

“Brooke 4” Executive Summary

“Brooke 4” will be a K-8 school, located in Boston, serving 510 students. The school’s mission is to provide an academically rigorous education to students from the city of Boston that will ensure that they are prepared to attend and succeed in college. The applicant group came together through the course of its experience as the governing board at the original Brooke School, and it includes all members of the current board of trustees, the chair of the advisory board, and the co-directors of the three existing Brooke Schools.

On the 2012 Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS), Brooke 2 students in the first year of the school’s existence achieved the highest growth in the state in both ELA and math. With an SGP of 95.5 in math, our 5th graders had the highest growth in any grade level on any test. Our fifth graders at Brooke 2 accomplished both greater growth *and* higher math proficiency than any of our prior incoming fifth grade classes at our original Brooke campus, proving that not only can we replicate our proven success from our original campus, but that we can improve on it.

Brooke students at our original campus accomplished the following on the 2012 MCAS:

- Our 5th graders ranked #1 in the state in ELA and math.
- Our 8th graders ranked #1 in the state in ELA.
- Our 3rd graders ranked #1 in the state in math.
- Our 4th graders ranked #1 in the state in math.
- On all math and ELA tests on all grade levels, Brooke students ranked in the top three schools in Boston.

The founding group is committed to bringing this opportunity for an excellent education to more Boston families. We expect to serve a population that is very similar to the population we have served at the original Brooke School, (where 98% of our students are African-American or Latino and 78% are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch) and at Brooke 2 (where 95% of our students are African-American or Latino and 75% are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch). We are committed to closing the achievement gap and will continue to welcome families in this demographic.

In Boston, demand for enrollment at the existing Brooke Schools alone is sufficient to enroll 7 schools of the size we seek in this application. The combined Brooke waiting list in grades K-6 stands at over 4,000 students (our current enrollment policies do not allow for new students in grades 7 and 8). Opening schools in different locations throughout the city has increased demand over the past years; in 2010 when we originally applied for more charters, our waitlist stood at 1,500 students and now with three campuses, our waitlist numbers over 4,000. Therefore, it is clear that demand is sufficient to fill a fourth Brooke school.

The founding group is committed to developing a replicable school model. To that end, the original Brooke school has been minimally reliant on private fundraising and has produced its results at the same or lower per-pupil expenditure as Boston Public Schools.

We believe that the achievement gap is the shame of our nation – and that great teaching can close it. Our vision for this school is the same vision that has led to excellent results at the existing Brooke

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Schools. This vision is shaped not only by what we believe, but also by what research has proven. Research tells us that the number one predictor of student achievement isn't race. It isn't socio-economic status. It's teacher quality. The best lever that we have to help low-income and minority students succeed is the same one that is most effective in helping all students achieve, regardless of their backgrounds: quality teaching in bigger doses. Therefore, our approach is guided by the answers to the following questions:

- a. **What does research tell us about what quality teaching looks like?** Our standards of excellent teaching include four major domains:
 - ***Growth Mindset*** - Research tells us that great teachers instill in their students the belief that intelligence is not something we are given, but something we work for. Brooke scholars will know what it means to work hard and to experience the related rewards.
 - ***Strong Leadership, Strong Relationships*** - Research tells us that great teachers are strong leaders who develop nurturing but demanding relationships with their students. Brooke scholars will feel known and cared for.
 - ***Rigorous Curriculum*** - Research tells us that great teachers engage and challenge students to think and conceptualize, while at the same time building proficiency and automaticity in basic skills. Brooke scholars will engage in rigorous work that challenges them to think deeply, apply their learning to new situations, and articulate and defend their thinking orally and in writing.
 - ***Individualized Feedback*** - Research tells us that great teachers assess their students frequently and follow-up with individualized feedback and support. Brooke scholars will receive prompt and frequent feedback on their performance.

- b. **How can we best develop our teachers to ensure that they can deliver this kind of quality teaching to our scholars?** The cornerstone of our program is professional development. Our teachers will be relentlessly reflective about their practice, using weekly video analysis, peer observation, and collaborative lesson study to improve. When analyzing data to give targeted feedback to students, teachers will simultaneously use that data to improve their own performance, analyzing the extent of their own effectiveness in teaching each learning standard.

- c. **How can we create the conditions across the school community that support quality teaching?** We are proud to serve among the ranks of the “no-excuses” charter schools that are closing the achievement gap across the United States. Together, our schools have shown that we can close the achievement gap by instituting common sense practices, such as:
 - Providing for more time on instruction (longer school day and school year)
 - Ensuring a safe and orderly learning environment
 - Establishing a positive, achievement-focused school culture
 - Implementing strong organizational supports and resources for teachers
 - Dedicating time each day, each week, and each school year to professional development to help teachers continually improve their practice