

Executive Summaries of Charter Schools for the 2014-2015 Application Cycle

- *Academy for the Whole Child Charter School (Fitchburg)*
- *Bentley Academy Charter School (Salem, Horace Mann)*
- *New Heights Charter School of Brockton*
- *UP Academy Charter School of Springfield (Horace Mann)*

PROPOSED ACADEMY FOR THE WHOLE CHILD CHARTER SCHOOL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*This was prepared by the Academy for the Whole Child Charter School applicant group.
Document was altered to remove footnotes.*

Mission

Academy for the Whole Child Charter School sets the foundation for the long-term development of elementary age children in partnership with students, families and communities. By embracing the “whole child” approach, we ensure that each child reaches high levels of academic success, creativity, personal growth and well-being. Through a robust academic and social-emotional curriculum, children learn within a safe, child-centered, and inclusive environment.

Academy for the Whole Child will be a K through 4 regional charter school for 360 children residing in Fitchburg and area communities/school districts: Fitchburg, Leominster, Clinton, Gardner, Athol-Royalston Regional, Orange and Winchendon. Fitchburg is the target location with easy access on and off Route 2 for families coming in from Orange, Athol, Winchendon and Gardner. The planned opening will be August, 2015 beginning with 120 children in grades K, 1 and, followed by grades 3 and 4 in years two and three for a maximum enrollment of 360 children by year five. The total number of available charter school seats at the 9% cap is 1600 students.

We chose the selected communities in the North Central Massachusetts region based on three criteria: the lowest 10% performing school districts; the lowest MCAS achievement ranking; and districts with the highest percentage of free/reduced lunch students. Four of the communities in the proposed region are presently in the lowest 10% of performing school districts in the state: Gardner, Athol-Royalston, Orange and Winchendon. District profile data shows that the average percentage of high needs students of the proposed region is 62% with the greatest percentage of high needs students in Fitchburg at 81.5%, Gardner at 65.7%, Athol-Royalston at 65.1% and Clinton at 57%. Based on the combined average of enrollment data of the proposed districts, A4WC strives to target a population that represents the region showing 60% of children as high needs, 20% special education and 13% English language learners.

There are very limited options for families in the proposed region to send their children to a tuition-free school. This is problematic for families living in one of the four districts that are under-performing. Also parents with a special needs child or struggling learner have expressed concerns that the school in their district does not provide the type of supports or environment to best meet their child’s needs. A4WC whole child approach with smaller class sizes will ensure each child has access to child-center learning supported by qualified and caring adults. A4WC academic goal is for all children to become proficient readers by the end of 3rd grade and by the end of 4th grade be proficient in both ELA and math!

Academy for the Whole Child believes in the “whole child” approach to learning and is

collaborating with the ASCD (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development) and Whole Child Initiative (WCI) to ensure the success of the school. A strong foundation in reading, writing, math, and other core subjects is as important as ever, yet by itself is insufficient for lifelong success. A child who enters school **healthy** and feels **safe** is ready to learn. A child who feels **supported** is more likely to stay in school. And, a child with opportunities in the arts develops a sense of identity and **self-esteem**. Children who have access to **challenging and engaging** academic programs are better prepared for further education, work, and civic life. These components must work together, not in isolation. That is the goal of whole child education.

Daniel Pink, author of *A Whole New Mind* states that traditional schools do not effectively address the changes occurring in our society. The future belongs to a very different kind of person with a very different kind of mind-creators and empathizers, pattern recognizers, and meaning makers. These people- artists, inventors, designers, storytellers, caregivers, consolers, big picture thinkers- will now reap society’s richest rewards and share in its greatest joys”. Children at Academy for the Whole Child will be respected for their individuality, right-brain thinking, cultural differences and innate abilities. Innovation, design thinking, and relevant, child-centered curricula will be the cornerstone of learning at A4WC.

C. A. R. I. N. G. Core Values and Goals



The Founders have developed a framework for Academy for the Whole Child based on the acronym **C.A.R.I.N.G.**, Community, Academic Achievement and Accountability, Rigor and Relevance, Inclusive for All, No Exceptions and Growth. Each of these areas articulate our Core Values and provide the framework for the design elements of the school with the **WHOLE CHILD** at the center.

While adhering to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks the instructional methodology at the A4WC will focus on educating the whole child in an integrated, child-centered classroom. A4WC believes the point of contact between student and teacher is powerful. “What teachers do in classrooms have twice the impact on student achievement as do school policies regarding curriculum, assessment, staff collegiality and, community involvement.” Curriculum, instruction, and assessment will be research base, data-driven, dependent on analysis of student progress. Program offerings will be English language arts/ELA (creative writing, composition, reading, spelling, vocabulary, and phonics), STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math), World Language, Health and

Wellness, and History/Social Sciences. Arts integration will strengthen content learning for diverse learners. “Arts integration is the investigation of curricular content through artistic explorations... and a reflection of both curricula content and the art form itself.”

What is Innovative about Academy for the Whole Child?

Academy for the Whole Child has developed a research-based, comprehensive and innovative program that will be unlike other schools in the proposed area and surrounding communities.

The Key Design Elements are:

1. **Whole Child Initiative (WCI).** Academy for the Whole will be the first charter school in Massachusetts adopting the Whole Child Initiative. Our mission supports the tenets of WCI that says for all children to learn at their best, they must be healthy, safe, engaged, supported and challenged. A4WCCS will partner with ASCD to bring research-based professional development, teaching resources and the implementation of WCI School Improvement Tool.
2. **Mastery of academic fundamentals:** A solid foundation at an early age in skills like decoding and computation are critical for higher order and analytical thinking, and future success in school. Through direct instruction of basic skills and knowledge in reading and math, the teacher presents the new skill or knowledge clearly and simply to the students building on previous learning. Children practice the new skills and given immediate feedback. Finally, the students are tested for mastery. Recognizing that children learn differently and at different paces, Academy for the Whole Child will help children through review, remediation, and differentiated instruction where necessary. This process is repeated until mastery.
3. **Safety nets for success:** A longer school day, after school and summer support programs will provide children and families with additional safety-nets as needed for success. A4WCCS academic day will operate 1.5 hours longer than most traditional school districts within the required school year of 180 days with a student to teacher ratio of no greater than 14 children in grades K, 1 and no greater than 18 children in grades 2, 3, 4 with one teacher and a teaching assistant. Before and after school programs will provide tutoring, homework help, arts and academic enrichment activities. A summer program will be available for children to help reduce the “summer learning loss” and support reading and math through academic enrichment programs.
4. **Reggio Emilia Inspired Approach:** Reggio Emilia is a highly recognized early childhood approach among professionals and psychologists. The closest school offering this approach is in Andover, MA. Our partnership with Professor Joanne Nichols at Fitchburg State University will assist A4WC with training and program evaluation, with the goal to become a lab site in the region for Reggio Emilia practice.
5. **World Language-Spanish:** All children will have 30 minutes of Spanish instruction daily and addresses the needs of Hispanic children and families who are trying to master their native language and gives all other children an opportunity to learn a second language. This program has cognitive benefits, increases self-esteem, creativity, and positive attitudes toward diversity. No other school in the area offers this type of program.
5. **Arts Integration/S.T.E.A.M.:** Arts integration traditionally takes place within the arts classroom in most schools or as part of a stand-alone theme based unit. With close collaboration and planning among teachers and arts specialists, A4WC plans to integrate arts daily into academic classroom: ELA, math, social studies and science. 1 hour of

concept and skill based learning for master, followed by 1 hour of integrating arts to reinforce concepts and skills. Planning time for collaboration is built into the schedule. Integrating arts is a powerful way to differentiate learning using multi-sensory activities to reinforce concepts and skills for children with special needs and learning styles. S.T.E.A.M. (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math) is the integration of the arts within the sciences. By adding the arts, the walls between the sciences and math are broken down by unleashing creativity, exploration and relevance to learning.

6. **Flexible scheduling supports** cross grade level activities; combined classes for team teaching; teacher collaboration, data teams; student project presentations/performances; and, team building and community outreach activities. “With large blocks of time to facilitate involvement, students benefit from less fragmentation and more engagement in project-based learning and interdisciplinary activities, promoting skill application, interpersonal relations, and decision-making skills related to concrete, relevant problems (Vars, 1993). Results indicate increased student engagement and achievement and positive social ramifications (Arhar, 1992).
7. **Daily Arts Instruction:** Where other schools are cutting back on arts programs, A4WC is committed to providing every child with 45 min -1 hour daily of instruction in visual arts, music, dance, drama, and media arts.
8. **Social-Emotional Learning:** Academy for the Whole Child understands that the social and emotional needs must be met first for children to learn at their best. A4WC will embed MindUP, an evidence-based curriculum into daily routines and Have a HEART, a teacher created character development program that fosters Honesty, Empathy, Acceptance, Respect and Thoughtfulness.
9. **The HPHP (high-performing, high-poverty) Readiness Model** addresses the challenges of high- poverty settings into design factors that increase the effectiveness of learning and achievement: Readiness to Learn, Readiness to Teach, and Readiness to Act outlines three key elements within each component that help schools overcome the barriers to success. A4WC will adapt the Readiness Model as an on-going process school administrators and staff will follow.
10. **Parents as Partners:** We firmly believe that parent involvement is a shared responsibility between school and parents in the education of their children and that continued parental involvement contributes greatly to student achievement and a positive school environment. Parents will be encouraged to visit the school often, volunteer in the school setting, attend monthly parent meetings, and be involved on sub- committees to develop a student handbook, uniform policy, and other initiatives.
11. **Community Partnerships and Service Learning:** Local agencies, service organizations and churches will assist us in enrollment and recruitment of children; and will help us provide health and wellness services to children, families and staff. We have established collaborations with colleges as a resource for professional development, program resources and evaluation. Through our community partnerships, the business community and family connections, there will be many opportunities for our school and students to participate in rich and meaningful community service learning throughout the year. Children will gain skills necessary for success in school, in the workplace, and in life.

Community Support

During the past year, support for Academy for the Whole Child has been very positive. This is evidenced by more than 1000 individuals who signed a petition supporting A4WCCS, as well as the number of visitors (5500) to the project's blog. In a public survey distributed in English and Spanish to more than 400 people, 88% said they would support an elementary charter school in Fitchburg. We engaged hundreds of families through our social media campaign on Facebook, and in February 2014, we pre-enrolled 100 children in less than 30 days. Since then, we have re-engaged our supporters and are engaging new supporters with our revised proposal through community out-reach, social media, surveys, and face-to-face meetings. The evidence supports that families in Fitchburg and surrounding communities are looking for an alternative choice to educate their children.

Board Capacity

The proposed Board of Trustees are a driven diverse group of professionals who bring to Academy for the whole child experience in law, real estate, education (primary, secondary, special education, ELL), facilities and municipality management, finance and accounting, technology, grant writing, fundraising, non-profit management, and community partnerships.

To ensure the success of Academy for the Whole Child, founding members and proposed Board of Trustees are consulting with: Donna Snyder, Manager, Whole Child Implementation of ASCD (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development); Mike Rulon, faculty member of ASCD; Sarah Krongard, Executive Director of MA-ASCD for the Whole Child Initiative, and Lesley University faculty; Dr. Isa Zimmerman, former principal and superintendent and Past President of MA-ASCD; and Kevin Andrews, Former Executive Director of the Neighborhood House Charter School in Dorchester; Joann Nichols, Fitchburg State University professor of Early Childhood Education; and Maria LaFord, Community Health Connections, Caring for Kids program and services in Fitchburg and surrounding communities.

PROPOSED BENTLEY ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This was prepared by the Bentley Academy Charter School applicant group.

The driving force and philosophy behind the founding group's desire to open Bentley Academy Charter School is an unyielding belief that every student deserves the chance and choice to live their educational life to its fullest, be that high school, college, or post graduate study. Regardless of the choice a student makes to pursue college or career, the road to educational and personal fulfillment begins with a strong elementary school experience.

MISSION: Bentley Academy Charter School prepares all of its students for personal and academic success to get to and through college. Through a combination of high academic standards, data-derived instructional methods, and community supports and partnerships, Bentley Academy Charter School establishes the critical foundation necessary for students to thrive as they advance in their academic careers.

VISION: BACS students will achieve at the same high levels regardless of socio- economic status, race, or other element of privilege or challenge. By applying our key design elements and with vigorous reinforcement of our core values, BACS will eliminate the achievement gap and graduate students with the academic skills and personal mindset to succeed in middle and high school so that a wide range of post- secondary options are available to them.

CORE STRATEGIES: To achieve the vision, Bentley Academy Charter School has designed a school around the following six strategies:

1. **Create a culture of achievement:** setting a culture that encourages and supports scholars to reach higher and achieve more is a key piece of student success. Clear and consistent standards applied throughout the school set the stage for better communication and productivity among teachers, between teachers and scholars, and among scholars themselves. A college focused school culture will encourage scholars to see themselves as collegiate scholars and will leverage the community to impart the importance of continued education for all scholars.
2. **Develop comprehensive and rigorous curricula:** allowing scholars to stretch their educational horizons is an important piece of college preparatory work. Scholars who feel supported are more comfortable pushing themselves and their understanding without fear of failure.
3. **Differentiate instruction:** using data to differentiate instruction is a powerful tool that

teachers can use to rapidly increase student achievement.

4. Attain excellence in leadership and instruction: staffing the school with teachers, administrators, and staff who have strong instructional, collaborative, and management skills is an important pre-requisite for school success. Regular observations, high quality feedback, and professional development ensure that teachers are working smart, not just hard.
5. Expand the learning day and year: more time used well can make a significant difference for scholars and teachers. More time not only allows for more targeted instruction, but also more enrichment and more opportunities for teacher collaboration. BACS will have a reimagined school day that takes into account the needs of both the teachers and the scholars.
6. Engage family and community: a school's biggest allies are the scholars' caregivers. They have the ability to reinforce or negate any progress that student is making, so keeping them well informed and focused on the same college preparatory goals can be a factor in school and student success.

BACKGROUND on PARTNERSHIPS and COMMUNITY: Salem Public Schools, Blueprint Schools Network, and Empower Schools have been working together for over six months to create a plan that accelerates achievement for the students of the existing Bentley Elementary School. The collaboration is the first of its kind in Massachusetts. It uses available regulatory pathways to allow the school to access important autonomies that will enable it to implement the kind of changes necessary to improve student achievement.

Bentley Elementary School, an existing K to 5 school in Salem, has a rich history, beginning with being named after one of Salem's "most productive and beloved citizens," Reverend William Bentley. But in the fall of 2011, Bentley Elementary School was named a Level 4 school by the state of Massachusetts based on student achievement data. The school has been through major changes to try to recapture the spirit of Rev. Bentley, most recently changing from a transformation model to a restart model which allowed a 'fresh start' to take place after a year and a half of student achievement data not meeting benchmarks. During the restart year, Bentley will be managed by Blueprint Schools Network. The next step in Bentley Elementary School's journey is to become a Horace Mann charter school to maintain, long term, the autonomy that it needs to continue to partner with Blueprint and implement its model, and the accountability that it desires to be a great place for scholars and teachers.

Salem is a vibrant, diverse, emerging community home to more than 42,000 people and some

of the area's most impressive cultural exhibits. The Peabody Essex Museum, the Salem Maritime National Historic Site, and the House of Seven Gables are among the attractions that share Salem's rich history and cultural offerings with the region, and the world. Salem is also home to a strong public school system that includes an existing Horace Mann charter school and an Innovation School as well as Salem Academy, a Commonwealth Charter School. However, the percent of Salem residents with an Associates or Bachelor's degree continues to lag behind the state average, and the percent of residents who have not finished high school exceeds the state average. Indeed, Salem is the only city that is not a Commissioner's District to have a Level 4 school: Bentley Elementary.

Bentley Elementary School, of all elementary schools in Salem, serves the highest percentage of low income students and special education students. Additionally, it is also educates the highest percentage of English Language Learners (not including the elementary school with a dual language program). The school also measures far above the district average in these same categories. However, Bentley Elementary is now uniquely poised, due to the bold vision and leadership of the Mayor and Salem School Committee, to transform itself into a school where every student excels, where every teacher is improving his or her craft, and every parent and community member's strengths are being leveraged for kids.

The founding team and founding board of Bentley Academy Charter School are made up of local stakeholders: the current Head of School at the Bentley restart, the Head of Operations of the Bentley restart, lead teachers, key partners, and two current Salem School Committee members.

Bentley Academy Charter School will open in August, 2015 with a Kindergarten through grade 5 student body consisting of 275 students.

PROPOSED NEW HEIGHTS CHARTER SCHOOL OF BROCKTON

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This was prepared by the New Heights Charter School of Brockton applicant group.

This proposal calls for the creation of the New Heights Charter School of Brockton (NHCS), an innovative, early college school designed to address the needs of the Brockton student population. NHCS will provide a public school option for 840 (at full enrollment) of the city's students to minimize the achievement gap in educational attainment and college success. Our mission is to provide urban students in grades 6-13 an early college experience coupled with academic rigor, meaningful relationships, relevant experiences, and a school-wide culture of success that leads students TO and THROUGH college. Our model focuses on community engagement, social and emotional preparation, and motivation for success. It is our belief that through gradual exposure to college expectations, with built-in support, students will build confidence, academic college and career ready skills, and the social/cultural capital they need to succeed in college and beyond.

Program Description: In order to realize our mission, NHCS will enroll students in grades 6-13, for a total school enrollment of 840 students, 105 students per grade. We will fill vacated seats throughout the year in grades 6-12 and we will recruit heavily in the poorest neighborhoods, ensuring that the poorest students in Brockton are aware of this opportunity. NHCS will address the troublesome transitions between middle school, high school, and postsecondary education that prevent some students from successfully completing their education pathways. Our students will enter NHCS in the 6th grade, spending their first four years in our "Lower School", part academic literacy bootcamp, and part culture laboratory. Students will acquire the academic acumen, the "College Knowledge," and the resiliency skills they need to be successful in schooling and in life. As our mission states, our goal is to get students to college and, armed with the tools provided by an NHCS education, through college. We delineate between a "Lower School" student and an "Upper School" student to explicate the strengths of our program and the innovative approach we take to teaching the whole student. Lower School students, in grades 6-9, participate in our literacy and numeracy bootcamp, preparing for the rigors of college, and our Upper School students, grades 10-13, begin taking college courses towards a degree and a career of their choosing. A student's instructional day at NHCS begins at 7:45 am, with our Morning Advisory and breakfast, and ends at 3:30 pm (extracurricular/enrichment activities will be held from 3:30-4:30pm). In addition, we will offer after school tutoring and "Saturday and Summer Academy" sessions to keep students academically on track and socially engaged in the learning experience. Students will be encouraged to participate in community service and extracurricular activities, which will be built into their daily schedule during our "Enrichment Period." Our students will meet our three primary goals for student success (examples from our programming are provided below each goal).

1. ***College and Career Ready Students:*** Our goal is to ensure that our students acquire the literacy and numeracy skills necessary to understand questions and problems, organize information so that salient issues are unveiled, and empower themselves with the ability to figure things out and get their needs met in any venue. At NHCS, literacy and numeracy skills do not disappear in the 9th grade, because it is our belief that these are “life skills” central to ones’ personal power. Every one of our students will graduate with a clear career path and up to 70 college credits towards the degree they need to pursue their career of choice.
 - a. Early College Model – Students take college courses starting in the 10th grade, earning up to 70 college credits (for free) at the end of the 13th grade.
 - b. The NHCS founding group will implement a Newcomer Academy, a model currently in development, to serve all newly arrived English language learners, particularly those students who have limited or interrupted education, addressing a need identified by the Brockton community.
 - c. Saturday/Summer Academy – Remediation services will be available on Saturdays and during the summer to improve students’ academic readiness.
 - d. Enrichment Period – Extracurricular activities will be offered from 3:30-4:30pm in addition to academic support for those students who need it.
2. ***Resilient Graduates:*** The founding group of NHCS shares the belief that all children have the promise for greatness, they only need to be given the tools and resources to cultivate their potential.
 - a. Parent and Family Engagement: The NHCS’ Parent/family Outreach Coordinator will hold monthly meetings for families, include family feedback in program evaluations and improvement plans, and monitor family contact, ensuring that teachers and administrators have regular contact with students’ families which will be conducted in English as well as the major languages of the school population.
 - b. Support from the Social Workers and Community Agency Partners: Students, parents, and caregivers will have access to emotional and social support on campus.
3. ***A Culture of Motivation:*** NHCS will develop a strong culture of belonging and motivation through our student support experience and our Resiliency Model. These models are designed to reach all students, wherever they are in their education journey, and maximize their potential. Our students are never alone in this quest for greatness; our entire school community supports them along the way. Students will attend quarterly, theme-driven retreats, including college visits, daylong community service projects, and cultural visits including museums, theater, music and dance performances. In addition, each retreat will contribute to the development of a “Culture of Motivation”, a key component of the Resiliency Model.

Lower School (Grades 6-9): NHCS will open with 315 students in the 6th, 7th, and 8th grades. In grades 6-9, the main focus will be to address academic skill deficiencies and ensure that students are performing to grade-level standards by the time they enter the Upper School. Students will take an accelerated course sequence in order to prepare them for college-level courses in the Upper School. Additionally, students will develop as “citizen scholars” through explicit instruction in study skills, effective study habits, and the pillars of NHCS’ school culture, including community service and respect. Starting in the 6th grade, students will be assessed and provided with an individualized learning plan (ILP) that will outline the courses and steps needed to become college and career-ready as measured by the state comprehensive exam, in addition to a college placement test. Students will be registered for 7 courses per day: two periods of math, two periods of English, a history, a science, and an elective period (which may consist of physical education/health, information technology, art, music, community service and/or academic support depending on the needs of the individual students). The Lower School students will attend advisory several times throughout their day – for “morning meeting and for an “end of day meeting.”

Upper School (Grades 10-13): The primary focus of the Upper School will be to prepare students for college and career opportunities through rigorous coursework and engaging, real-world learning experiences.

Students will transition from the highly structured environment of the Lower School to an environment of more independence in preparation for college and career success. Using the community as their lab, students will augment their learning experience by engaging in coursework on a college campus, taking online courses, receiving practical work experience through internships and employment, and participating in intensive seminars at NHCS. Students will be held accountable for their performance in these varied learning environments through projects, presentations, and written reflections.

During 10th grade, students will have the opportunity to enroll in two, college-level courses, one per semester, on the high school campus, taught by college staff. At the end of 10th grade, a decision will be made with regard to additional college course taking based on the results of the college placement exam.

- During the 11th and 12th grade, students will be encouraged to complete six college courses each year and additional NHCS’ seminars.
- In the “13th grade,” students will be fully enrolled in college courses on the college campus. They will continue to receive wrap-around support from NHCS in addition to weekly community service, academic support, and meetings with their college guides.
- In the event students are not able to pass the college placement test, students will enroll in the remedial course/ESL identified by the college to prepare the student for college coursework.
- In addition to rigorous academic responsibilities, students in the Upper School must provide a minimum of two hours of peer tutoring per week to Lower School students.

- Students must also complete a “College Portfolio,” which they will begin to gather in the 10th grade, including letters of recommendation, multiple college essays, a statement of intent, a resume, at minimum three completed college applications, and examples of academic work or accolades earned in the Upper School through community service or employment.

Student Impact: NHCS will serve a student population that may not see its own potential for college, and perhaps the greater issue, understand why an investment in education today may mean a happier, more fulfilled tomorrow. We expect our students to take ownership of their education through our Resiliency Culture (Rigor, Relationships, and Relevancy). They will understand their role in society, and above all, they will discover the wide array of options available to them in college and beyond. Students who do not meet our academic expectations will be required to attend an intensive, academic remediation program on Saturdays and/or during the summer. Saturday and Summer Academies will provide tutoring in the student’s areas in need of improvement.

Capacity: NHCS founding members and the proposed board of trustees draw from decades of experience in alternative education programming, working with high needs populations (including free and reduced lunch, ELL, and Special Education) and school development as well as in higher education access programming and policy. In addition, our applicant group is comprised of individuals with experience in high school administration, middle and high school teaching, college access and success programming, curriculum design, community outreach, special education, legal affairs, education finance, community members and Brockton parents, and English language instruction from district and charter schools. We are currently meeting with residents of Brockton, including faith and community-based groups, school administration, members of the legal community, business leaders, and parents and caregivers.

Why we chose Brockton for the site of our charter school: Brockton is an ideal community for the founding group of NHCS to put into practice a strong model, honed during our work in Fall River during the 2013-14 cycle. Brockton is a similar city to Fall River, both communities serve a higher population of low-income families and both cities share enormous pride for their public education system. The commitment from all layers of social, cultural, education, and political communities in Brockton to improve the lives of students plays a large role in the founding group’s interest in opening a new charter school in the district that embodies our mission and our model. Our mission to see students TO and THROUGH college, particularly those students impacted by poverty, addresses a need in a city where 80.7% of students qualify for free and reduced lunch. Our commitment to urban students, particularly those who are from low-income or first generation college families is clearly addressed by the youth population in Brockton. Finally, we are committed to operating a school that is embedded in the community we serve. There is currently no charter school choice in the city of Brockton, an alternative choice that would permit city residents to remain in Brockton. During the 2013-14 school year, approximately 300 students left Brockton Public Schools to attend

charter schools in surrounding districts and an additional segment of the population chose to attend nearby private and vocational schools. The founding group of NHCS will address the lack of opportunities available for students living in poverty, responding to a need we have heard over and over in our outreach work in the community – the families in Brockton are in need of a high quality public school choice. While Brockton Public Schools may be a good fit for some students, it is not the right fit for all students.

Choice of a Commonwealth Charter: A Commonwealth charter will give NHCS the autonomy to reimagine the traditional school model to include a 13th year, amend the schedule and calendar to meet the needs of students, and put policies and practices in place on behalf of all students and their families. The Commonwealth charter will provide NHCS’ founding group with the resources to address the educational achievement gaps in higher education enrollment and completion and continue to chip away at the pervasive cycle of poverty in urban cities.

PROPOSED UP ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL OF SPRINGFIELD

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This was prepared by the UP Academy Charter School of Springfield applicant group.

UP Academy Charter School of Springfield (UP Academy Springfield) will open its doors to up to 800 students in fall 2016. The school's launch, a collaborative effort between the founding team, Springfield Public Schools, and UP Education Network, will represent the restart of a struggling grade 6-8 Springfield Public School.

In addition to enrolling incoming grade 6 students in year one, UP Academy Springfield will aim to serve all students previously enrolled in an underperforming district middle school that SPS intends to close after the 2015-2016 academic year. The school to be restarted will be determined based on district determination of greatest need. The restart strategy – closing an underperforming district school and opening it as a Horace Mann Charter School – is consistent with SPS' relentless and innovative efforts to raise student achievement in its lowest-performing schools. Our school's founders believe that a successful restart represents the most effective and efficient means to close the state's achievement gap.

Our Mission. UP Academy Charter School of Springfield will ensure that all scholars acquire the knowledge, skills, and strength of character necessary to succeed on the path to college and achieve their full potential.

Our Program. UP Academy Springfield's program will utilize practices of the highest-performing urban charter schools, Springfield district schools, and school turnaround organizations. Our team believes any student can rapidly approach grade-level proficiency when exposed to an academic environment defined by the following programmatic components, which will permeate our school:

- **Relentlessly high and consistent academic and behavioral expectations for all stakeholders,** including our students, our families, and our staff. Our expectations will be explicitly taught, meticulously enforced, and consistently supported by school-wide systems of incentives and consequences.
- **Seamless and detailed operating procedures.** Our operating systems will be wide-reaching, will encompass every imaginable aspect of school operations, and will be implemented with unyielding attention to detail. All routines will be modeled for and practiced by the appropriate constituents at the beginning of each year and regularly reinforced thereafter.
- **Rigorous, standards-based curriculum, instruction, and assessments.** Our educational program will be designed to help students build a strong foundation of core content and skills by 8th grade, while simultaneously preparing them for the intellectual demands of rigorous college preparatory high school programs.
- **A wide-reaching network of supports designed such that no child is left behind.** Our school will employ an extensive network of whole-school and individualized supports

to catch struggling students before they fall behind. When faced with a student who is not finding success in our program, we will identify the underlying skill deficiency and provide systematic supports to address the issue.

- **An obsession with regularly and effectively using data.** We will regularly analyze academic assessment data to understand which concepts students have and have not mastered, using this analysis to build tutoring plans and make adjustments to our program. Data detailing student performance on non-academic goals will also permeate the school and drive individual and school-wide improvements.
- **An atmosphere of enthusiasm and joy.** Our program will be designed to ensure teaching and learning become exciting and fun.

Impact on Students. UP Academy Springfield aims to serve a population of students who, without our program, may have been substantially excluded from the path to college. Initially, we intend to enroll any student currently attending the respective underperforming school who wishes to join UP Academy Springfield, including the school's population of students with disabilities and English Language Learners (ELLs). Going forward, we intend to enroll students reflective of the demographics and learning needs across the SPS system. Within four years, we intend for at least 75% of these students to be demonstrating grade-level proficiency in math and ELA, having thus secured a place on the path to college.

Community Support. There is strong demand for UP Academy Springfield from within the community. Springfield families have repeatedly spoken with members of the founding team about the need for the city's low-performing middle schools to be transformed. A large number of families and Springfield community members have visited other in-district charter schools operated by UP Education Network and they have expressed a strong desire for a similar school to open in Springfield. Moreover, Springfield Public Schools' desire to work with UP Academy Springfield's founding team on this endeavor signals the district's belief in the school's ability and vision. The district's enthusiastic support of UP Academy Springfield is pivotal in our decision to launch the school. Moreover, members of the school's founding team have demonstrated an ability to develop deep relationships and partnerships with local community members and organizations when launching a restart school.

Our Capacity. UP Academy Springfield has the capacity to achieve its mission. The UP Academy Springfield board will be comprised of community leaders, parents, and others with relevant experiences, each of whom will contribute invaluable knowledge about launching an autonomous school within the SPS system. Other founding team members will contribute insights from having managed and worked in some of the highest-performing urban public schools in the United States. Springfield Public Schools will contribute its vast accumulated knowledge of district-wide best practices, including those prescribed to serve the city's most at-risk middle school learners. UP Education Network, a non-profit school turnaround organization, has a tremendous track record of rapidly transforming low-performing urban district schools into high-performing schools by restarting and managing them as in-district charter schools. UP Education Network will also provide voluntary in-kind support during

UP Academy Springfield's pre-operational years (the 2014-2015 and 2015- 2016 academic years) to continue building a local presence in Springfield while transferring its unique intellectual capital gained through supporting the launch and operation of other successful turnaround schools in Massachusetts. Private philanthropic funders are confident in the team's ability to leverage its experiences and expertise and have already pledged to support the launch of UP Academy Springfield.