

FINAL APPLICATION REVIEW 2012-2013

Proposed School Name:	International Charter School of Brockton
Grades Served At Full Capacity:	K-12
Number of Students At Full Capacity:	1,200
Proposed School Location:	Brockton
Proposed Opening Year:	2014-2015
Proposed Management Organization:	SABIS Educational Systems, Inc.

Public Statement:

“The International Charter School of Brockton will be a rigorous college-preparatory public school opening in Fall 2014 with 540 students in K-5 and adding one grade each year to a capacity of 1,200 students in grades K-12. We will locate within the Brockton School District. Our mission is to provide any student who enrolls with the knowledge, skills, thinking ability and leadership qualities needed to achieve college acceptance and succeed in life. We will provide any child, regardless of background, with a world-class, proven college-preparatory public education in a student-centered setting that emphasizes community, civic responsibility, personal development and academic rigor.”

Mission Statement:

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

Proposed Growth Plan for First Five Years of Operation:

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

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

Primary Strengths

- The mission and vision clearly define the purpose and values of the school and are consistent with high academic standards and student success. (Section

Primary Weaknesses

- Components of the mission were not reflected throughout all sections of the application nor did the vision serve as an organizing principle for all sections

I.A. and I.B.)

- The application describes the applicant group's reasons for selecting Brockton including the need for increased educational choice and quality through the establishment of a Commonwealth charter school option for Brockton families, particularly at the elementary and middle school grade levels. (Section I.C.)
 - This charter application received letters and/or written testimony in support during the public hearing and public comment process, including Brockton City Councilor Jass Stewart, and former Springfield Mayor Michael Albano. See public comment. (Section I.C.)
- of the application. (Section I.A. and I.B.)
- The vision statement did not provide a compelling image of the school's future nor did it describe the positive impact on all stakeholders. The vision statement, as written, emphasized the proposed board's reasoning for selecting SABIS Educational Systems, Inc. (SABIS) and does not connect to its intended community in a meaningful way. (Section I.B.)
 - During the interview, the proposed board and management organization provided anecdotal evidence of parental support, including a petition, which was insufficient to justify the 1,200 student size of the proposed school. The group emphasized the number of seats available in Brockton under the net school spending (NSS) cap rather than the demand for the SABIS program. (Section I.C.)
 - The proposed school has received opposition from municipal leaders, the district administration, the school committee, school employee unions, and community members through written public comment as well as consistent attendance at each of the eight public hearings. Senator Thomas Kennedy; State Representatives Michael Brady, Geraldine Creedon, and Claire Cronin; Mayor Linda Balzotti, interim Superintendent John Jerome, former Superintendent Matthew Malone, and former State Representative Christine Canavan oppose the proposal. See public comment. (Section I.C.)

Educational Philosophy, Curriculum and Instruction

Primary Strengths

- During the interview, the proposed board spoke passionately about their commitment to successfully serve and retain all students and the leverage to do so provided by the proposed relationship with SABIS. (Section II.A.)
- The curriculum and instruction are consistent with the mission and educational philosophy of the proposed school and reflect the commitment made to implement the full educational and management model from SABIS. (Section II.A. and II.B.)
- The application contained an outline of the proposed SABIS curriculum, a sample scope and sequence, sample content and skill standards, and pacing charts which provided reviewers a clear understanding of the essential concepts of the SABIS curriculum and the various materials teachers will use to guide and plan daily instruction. (Section II.B.)
- It is clear that the development, refinement, and improvement of the curriculum will be performed by SABIS personnel as part of the management contract though the processes to do so were not explained in the application or the interview. (Section II.B.)

Primary Weaknesses

- The application does not contain nor reference research on the SABIS educational practices to demonstrate that this approach may improve the academic performance of the anticipated student population and its diverse needs, including the diverse immigrant population residing in Brockton. (Section I.A.)
- The application describes the resources, both in educational materials and corporate support, which SABIS will provide as part of the draft management contract. It is unclear how the materials and corporate support will operate within a clear system to support school leadership and staff in providing effective and responsive instruction to diverse learners. It remains unclear how school employees work together to respond to student assessment data and facilitate decision-making about adjustments to the educational program or in using student data to target appropriate professional development for faculty. It is clear that the curriculum is modified only by SABIS and not school employees. (Section II.B.)

Assessment System, Performance, Promotion, and Graduation Standards

Primary Strengths

- The application and the applicant group describe a comprehensive set of SABIS assessments that will be used to monitor students and teachers in a

Primary Weaknesses

- None identified.

systematic way, including diagnostic, standardized, and norm-referenced tests. The system includes the weekly Academic Monitoring System (AMS) that is used to assess student knowledge of every concept taught the previous week, periodic exams, end-of term exams, final exams, as well as norm referenced tests from outside of the SABIS system, such as Standardized Tests for Assessment in Reading and Math. (Section II.D.)

- The SABIS assessment system is clearly explained and the application describes how the data will be used. The proposed school has a computer-based, SABIS developed academic monitoring system that will be used by teachers, administrators, parents /guardians and the board to monitor student performance. The application explicitly states that SABIS assessments are directly linked to the SABIS curriculum. (Section II.D.)

School Characteristics

Primary Strengths

- The application provides a general description of the school culture which is strengthened by the description of the implementation of the Student Life Organization (SLO). (Section II.E.)

Primary Weaknesses

- While the application described a school day that operated from 8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m., it was unclear how the day would be organized for students and teachers. The application provides limited information about the day-to-day experience of students and teachers making it difficult to envision the school in operation. (Section II.E.)

Special Student Populations and Student Services

Primary Strengths

- Special education student-teacher ratios during the first year of operation are approximately 23:1 FTE teacher/1 aide based on projected enrollment and typical Brockton enrollment of

Primary Weaknesses

- The application acknowledges that the school will enroll a significant number of English language learners (ELL) but does not clearly indicate the number of licensed ELL teachers to

<p>students receiving special education services. The number of special education staff and aides increases as the proposed school grows and demonstrates a commitment to provide adequate student support. (Section II.F.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The application provided general knowledge regarding program requirements for special education and English language development (ELD) programs. (Section II.F.) 	<p>serve the targeted student population during the first year of operation nor as the proposed school expands. (Section II.F.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The application does not provide a description of how the special education program or the ELD program will be evaluated. (Section II.F.)
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Enrollment and Recruitment

<p><u>Primary Strengths</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None identified. 	<p><u>Primary Weaknesses</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was not evident in the application, the interview, at the public hearing, or in submitted public comment if potential enrollment will support the founding of a 1,200 student SABIS managed K-12 school in Brockton. (Section III.A.) • The application contained a draft recruitment and retention plan developed by SABIS that did not describe meaningful strategies to support the recruitment of student populations comparable to Brockton schools or specific distinct strategies to retain enrolled students. (Section III.A.)
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Capacity and School Governance

<p><u>Primary Strengths</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Though two of the nine proposed board members were not in attendance at the interview, it was clear that those present were united in their vision to provide Brockton children a strong choice for education and spoke passionately about their commitment to the proposed school and its mission. 	<p><u>Primary Weaknesses</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While passionate and enthusiastic, the proposed board provided limited evidence during the interview that they would provide effective oversight of SABIS. The proposed board did not review the proposed draft management agreement nor did it review the draft budgets included in
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<p>(Section III.B.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed board includes members who possess skills and experience in areas such as education, management, finance, and law; and have tangible ties to, and broad and diverse representation from the community the school will serve. Members include a past Brockton mayor, special education teacher, middle school vice principal, banker, auditor, and college professor. (Section III.B.) 	<p>the final application. (Section III.C. and III.F.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The application provides an organizational chart that inserts SABIS between school leadership and the proposed board of trustees and contains inconsistencies as to the party responsible for the evaluation of the school leader. While accurately clarified in the interview, these areas of the application undermine the proposed board's assertion that it is fully aware of the responsibilities of a board of trustees of a Commonwealth charter school and the responsibilities that cannot be delegated to SABIS. (Section III.C.)
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Management

Primary Strengths

- SABIS can enhance the capacity of the proposed school by providing a collection of instructional and operational services to the school leadership and the board of trustees, including but not limited to staff recruitment and training, core academic and character education curriculum, an integrated assessment system, staff professional development, access to and development of resources, in addition to start-up process management. (Section III.D.)

Primary Weaknesses

- The general staffing chart and brief narrative staffing plan provided information that was inadequate to determine if staffing projections were aligned with the application and sufficient to meet students' needs. (Section III.D)
- As a school intending to contract with a management organization to provide substantially all of the educational and management services, limited information is provided about the structure and staffing at SABIS that will support school leadership and teachers. Questions remain about the role and authority of the school leader, the influence and responsibility of SABIS, and the potential challenges created by management internally by school leadership and externally by SABIS. (Section III.D.)
- Questions remain about the proposed school's plan for making key school-level decisions on student achievement, fiscal planning, and/or operations as

well as the board's oversight of decision-making by SABIS. (Section III.D.)

- While committing to adhere to the new educator evaluation requirements, the application provides limited information about the evaluation systems to be implemented to assess teacher, administrator, and school director performance. (Section III.D.)

Facilities, Transportation, and Finances

Primary Strengths

- None identified.

Primary Weaknesses

- The budget narrative and expenditure justifications lacked sufficient detail to explain and support the projected amounts in the budget. Additionally, there are contradictory statements in the budget narrative regarding the ability to project revenues from federal grants while choosing to provide no projection of nutrition expenses or funding. (Section III.F.)
- The various costs of the management contract are not clearly described in the application, draft management contract, or budget. The draft management contract states that the licensing and management fees to SABIS are a combined 14% of total tuition funding, which does not include the costs associated with instructional supplies and materials (textbooks & workbooks), and potential support services provided by SABIS personnel outside of the stipulated management services. (Section III.F.)