our student populations will be and what their needs will be and then based on that we will be able to plan accordingly.

2. How are you going to evaluate your program and services for English language learners and students in need of special education?

- You evaluate the program by evaluating the students and their progress. That gets back to the constant assessment of the students' progress.
- The director will be reporting to us on a regular basis so that information will be available to the board.

Enrollment and Recruitment

1. Please explain your rationale for the proposed school's size and growth strategy.

- When you bring in an entire group of new students and a different style of academia to them, it will take time. There will be students at varying levels – to get everyone to the level where they are mastering the system will take time. Mastery level at the high school for most of the kids, this will take time and this is why we are beginning at 5th grade. Having the two to three year leeway makes all the sense in the world.

2. At which grades will the proposed school admit new students? At which grades will the school backfill?

- New students start in the 5th grade, my understanding is if there is a spot open, they can come in.
- I don't know that we have discussed that frankly.
- I wonder that too. Entering in eighth grade is a lot more challenging than entering at 5th grade to get that student up to speed.
- *Ideally, it would be to grow the students early. We will have seats available which we will fill either from waitlist or application. We administer a diagnostic assessment and if a student is a grade level behind but doesn't have learning gaps that are detrimental we can plug them into their grade level or if a student is unable to perform at that level and missing that prerequisite knowledge to be successful in that grade level, we may offer a seat in a lower grade level.*

3. What is the proposed student class size for the different grade levels?

- *The standard SABIS model is three to four sections per grade. Approximately 128 students per grade level.*
- *We believe that small class sizes are irrelevant if key ingredients are in place. We have a measure of accountability every week for performance. If you are assessing on a weekly basis, you can quickly pinpoint in that class what is happening – is learning taking place? Who is learning? Is teaching taking place? The management of student behavior is another key piece. If you have a large class sizes and an ill equipped teacher with poor classroom management skills then forget it – it won't work. If you have a large class size with a structured curriculum, constant accountability and assessment, training on classroom management for our teachers, a clear code of conduct and emphasis on good behavior, you mitigate that issue in our mind.*
- Moreover you are breaking each class into small sizes with the prefect system.

Capacity

1. How did this group come together to form the proposed school?

- It began with STCC's commitment to want to do this. It began with Ira. When I co-chaired the committee that conducted the national search to find President Rubenzhal. He has expressed the desire to do this from day one - how will we firm up the connection on the proposed charter school's board with the college – with the addition of Michael Suzor from STCC and myself because of my relationship as a board member on both sides of the road (STCC and STCC Technology Park). SABIS became the obvious choice. What we have done in terms of reaching out to different people - we are trying to fill roles on

the board. Dan, a former teacher in SABIS system, understands the SABIS system, it is good to have someone no longer connected and he is also an attorney. Waleska has been in education and has had a stellar career in higher education now at Westfield State. Nick comes from parent and coaching backgrounds – what do coaches do they motivate kids and we want someone like that on the board. John sees everything that happens in Springfield when the system doesn't work. John knows more about what these students deal with in their neighborhoods. He was an adjunct professor at STCC but is now presently at AIC. Heidi is an organizational consultant. We do intend to enhance the size of the board and envision it going on to the full 13. We are looking for people who are neighbors, not necessarily community activists, but who want to be active. This isn't just about SABIS – this is about Springfield. We are a concerned group of citizens who recognized a problem in the city. We are not elected officials. We know we have identified the answer. 20% of students in a charter won't change everything but it will change a lot. Why two new charters now? The kids going to school now can't wait for us to figure out what the problems are in the system. They are going to school now – it is their lives and their futures. We are trying to maintain a middle class. People in the city want a choice for their children to go to school. More charters with strong support from boards and strong affiliations and strong delivery systems – the more chances they get. STCC is a gated safe community where these kids would go to school. They will witness people going to college every day and people going to work every day. Security is 24/7 in a gated community. There are many opportunities – an entirely different experience.

Governance

1. How will the proposed board of trustees communicate with SABIS?

- My objective is that SABIS will communicate with us. The expectations will be that we want to be informed – it is a matter of personal preference but also a matter of responsibility. We will be having monthly meetings with the director that will entail a regular diet of how is this working out? Where are the problems here? What have you done to correct this? My experience on boards after twenty four years, how I have judged a president, a director – does this person come to the board with problems or solutions? A good executive doesn't bring problems to the board, they bring solutions and progress.

2. Please specify the proposed services to be received from SABIS.

- Holding SABIS accountable for managing the day to day operations of the school and all ancillary services. The gymnasium, the cafeteria...
- SABIS will be treated as a vendor by the board. There are contractual obligations and the expectation is that the contract will be met.
- Hiring... Specifically with respect to the director that person will be approved by us but SABIS will lead the recruitment and selection process to identify the ideal candidate for that role, take care of the training for staff to get professional standards in place and get teachers and staff up to speed.

- The AQC will report to the school director. The AQC will have a constant eye on the assessment system.
- The monthly reports from director and the annual report and monthly budget and hiring updates... As a start up, our expectations is that when the school opens we expect that we will have communication on a more than weekly basis until we are confident that things are running up to our expectations.
- We expect them to perform in the special needs and ELL area.

3. Are school staff employees of SABIS?

- They are employed by the board of trustees but managed by SABIS.

4. Please describe how the proposed board of trustees will provide oversight to SABIS.

- First thing is it gets back to testing and assessment. This is our turn to look at how the tests are going and make an assessment of that performance. It depends on MCAS, weekly progress reports, some analysis from the Commonwealth, and the accountability report/plan. In terms of our protection, we will professionally have an annual audit of the books. We will retain counsel to be sure that we are compliance with all of the state mandates.

5. What is the status of the contract?

- We have a draft of a contract but are waiting to get approval from the Board. We are aware that ESE approves the contract.

6. Please identify the expenditures in your proposed budget that are part of the negotiated contract with SABIS. (Line item 28, 38, 43, and 47) (Licensing, Management and Corporate Support)

- There are two line items in particular that are directly related to SABIS – one is a management fee of line item 28 which represents 6% paid annually to SABIS and also line item 43 which represents the 8% licensing fee.
- It is my understanding; I have had a conversation with financial folks at SABIS that this is pro forma. There are assumptions built into this that are based on head count and that staffing is related to the number of students. It is pretty standard operating procedure.

Management

1. Where is SABIS in their process to identify the proposed School Director? The Academic Quality Controller (AQC)?

- *Until we have received approval we will not hire anyone. We have posted nationally and within the SABIS network for potential school director positions. We have been looking through our SABIS network. We are looking for a great school leader and exposure to SABIS would be a great bonus but is not required.*

2. On page 57, please explain the staffing positions indicated in FY13 for the school.

- The direct hands on management of the academic side is performed by the AQC. Everyone reports up to the director. Teachers report to the AQC.
- In a charter school, the school director is also the superintendent so they are ultimately responsible for every function, academics, facilities, business, every function... The AQC is like your academic principal they are exclusively responsible for academic performance, student performance, academic delivery and instruction, professional development for teachers. Anything relating to academics falls under the AQC's umbrella. They report to the director.

Facilities and Finances

1. Tell us about your progress on finding an adequate school facility in time for opening in 2012.

- We have a facility identified in a portion of the STCC Technology Park – it would be a perfect site for the project. It is directly across the street from the college campus, the street is a minor artery. STCC Assistance Corporation owns the Tech Park on behalf of the college has already expended \$125K for pre-construction design.
- *We have had an architect review the site - it is a one story 110K sq. ft. property. There will be one area that is a two story level – a very high ceiling. We will need to add a gym. We have enough space to fit all of the necessary classrooms and office space – we have designed it out.*
- We can do this in stages which will allow us to grow. As soon as you have the first cohort of students you got to have a gym, etc.
- If need be, we have some synergies on board with Springfield Cathedral High School who had to identify temporary sites during total reconstruction due to the tornado disaster. They reviewed ten potential sites which will help us if we are requiring an alternative site during the first year.

- Our plan, based on the design and the people that we can bring to bear, we think that we can be in the STCC building in time for opening – if it becomes evident we can't we have a back-up plan.

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

- Again a budget is a budget and they are made to be changed so understanding that in the beginning – it was based on the input that SABIS had and their experience on what happens as a practical matter when you open schools and what it does cost. That is what we were primarily looking at. In terms of start up cost and addressing the deficit, SABIS has the ability to be a resource for capital, in that event, that would be paid back over a brief period of time through revenues or a line of credit from one or more local institutions.
- My understanding of the assumption for line item 60 is that would include the additional space. The building will be rehabbed in stages and that cost is part of that. That is the assumption by the third year we will need more of the space available to us. We are not fully built out until probably year six. There are essential services that need to be considered in year one but we will not build a complete school.
- Our assumption was 100 sq. ft. per student at \$15 sq. ft. in this particular area.
- *This is high per pupil– this is a conservative budget. We used a student per pupil tuition funding that is lower than what is currently available for Springfield charter schools. We used higher costs than we will likely occur because we wanted to put forth a conservative budget and used higher assumptions than we will likely face. It will be less than \$15 sq. ft. but we wanted to cover that in case the facility needs extra work.*

3. What analysis has the proposed board performed regarding securing a line of credit from SABIS?

- We have not had those discussions.
- *We know that any loan secured past the term of the charter requires board approval. We have not had those discussions with the board because it is not in our interest to loan money to the schools – we do it if there is no other way. That is a conversation that we will have to have with the board only if it is necessary then SABIS would be available to provide a line a credit.*

4. Does the board have fundraising goals?

- Speaking from personal experience having owned two businesses – banks look upon business plans to make credit worthy decisions on loaning money, short term and long term. Showing this three year pro forma, we're making money in year three. My preference would be to go to SABIS since they are our partner but if we had to go to a bank we should have not trouble to borrow the money.

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- Over and above, I can see the creation of a foundation. The parents may not be in a position to give but they can work and help. Absolutely, once we get this thing off and running we will create a foundation. But we have to walk before we run.
- Some boards of SABIS schools fundraise. SABIS International does not depend on fundraising to operate our program in schools. The SABIS program operates as a viable entity of a successfully implemented program at the per pupil funding provided by the state.