Phoenix Academy Public Charter High School Springfield
Questions as derived from panel and documentation review

1. **For the record, please introduce yourself and indicate your position on the board or at the school. Please include the number of years you've been involved with the organization and a brief description of your history with the organization. If a board member, please also describe the areas of expertise you bring to the board and which committees you are involved in as well.**

   - Jeff Meaney, Board Member – I'm board chair. My background is about 30 years in financial services. I'm chief operating officer at a corporate legal practice for a large financial services organization based here in Massachusetts. I have a long interest in support of various education initiatives. I've been part of the board for three years now.

   - Greg Susco, Board Member – I'm a trustee that has been on the board for over six years. I'm an owner of an insurance brokerage in Newton. I currently sit on the strategic sub-committee and the development sub-committee.

   - Neil Cohen, Board Member – I'm a practicing attorney in a mid-sized law firm that I manage in Newton. I've been on the board for almost five years now. I sit on the development sub-committee.

   - Colette Stanzler, Board Member – I'm vice chair of the board. I've been involved with the organization since 2007. Professionally, I head a research division where we analyze different social causes and non-profit organizations on their effectiveness. At Phoenix I head up the strategic planning committee and I'm also on the evaluation committee that evaluates the executive director.

   - Joan Gallant, Board Member – I've been with the board since 2009. I have a legal background as well as a development background. I serve as the chair of the development committee. I also serve on the strategic sub-committee.

   - Nate Wolfson, Board Member – I'm an entrepreneur. I founded a company called Frat Networks which I built and sold to Staples and now I have a company called Digital Bungalos which is a web design and development firm. I've been involved with the school for 4 or 5 years and I've been on the board since 2010.

   - Patrick Monkiewicz, Board Member – My background is in finance, manufacturing, sales and marketing with family business of over 100 years in Chelsea MA, where the first charter school started. I've been with the board since July of 2009. I'm a former professor at Northeastern University executive program that introduced me to the school. The last two years, I've been on the finance sub-committee.

- Devin Sullivan, Board Member – I work for Intercontinental Real Estate Corporation. I've been there for 10 years and I run the sales and marketing group. I've been on the board for three years now. I serve on the development sub-committee as well.

- Beth Anderson, Executive Director, Phoenix Network – I'm the founder of the Chelsea school and the leader of the Phoenix Charter Academy Network of Schools. I've been with the school since the first charter back in 2004 after being a Building Excellent Schools fellow. Before founding the school I was the deputy executive director of MATCH high school in Boston and prior to that I was the senior program officer for a community based program for teen pregnancy prevention in Chelsea.

- Caroline Pierce, Manager of Strategic Partnerships and Planning, Phoenix Network – I've been with the school for four years. I started off as a fellow for the Chelsea school. I've held a number of different positions since then. I offered the application.

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

1. **How has the board assessed demand for Phoenix in Springfield? In Holyoke? In Chicopee? Other Gateway cities?**

   - I think one of the assessment criteria is looking at school in Chelsea that has had success. We looked at areas where we could duplicate that success. We looked at Lynn, New Bedford, Brockton, Springfield, and looked at the type of criteria: teen pregnancy, dropout rates, poverty level, and MCAS scores. I think Springfield, having similar criteria that were successful in Chelsea, made it attractive to us.

2. **Why did you decide to apply for a charter school located in Springfield rather than other Gateway cities in eastern Massachusetts, such as Lynn or New Bedford? Why does it appear Brockton & Fall River were considered but are no longer part of the long term plan?**

   - A large part of that is the relationships and support that we've seen from Springfield community. Also, the support for the pipeline of students between these different on-the-ground organizations that are already there. Also from a financial perspective, we see an ability to raise funds.

   - The things that are interesting to us are: Can we get kids into the school, need for a school like Phoenix in terms of the school system and politics. So in terms of need we look at five cities, including Lawrence, Springfield. In terms of people, the department of youth and families estimates that there are about 100 students today that they could refer to Phoenix Charter Academy Springfield. DYS has about 150 girls and 150 boys that are currently out of school. In terms of politics,

every organization that we've talked to in Springfield has said "how can we help?" and "when can you come?" We've had no pushback and no bad press. Dan Warwick, Superintendent, is very interested from a recruitment standpoint and sharing of services. Also the Mayor of Holyoke was open arms and has introduced us to community colleges and we're beginning to build a relationship with Chicopee. Regional school has worked for us in Chelsea, so we want to keep going on the regional school route.

- We want to be able to serve a community of young people who have been in lock up or some kind of residential facility or foster homes. If DCF places them in a foster home outside in the middle of the application process, then all of a sudden we can't serve them. That has happened in Lawrence. It's easier if we can serve all the communities.

- The board is very concerned and wants to know that we have support, demand and acceptance. We absolutely feel that in Springfield. One indication is when you look at the public hearing; it was easy to get people to come and talk on our behalf. We saw very strong support from local community, which gives us a comfort level that there is demand and support.

3. **Describe the ways Phoenix prepares its graduating students for post-secondary success.**

- I think the whole model at Phoenix is about preparing students for college success and self sufficiency. We use the NWEA map to assess students every September and every May. We use that to assess where they are from a grade-level perspective. Basically you have three levels of classes: category 1, 2 and 3. Category 1 has an emphasis on attendance and basic skills. Then by category 3 there is an emphasis more on quizzes, test, and independent projects. We're preparing them for lifetime success and self sufficiency. College acceptance is required to graduate, whether it is a 2-year or 4-year school.

- Sometimes there is push back about college acceptance to graduate. Some kids have other goals other than college, some are good, like joining the military or auto mechanics training for example, and some are bad. We're college focused but we're trying to be flexible.

- This is something that Beth reports to the board monthly on expected graduation rates, college acceptance rates and college persistence rates. We have discussions about this often.

- The core of the mission is rigorous education along with endless support. The support is there to teach kids how to be survivors and be on their own. We're not letting anyone go until we know that they are able to do that because they don't have that stability in their lives otherwise.

- It doesn't end the day they get their diploma. We set a rigorous standard that will set them up for a lifetime of success, but the support continues after graduation and we foster a relationship where kids come back for advice and support.

4. **What information do you collect about Phoenix graduates? Tell us about the alumni support programming, called Phoenix through College, that Phoenix graduates receive.**

- PTC was founded by our vice principal, who is a second year teacher at the school. She is still involved on a consulting basis with the college office. It's now headed by a former fellow from our first fellowship core, Haley Bentley. We'll be adding two more staff over this year and next year. Under her we had 77 graduates and now we'll have over 100 with our graduate estimate at 30 this year. PTC will be part of the network. It is in Chelsea because we won't have graduates in Lawrence. Haley's job is to get students from one year to graduation and originally we designed it to follow them two years into college. We found we have to keep following them forever. So for the 2008 graduates, it's checking in with how their life is right now. Some are working, some have graduated, etc. We have a good rate of finding our kids compared to other schools. With the more recent graduates, it's asking them to attend alumni dinners, incentivizing them to give us grades and come to dinners. We tried things like giving them gift cards. We track all our graduates, are they in school, did they graduate, left school, coming back to school, how long they've been out of school, etc. We follow up to make sure kids on are track. Students are taught to seek us out and how to recognize trouble in college.

- The college office has expanded capacity this year with the growth of our fellowship program. At our Chelsea school we now have 22 fellows as fulltime staff members, they provide AmeriCorps. Their primary responsibility is to work with students to prepare for MCAS, but they also help with graduation coaching and college planning.

- We have 22 fellows in Chelsea and 8 in Lawrence. So we have 30 total.

Educational Philosophy, Curriculum and Instruction

1. **Describe the progress of aligning the Phoenix curriculum to the Common Core state standards.**

- Our teachers and our head of school have been in a two year process of matching up the common core standards to our classes, and they're in a process of developing internal assessments, to set how students are doing as individuals. They have done a detailed process where they match up the common core standards with their teaching in class and those are matched up also to the MCAS, PSAT and the SAT.

- By the end of this year, all of our curriculum will be realigned from Massachusetts framework to common core standards.

- We've been working on having really good dashboards. We have a full-time data coordinator in Chelsea and she works with a part-time data coordinator in Lawrence. We have various dashboards.

- We hold Beth to report on key metrics on a regular basis. We understand that there are deep dives we can make if board is interested in doing so.

Assessment, Promotion, and Graduation Standards

1. **How are interim assessments developed?**

- Our teachers work in teams to design the interim assessments in house. They are backward planned from the key assessments that different categories of students are taking. So in category 1 they are backward planned from MCAS. In category 2 it's backward planned from SAT. In category 3 it's backward planned from college level courses. There is a rigorous data protocol that we follow that is detailed in application. It involves preplanning, assessing, data analysis, re-teaching and re-assessing. And that is repeated on an eight-week cycle.

- We want our kids to be ready for community college and not have to take remedial course. At North Shore Community College, two years ago, 90% of incoming students need to take remedial courses. We want our kids to be community college prepared. The data helps us identify and fill the holes.

- We consulted with other charter management organizations when creating our interim assessments. We worked closely with representatives from the Uncommon Schools network.

2. **Explain mastery tracking and its use. How do students use mastery trackers?**

- All students' answers are recorded in spreadsheet and then teachers are able to drill down into places that students haven't mastered and re-teach. It is geared toward power standards, MCAS, and college success. It really informs instruction in a very powerful way as it hits the skills that kids are missing. It's been really critical to have the breakdown data, because of the skill gaps kids have.

- The students also have access to data. There's a cover page of all interim assessments with questions you got correct, percentage of mastery, and teachers go over this in class explicitly with students.

School Characteristics

1. **Describe strategies undertaken at the existing Phoenix that have proven successful in navigating obstacles to student success.**

   - We put a certain amount of our DNA from Chelsea to the new school, which certainly helps. The network is working on making it less organic and more structured and formal. We have material, curriculum, assessment to give to the new school, which are all based on Chelsea and Lawrence. We're watching Lawrence and taking note of what has been easy and what has been hard, so we can do it right in Springfield. We'll also be looking at how we hire. Where did our best and brightest come from? Some from Teach for America and some from our fellowship program. We brought 5 from Chelsea to Lawrence. Right now, we're at about 75 altogether, staff wise. The Lawrence staff is about 20-25. All leaders at our school are from Teach for America.

   - We're not looking to reinvent the wheel. Our teachers and staff have been refining this curriculum in Chelsea and have made a proven model. We're just going to take some of that DNA and move it to Springfield.

   - We have a tested and proven feeder program. We have ability to leverage talent from within.

   [Follow-up: "What is the board thinking of the nature of employment contract as you move into Springfield? Will you place people there?"]

   - You have to be very excited about our mission to work at our schools. We build on that excitement and treat our teachers very well and we asked who is interested in the founding school process. Additionally, we are designing a strike team, the network people who lay ground work before the schools open; they find the building, recruit the first numbers of kids, get a good parent base going, and define right community relationships.

   - What has been emerging is a pipeline of talent that could go to the school, through fellows and growing them organically through the schools.

   - What gives comfort is at least so far in planning, the idea of doing director verdicts of "you must go" hasn't come up because of the level of interest in our assessment of what's out there. It is something we are thinking about, but it's not a problem yet.

   - There's been a lot of thought on financial side with regard to foundation and the network, Lawrence, Chelsea, and soon to be Springfield, and how to look at that

from financial perspective. Once we answer framework questions, that will help us.

2. **Describe how the Phoenix Urban Fellowship program will be implemented at the new school.**

    - In 2010 we got an AmeriCorps grant for three years, for 17 fellows. It has been a great relationship with AmeriCorps. That has grown a piece of infrastructure in the school. They have continued to invest in us, growing the number of members every year, now we have 30. The Lawrence AmeriCorps members are actually Chelsea AmeriCorps members placed in Lawrence. It feels that AmeriCorps is doing all the investment things they can do so we can have another three-year grant. We want to put 10 members in Springfield. All systems look good right now with regard to where we're going with AmeriCorps. We haven't had to use tuition dollars yet because of the fundraising that the board does.

    - If we get a 50-person AmeriCorps program, we are looking at a candidate right now to be the fellowship program director across the three cities. That would be a network positions reporting to me or the COO. We have a how-to manual in Chelsea and Lawrence in terms of replicated the spirit of the fellowship program.

3. **How are teachers supported to create a sustainable work culture?**

    - The way we get our data on how our teachers are doing is that we do a Survey Monkey survey every Friday for both campuses and we'd do Springfield as well. We ask a lot of different things, about anything incidences, leadership; it depends on what is going on in school, it's not same every time. September through March is tough, so we load up on fun stuff. In Chelsea, we go later in June to give them longer holiday break. We give them a professional development day where half the day is on your own planning or something like that. We have our gala in March for our staff. We surprised teachers, we said that they we were going to have to clean the building, but then we took them out for pizza, wings and beers instead. We do outings once a month. We did a surprise brunch and other things like that. We bring in munchkins, coffees, cocoa for kids and staff, food and lunch. We've brought in inspiring speakers. If a teacher is struggling, we have a culture that serves those problems. We help out as much as we can.

    - Healthcare is a big one, too. We've been covering an additional 10%. Our rate is up to 70% now.

    - We also have time when we get board to engage staff. We have an end-of-school-year event as well.

    - We give them a lot of freedom on how to deliver curriculum. If they want to try something new, we support that. Our club program, our sports program, black

women association, our speakers series, all were ideas that came from teachers.

- We've built an incredible collaborative environment, so teachers can work together. You can go to other teachers for help and advice. We were purposeful in creating that culture.

- On Fridays the day is shortened, at 1pm, teachers gather and share notes.

- We get school gifts for teachers every year as well.

Enrollment and Recruitment

1. **What targeted strategies are being implemented to address concerns around graduation rate, attendance, and attrition? How have the strategies changed over time?**

   - From the board level, we are certainly conscious about it but we care most about the Phoenix calculation.

   - We want to measure in the right way that is honest to our mission. The metric that we currently have, we look at our potential graduates in the spring before their senior year. We don't have grade level until you get to senior year. Our graduation rate is based on how many of those kids graduate. How we determine a "senior" is dependent on a number of factors. Seniors are dependent on MCAS, which tests you've taken, number of credits, and which classes you have credits in. You have to have passed a certain amount of math classes, science and humanities classes.

   - We're trying to get something that is close to the initial denominator that the department uses, that gives some idea to kids we lose and kids that graduate. We're the only level 3 that is very successful with MCAS grades. It's tough because we have one ding, and because of the feds we have to be labeled level 3.

   - We can quantify that these students that come in as dropouts, we can say that they would not be anywhere else. We're trying to look at entry cohorts, and asking how many quarters does it take to become a Phoenix and then we study those based on the dropping out per quarter and how many we bring back. We've been studying this. We know we are specifically designed to go after kids that are about to drop off and we're counted against those and that's why our graduation rate is so low, because we're missing those. The department graduate list never matches our graduate list, which I've asked department about. We're counting it this way right now and we recognize the concern. We've decided to go to outside help to help us with this. Strategic Grant Partners has offered to help us take a look at this.

Capacity

1. **Tell us about your partnership with the Lawrence receivership to operate the Phoenix Academy Lawrence. How does Phoenix Academy Lawrence factor into the request for an additional Commonwealth charter and support the board's long term goals? Management fee? Other interested districts?**

   - It's contracted with the school. It was in middle of the Springfield application cycle that the schools system went into receivership. The process felt very doable for us. When I went out to see the schools, it's like a big Chelsea in a lot of ways. In terms of looking at do we have the expertise to work with? The alternative population, the out of school population was exactly what we're endeavoring to do. We're trying to do something that hasn't been done. A commonwealth charter has never tried to start an in district alternative high school that is not a Horace Mann, it's not a level 2, it's a Lawrence public school. The district knows our success and our model, but they are kind of hands off with regard to decisions. They have rules that we have to follow. We have a management contract outlined with them, detailing what is important, particularly our autonomies. There's also a 25-30 page school operational plan about how we operate. The other pickle is that the way things work in Lawrence have changed. It's almost like a new school district with some old school practices. In the middle of all that, we have a Phoenix Academy in Lawrence running as close to a charter school as possible. It's sort of a smaller version of Chelsea school.

   - From board point of view, Lawrence has been interesting for us: the uniqueness, the model, the contract, and the arrangements. It was also serendipitous for us. Frankly, it gave us comfort that we had a visionary leader that made one place happen with a model that is transportable. Lawrence has shown us that we can do it, be successful, be true to model and extend this high accountability concept to a second location without exclusively relying on a small group of people. We can take on Springfield. The Lawrence experience gave us a background on how important the planning is so we hit the ground running and so we are delivering on day 1 at Springfield.

   - Lawrence didn't happen overnight; we had a lot of board back and forth.

   - We're cautious as board. What are we trying to do broadly here? What is our vision with regard to who we are serving and what we are providing? Does that have to be in charter school model? Charter school model works and that's what we'd like to do, but could we help a population in Lawrence? There was an opportunity there. The second point is there is a lot of verbal agreement that we would be able to stay true to our model, but there was a lot of concern that once we solved contract, would we able to have longer school days, be involved in recruiting, hiring/firing, and high expectations for students. We eventually felt confident that we could do that.

- It's a 3.5 year contract and at the end of the year we can review and add another year. However, the city/district relationship is tricky.

2. **Please tell us about the lessons learned from the experiences in opening and operating the existing Phoenix-Chelsea and Phoenix-Lawrence. What successes are you most proud of? What stumbling blocks are you planning to avoid in the future?**

- We hired better. We've learned a lot about hiring. I thought in opening the Chelsea school we needed teachers who have worked with tough kids. Statistically we do better with young folks with no preconceived notions. Our fellowship program has knocked it out of the park. We put all new people in Lawrence. It's good in Lawrence but we have typical struggles, but not that same ones as in Chelsea. We had some folks that couldn't hack it because they had easier teaching jobs that were lighter that they compared it to. I'm not getting "these kids can't do it." Even on the worst day, teachers believe that everyone can graduate.

- From a board perspective, we tried to get on the ground in the schools. I was in Lawrence in week 6 or 7 and the good news was it felt like the school had been running for two years. We are in temporary facility there, we're going to have to move and I didn't know why until I got there. There a lot of exit doors and windows and we're trying to keep population in the building. Little things like that make a difference. We're focused on facility and optimal space.

- There were 5 people who went from Chelsea to Lawrence. We want to bring the Phoenix DNA to Springfield again on day 1.

- We want to take from within to breed leadership staff.

[Follow-up: "Do you have particular professional development in order to be successful at PCA? What are the different skill sets necessary?"]

- From a mission standpoint, we've had teachers from MATCH, and others that had been at MATCH and came into the Phoenix fold. If they come as a group from MATCH, they are like "wow" because they don't see some of the things we do on the student support side of things. I was concerned that even the look and feel would be too much for them; a big 19 year old with tattoos is not what you see at MATCH high or middle school. However, there are some in those training programs that are entrepreneurial and very diagnostic in the way they walk through the world. Teachers are excited and challenged by making a difference and getting kids off the streets and out of jail.

- Working with public school system, there is a need, the Phoenix won't steal students from public school, and there are students out there that need the Phoenix.

- There is a huge emphasis at Phoenix on differentiating for all learners in the classroom. How to create curriculum to serve every single student's needs is huge.

- Instructional Kid Talk, which is looking at where kids are struggling in test and quizzes and what not and figuring out a repair place. They figure out from instructional standpoint. At Phoenix, they would do that as well, using data cycles and what not. They'll also talk about what's going on with students outside the school.

- Teachers are trained to teach the whole child and all of their circumstances and fill in the gaps, educational and support wise.

3. **Some may argue that the pace of expansion will weaken or undo Phoenix's accomplishments. What is being done to address this potential concern?**

- We're definitely a cautious board. We formed the strategic planning sub-committee 18 months ago to start thinking about replication, where we might go and what types of cities might be interesting. We've also talked a lot about the current infrastructure. Are we at the place where we can go? Are we at financial capability to move? We've also focused on development, fundraising, leadership and bringing fellows up to senior roles. Also, we've been cautious about taking this year to plan for Springfield and making sure we have the right pipeline and management team to be there. We've done a lot of thinking across the various sub-committees to make sure we are strong enough to go and that our other schools will remain strong if we do go.

- We're doing this now. This is an active board. We have taken the approach that since this school is based on a high accountability model, we ought to hold our board and executive director to high accountability as well. With regard to our Springfield plans, the Lawrence experience has validated the caution and attention that we've spent on this. We have a high degree of confidence about our ability to do this. We know we can make a strong school and keep current school strong.

Governance

1. **Describe a recent discussion at the board level that reflects the decision-making process during the review of student academic achievement and the maintenance of quality control within a school and across the two present schools.**

- We had a board meeting this morning looking at dashboard statistics. One of our issues was around enrollment. We have specific goals set for beginning period and targets for end of period, and we ask Beth before we enter the next reporting period what is happening in the mid-point and what actions are we taking. In Lawrence, a new area, we're seeing some dropout based on opt-in and opt-out and other issues. We have 130 students enrolled right now. Beth talks to us about

trends and what, specifically, is she doing. The answer this morning what this idea that there will be more periodic visits from Chelsea staff to Lawrence to shore things up.

- Beth is extremely transparent; she's on the phone with board members often with questions and challenges. She brings problems to the board, issues she sees, and presents options she's thinking about. We know she is thinking about it. We offer input and she comes back with regular updates. There is very transparent relationship between Beth and the board.

- The board also has good working relationship as a team, as well as with Beth.

2. **What progress has the board made to recruit additional members who would contribute to the skills and qualifications of the board as well as reflect the proposed new communities to be served? What qualifications would the board look for in potential new trustees? Please describe the process to recruit, select, and orient new board members. Are there considerations to expand officer positions or committees? In the prospectus, it was indicated that board membership would be changing and members would leave and become advisory board members. Is this no longer the case?**

- We have been very deliberate in our filtering and assessment of candidates. We're a board with diverse background that works very well together. Patrick, who is in a multigenerational family business in Chelsea, is an important link to Chelsea. The plan is to have two additional board members with Springfield links by the end of year, first by June. It's important to have that representation.

- We have three people in pipeline from Springfield area. We did fundraising 8 months ago and talked with potential board members. We ask a lot of our trustees, so finding the right candidates is hard, but we'll continue to keep the pipe full.

- We need more racial diversity. We've talked about this a lot. We have very high expectation of board members. Our chair had to leave for job opportunity, and Jeff has jumped right in, it's been a seamless transition. Retention has been extraordinary.

- Diversity is something we talk about a lot. The challenge is that there is a smaller pool of diverse applicants that are asked by a lot of boards to join. They are being courted by many, so it's tough.

- One thing we look for in potential candidates is the network of potential donors and financial support. We look at personal background and experience. We have a good variety here; we have charitable, financial, entrepreneurial, and development experience.

- We have three candidates of color in the queue; one is from the western Massachusetts area.

- I had thought we had to have an advisory structure, but it turns out we don't have to. I was also told that we have to have at least 10 meetings a year in person and that has been a struggle, but we made it work. But then we found out that isn't the case. We can formalize the structure of sub-committee reporting to the board.

- We had 11 meetings last year, not counting sub-committee meetings, and phone conversations.

- Sub-committee will have more focus upon expansion.

3. **Share with us your experiences in evaluating your own performance as a board.**

- We look at metrics of student success. Are we preparing students for success? It goes back to the dashboard. We're all accountability to the success of the students.

- There's the faithfulness to mission, tracking of day-to-day operations, financial and funding.

- We also use the high bar software. We also have annual board retreat, where we are looking at how we're doing and progressing towards goals.

- The annual financial audit as well.

- We have development consultant, looking to hire a director of development.

4. **Tell us about the process of Executive Director evaluation performed by the board.**

- We have a formal assessment program with goals set at the beginning of the cycle. We sit down with Beth with the sub-committee and talk in detail. Then the committee reports back in the following board meeting.

- Evaluation committee sits down with Beth before start of academic year. She develops goals that we review based on accountability plan and different goals as well.

- We've talked about having the head of school come to board and to present to us.

- In the past with the Chelsea school, I've had sub-committees interview potential head of school.

- In practice what has happened, we're asking "hey what's going on with candidate X." We're plugged into recruiting even though we don't have a formal vote of approval for final candidates.

5. **What challenges have network staff encountered? What strategies have been implemented in response to these challenges? What challenges have been identified related to the geographic distance of the proposed school from the existing school in Chelsea? How will they be addressed?**

- We're looking at cost and time. Look at time management to support two schools. We definitely need a larger network staff. I'm talking to two people, potential COOs for the network. We need big strategic thinking so that it isn't all on me to lead all the different parts. I would like to work with the COO to figure what the other staffing should look like. We need to hire an on the ground recruiter for Springfield. By the summer, we want to have a recruiter in place that can do student recruitment but also staff recruitment.

- There is a leadership piece where I need to oversee, but I also have areas of expertise. If the strategic structure is a team-shared workload, I can utilize my areas of expertise such as school culture building in each of the schools. I want to spend the majority of my time balanced between head of school support, strategic work across the state about what it means to have this model and also oversight work with regard to operations across the different schools.

- In terms of comfort regarding the ability of this school board. In Lawrence, we were starting our in-school daycare program, and basic supplies for daycare center supplies weren't going to be there on day 1. Board members physically grabbed materials and brought them up to Lawrence to make it happen. I have confidence that we can handle emergencies at Springfield.

Management

1. **Describe how new principals are supported in making the challenging hiring and firing decisions. What obstacles are anticipated as the schools require additional human capital over time and what strategies are being implemented to address these challenges to continued success?**

- I'm the third in Chelsea, so we've had hire and fire experience, particularly in the first few years of the school. Meagan and Sarah have had to let people go in the Chelsea school. In doing that, I go back to the dashboard to see how the school is doing. So I'll give you a Lawrence problem. The teen moms don't have the experience of the teen moms in Chelsea, and they are scared to bring their kids to school into the daycare center. The enrollment has gone down so now we have to help train staff, the director of the daycare center to be youth development specialist as well as caretaking of youth in center. It's a tough discussion because if you don't have the babies for the daycare center, then you don't need the staff

and you're going to have to lay somebody off. So, the discussion with Olivia becomes how do you look at metrics will regard to that? I want Olivia to be able to bring the problem to me. I don't want to be the first to see it. If teachers aren't improving fast, we have to have metrics in place. We want them to improve fast. The head of schools know the metrics to gauge development of teachers. In their first firing, I do it with them. We'll have them practice the language that they have to use. I'll also sit in and watch and provide support. In Lawrence it's a little different, because we can only dismiss. Lawrence can take someone we dismiss and put them in another school.

2. **How will network staff be allocated over the three schools? What are the tasks that will be performed by network level staff and what will remain at the school level?**

- We are deep in conversation now. We don't have a final answer now. I don't want to reinvent the wheel. With regard to structures of network, I've gotten good advice from John Clark and Scott Givens. I initially see our network with a COO, director of development, on the ground people that are smart and versatile, a grant specialist, a recruiter, a hiring manager and a student recruitment person. I've seen some other tantalizing things lately like a mission's vision development person. I'm studying those types of positions. John has his college and social work function in the Brooke schools; that feels like a good alignment for us. We have data coordinator on the Chelsea campus that is now coaching a data person at the Lawrence campus. That should be up in the network by next year. I also think the college function should rise in a year and the data person should rise.

- We're talking about a CAO position; we have Sarah deep in pipeline for this position and is interested in this position.

- Our vision for the network with a CAO would be in FY15.

- We have a professional development function at Chelsea campus that has worked out well that we'd like to use.

Finances/Facilities

1. **How was the budget developed? What review did the board members perform prior to the submission of the application and associated budget? Explain the rationale to produce a budget that does not reflect a few expenses accurately (such as salaries for specific employees, administrators & custodians, and fundraising expenses) as separate line items but instead reflects the expense as part of the network fee in line item 23. How was the network fee determined (line item 23, FY14 = $130K)? Clarify how food service expenses were determined. Is this the raw cost or the expense after nutrition grants are factored in? Please clarify the changes in federal grant revenue projected in line item 3 over the three years.**

- Between Beth and Lauren developing it, we were looking at from a network perspective and then individual locations and looking at it based on known information that we have based on Chelsea. The biggest piece is tuition dollars and then we looked at expenses and filling that out throughout the three locations. From there, it was then brought to the finance committee then brought to the board and then it was submitted.

- Also, I meet with each head of school prior. I met with Olivia and Sarah for this.

- Our network fee was determined based on what we need combined with what other charter school networks are doing. I think it's about 10%. In Lawrence, we're charging a network fee of 10% this year but it's going to go down to 6%.

- I believe the food service expense is raw cost. Depending on what the department allows us to do in Springfield, we'll either go with the catering that we do now, or do the MATCH model, where a person is overseeing food delivery at different restaurants where kids can go.

- The charter school startup money is embedded in there. AmeriCorps is in there. We built our budget assuming AmeriCorps and then tuition and then federal startup grant and then we used a calculation to figure generally what Title 1 and federal and state would be.

2. **Clarify which entity will perform fundraising for the proposed network of schools. Is there a proposed foundation to support all schools in the network, including the relationship with Lawrence?**

- All of the above.

- Grant writing is much more the school. Foundation is more the network.

- We haven't financially differentiated out the network from the Chelsea school yet. We only accept money into the foundation for the network, but if someone wants to donate to the Lawrence school, it would go into the network foundation and out to the Lawrence school.

- $2M fundraising goal is cumulative over 6 years--by FY17.

- We are trying to get bigger folks to invest in us, the Lynch Foundation or the New Schools Venture Fund. We are going to have to raise some money for capital cost. The parish in Chelsea is probably going to talk to us within the next 18 months about a possible purchase or sale of the building and I want to make sure that we're in a position to at least entertain that.

- We have interest from people that are interested in network model, so they want us to come back and talk to them once we get the network going.