

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY
AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

**Executive Summaries of
Proposed Charter Schools
in the
2015-2016 Application Cycle**

- *Central Square Public Charter School (Lynn)*
- *International Academy of Montachusett Charter School (Regional)*
- *Libertas Academy Charter School (Springfield)*
- *New Heights Charter School of Brockton (Regional)*
- *Old Sturbridge Academy Charter Public School (Regional)*

PROPOSED CENTRAL SQUARE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This was prepared by the Central Square Public Charter School applicant group.

MISSION STATEMENT

Central Square Public Charter School partners with families and communities to provide powerful learning experiences that unleash students' natural potential for creativity, innovation, collaboration and social responsibility. Through integrated and project-based curricula anchored in authentic experiences of social entrepreneurship, students develop the academic and social emotional competencies to complete higher education, thrive in evolving economies, and seize opportunities to be change agents in their communities. Named after the cultural and civic centers where communities gather, Central Square serves as a hub for educational and social innovation.

This public school serves students in grades 5 to 12 and their families in the community of Lynn, Massachusetts. Central Square is committed to educational equity and serves all students, including English Language Learners, students with diverse mental/physical abilities, and at-risk youths.

SCHOOL OPENING AND PROJECTED STUDENT ENROLLMENT

Central Square Public Charter School will open in September of 2017 with 160 fifth and sixth graders and expand by one grade level each year until maximum enrollment of 640 students by 2024.

EDUCATIONAL APPROACH AND SCHOOL DESIGN

Our innovative school model leverages research-based design elements that uniquely address the needs of diverse student populations in under-resourced communities. Central Square integrates the following five design elements: (1) Project-based Learning; (2) Community-based Learning; (3) Social Entrepreneurship; (4) Social Emotional Learning; and (5) Arts and Movement.

Design Element #1: Project-based Learning

Project-based learning involves a year-round study where students work in teams to research real issues that are affecting the Lynn community and develop viable solutions. This process involves researching and analyzing the problem, designing and testing possible solutions, choosing the best design based upon the best outcome, and sharing their results with civic authorities and professional experts in the fields related to their projects. In the process students discover how the academic disciplines interact and their real-world applications.

Design Element #2: Community-based Learning

The community becomes the classroom for students. The community becomes a partner and teacher in their formation. Students come to love the assets of their community rather than seeing the community through the deficit lens that is prevalent in public education. When students become invested in their communities, they become more sensitive to social problems and more motivated to be change agents. The curriculum becomes more authentic because it reflects the

hopes and aspirations of their community. Because the curriculum is so deeply connected to the community, students can see themselves and the result is greater engagement and focus.

Design Element #3: Social Entrepreneurship

Our focus on social entrepreneurship not only serves as the educational structure to develop their academic and social emotional competencies, but as the vehicle to inspire them to be change agents. We define *social entrepreneurship as the development of innovative and sustainable solutions to pressing social problems. Social entrepreneurs seize opportunities to transform systems and focus on the assets of communities to leverage changes. They do not see the people they serve as passive beneficiaries or as part of the problem, but as resources and collaborators in the change process. Social entrepreneurs operate from the core belief that the best solutions unleash the human potential within communities.*

Design Element #4: Social Emotional Learning

Social emotional learning (SEL) focuses on helping students to develop a strong sense of identity, set goals, build resiliency to overcome problems, and cultivate empathy to support constructive relationships with adults and peers. SEL programming is based on the understanding that the best learning emerges in the context of supportive relationships that make learning challenging, engaging, and meaningful.

Design Element #5: Arts and Movement

One learning style does not fit all. Students need to interact with ideas and concepts in multiple ways because they come to classrooms with particular gifts and learning preferences (linguistic, kinesthetic, spatial, mathematical, and musical). True student-centered classrooms need to be structured to honor students' diverse ways of knowing the world and themselves. Our education program immerses students in a *knowing by doing* model. Art is infused into academic subjects to support student learning and social emotional development. Art activities include: painting, drawing, models, sculptures, mixed media, music/vocals, drama/performance, and film/media. We define movement as *intentional physical activities built into daily classroom rituals and school program that support cognitive and social emotional development: short exercise bursts, dance, creative sports, and problem solving games.* Classrooms become working studios where students have opportunities to interact with and master essential academic concepts and skills through multi-sensory experiences.

LYNN, MASSACHUSETTS: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The city of Lynn, located in the North Shore of Massachusetts, is a complex linguistic, social, and cultural mosaic. A historically immigrant community, Lynn is one of the most racially and ethnically diverse communities in the commonwealth. The community has a fascinating and compelling history where it has blazed trails in economic, social, and technological innovations. Unfortunately, the city also has a history of chronic racial and educational barriers that have kept segments of the population from unleashing their true potential. Only 21.5% of Lynn residents have a bachelor's degree and only 14.2% have a graduate or professional degree. 16.2% have some college training but no degree. Only 35% have a high school diploma or GED. Lynn has always found a way to reinvent itself at challenging points in its history and the present educational and social conditions demand reinvention.

NEED FOR CENTRAL SQUARE PUBLIC SCHOOL

The proposed opening of Central Square Public Charter School is not an indictment of the Lynn Public School system (LPS). While LPS has pockets of innovation, the school system does not have the integrated approach to student learning described in our school design. A stronger educational system that offers diverse educational models and programs is essential for transforming the current educational, economic, and social barriers in Lynn. Lynn has few educational options. KIPP Academy, the sole charter school located in Lynn, has a waiting list of 200 students. The waiting list balloons to 700 students when including families that have applied to charter schools outside of Lynn.

FOUNDING TEAM: CONNECTIONS TO LYNN COMMUNITY

Our founding team is a diverse and innovative group of professionals and parents who have strong ties to the Lynn community. The proposed Chief Executive Officer has children in Lynn Public Schools. We have a proposed board member who served as a Special Education teacher in Lynn and another who serves as the Engineering/Technology Program Leader for the Product Engineering Center at GE Aviation in Lynn. Other proposed board members run college and educational programs that serve Greater Lynn.

Since 2012 the founding group has conducted focus groups, individual interviews, and surveys of Lynn parents. Members of the team have also communicated with Lynn parents using social media. The following is a summary of the educational priorities of Lynn parents. Schools should:

- Provide the foundation for college and career readiness (economic viability)
- Engage students with challenging and relevant curriculum
- Connect student learning to the real world
- Honor students' identities and cultures (embrace diversity)
- Support students in being agents of change in their community (active citizenship)
- Cultivate student creativity and health through regular access to art, music, and physical activity
- Provide an extended day program
- Support students with a range of health, cognitive, and social emotional challenges
- Involve parents as partners in their children's education
- Provide a warm, safe, and welcoming school environment

COMMITMENT TO EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE AND EQUITY

Unfortunately the charter school movement is a source of deep division within Lynn, as it is in other cities/towns in the Commonwealth and around the country. The labor movement in Lynn has a rich history of advancing worker protection rights and pro-labor groups see the non-union structure of most charter schools as an affront to educational and economic equity. The Lynn Public School administration and School Committee have also taken a stand against charter schools because of perceived inequities in student enrollment, retention, and funding.

As a way to bridge this divide, the founding group developed the following strategies:

- ***Equitable and Sustainable Working Conditions.*** Central Square operates within a 185 day schedule where staff do not work more than 8 hours per day. This ensures that innovative practices are sustainable and transferable to district schools.

- ***Encourage staff to unionize.*** We are exploring being one of the first Commonwealth Charter Schools to unionize in Massachusetts in order to pioneer a model that integrates worker protection rights with educational innovation. This strategy is closely aligned to our school mission and vision to promote educational equity.
- ***Implement systematic scaling of effective practices across the district.*** The proposed Chief Executive Officer is currently working on a project called the *National Center for Scaling Up Effective Schools (NCSU)*. The Center is a partnership of Vanderbilt University, North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and Educational Development Center (EDC). The purpose of NCSU is to develop, implement, and test new processes to scale up effective practices in secondary schools that districts will be able to use within the context of their own goals and unique circumstances.
- ***Leverage the resources of the Big Picture Learning Network to scale innovative practices.*** Our school support partner, Big Picture Learning, has pioneered educational innovation and equity for over 20 years. They operate a school support network that works with districts to adapt innovative practices to diverse school and community contexts.
- ***Establish a Lynn Compact or Lynn Educational Network.*** The cities of Boston and Lawrence have successfully established an *education compact* where representatives from district, charter, and private/religious schools come together on a regular basis to set goals and regularly assess how they are working together to improve the educational outcomes for all students and families. The compact provides the infrastructure for these city-wide collaborations and allows for the sharing of innovative practices and resources.

PROPOSED INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY OF MONTACHUSETT CHARTER SCHOOL EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This was prepared by the International Academy of Montachusett Charter School applicant group.

Mission: The mission of the International Academy of Montachusett Charter School 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, socioeconomic status, prior academic experience, or other factors – with an international and proven, college-preparatory public education in a student-centered setting that emphasizes community, civic responsibility, and personal development as well as academic rigor.

General Overview: International Academy of Montachusett Charter School (referred to as “IAMCS” within this application) will be a Commonwealth charter public school of choice serving a diverse student population. We seek to open with grades KG-3 and grow one grade level per year until we are a KG-12 school in year ten. For the initial charter period, the enrollment plan is as follows:

School Year	Grade Levels	Total Student Enrollment
First Year	KG - 3	322
Second Year	KG - 4	418
Third Year	KG - 5	514
Fourth Year	KG - 6	610
Fifth Year	KG - 7	706

The charter school will be non-selective in its admission process. If there are more applicants than spaces available, a public lottery will be held to randomly enroll students. Our mission, values, vision, structure, and academic rigor will offer our students the opportunity to succeed in a supportive academic environment. Parents are seeking high quality educational opportunities for their children. This outcomes-based school will offer all students, regardless of race, ethnicity, language, income, or ability, an opportunity to enroll in a college-preparatory school based on a proven educational model and curriculum.

We plan to retain the services of proven provider, SABIS® Educational Systems, INC. (referred to as “SES” within this application), which manages three highly successful charter public schools in Springfield, Holyoke, and Lowell, Massachusetts. SES is a 129-year-old global education network that operates on four continents operating in 16 countries and educates approximately 70,000 students. SES currently serves 12 charter schools and 1 private school in six states. SABIS® Network schools employ the same educational model used across its international network of prestigious private schools.

Community Need and Support: The essential purpose of IAMCS is to offer families and students a free, highly successful and proven college-preparatory KG-12 program of choice in communities where access to such options is extremely limited. The school districts and communities we propose to serve, Fitchburg, Leominster, Clinton, Wachusett Regional, and North Middlesex Regional are located in the Montachusett region. The entire region includes 236,475 people in twenty-two communities located in north central Massachusetts. The Sizer Regional Charter School in Fitchburg serves grades 7-12 and Montachusett Regional Vocational High School with grades 9-12 are the only choices for upper middle and high school students. There are no other options for students in grades KG-6. Our school aims to elevate the struggling students of the Montachusett region to their true potential. By closing achievement gaps, helping young people recognize that learning and academic achievement have great value, and creating a community of learners and citizens, we believe IAMCS will have short- and long-term positive effects on our community.

During the past two years, support for a charter school in the Montachusett region has been very positive based on data collected by the founders. This is evidenced by more than 1000 individuals who signed a petition, the number of visitors (5500) to the project's blog and over 700 friends on Facebook. 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. This evidence clearly shows that families in Fitchburg and surrounding communities are looking for an alternative choice to educate their children. Currently, the founders are promoting IAMCS by re-engaging past supporters and encouraging new supporters through community outreach, social media, surveys, and face-to-face meetings.

Founders' Capacity: The originating founders came together because of a shared belief and passion that all children deserve access to an exceptional education regardless of socioeconomic status. We recognize that there is a need for a tuition-free, high performing public school in Fitchburg and surrounding communities. Therefore, the founders began working together three years ago on the proposed charter school in the Fitchburg area. During this period, the founders invited enthusiastic likeminded professionals to join in this endeavor. The entire group is committed to the provision of an excellent education for children in North Central Massachusetts, in order to ensure that they are given a solid foundation to becoming capable, successful, and productive contributors to the area. The founders share the belief that by addressing all aspects of the child's development, coupled with a rigorous academic program, this vision will be achieved. Most importantly, many of the founders are parents of children who have completed or are currently attending a public school and have a high stake in seeing that all children are appropriately educated. In addition several members have strong ties to the political community, churches, non-profit entities, schools, and other organizations with whom we are seeking to partner with to enhance the service delivery of this program.

Educational Program: Our founding board wishes to contract for management and operational services with proven provider, SABIS® Educational Systems, INC. – a full service education service provider offering turnkey management of our school. IAMCS will fully implement the SABIS® Educational System, including its assessment system, instructional methods, and school management model. This rigorous program is designed to challenge students and exceed state and federal performance standards. The SABIS® curriculum is designed with the intention that

all students obtain the necessary skills to be successful in higher education, work, and society. The program provides a well-rounded, student-centered education with heavy emphasis on the core subjects of English, mathematics, and other subjects such as science, world languages, social studies, art, music, health, physical education, and computing.

The SABIS® curriculum is a spiral curriculum design, meaning that previous concepts are revisited in a more advanced form in later units or grades. Students exhibit mastery of essential concepts at each level of advancement along the spiral curriculum. The SABIS® curriculum is comprehensive, dynamic, and continuously upgraded by the SES Academic Operations Division. For every course, the objectives are clearly laid out on the pacing charts (“lesson plans”) provided weekly to teachers. Each unit of a course has its sub-objectives and, in turn, every lesson plan or period has its own sub-objectives. These objectives consist of skills, abilities, and new concepts that students acquire, or master, as a result of having attended a particular lesson. By breaking down the courses, the material becomes more meaningful, teachable, and measurable. The SABIS® curriculum also provides for a variety of enrichment opportunities such as: AP courses; Math League; academic prefect; activities happening during the daily Student Life period; students advancing a level in math or world language independent of their peers; taking two or three science, math, or language courses at once; or travel abroad (for the annual Student Life Camp).

A core component of the SABIS® Educational System is the frequency of assessment throughout the curriculum, which enables timely identification of individual’s needs and talents. Thus, students who are capable of advancing rapidly have the opportunity to do so and are prepared to successfully complete a variety of internationally recognized examinations. Conversely, students who are struggling are identified in real-time and are provided with Intensives classes designed to fill learning gaps that may have developed.

IAMCS will implement the educational system described above, a system implemented at all SABIS® Network schools. SABIS® Network schools have a proven track record of student learning and closing the achievement gap with students just like those of Fitchburg and its surrounding communities. The following short list of achievements at the SABIS® International Charter School (SICS) in Springfield, Massachusetts, is exactly what we want for Fitchburg and its surrounding communities.

- SICS is considered the best performing school in Springfield and among the top performing schools in Massachusetts with its 10th graders (last grade of state testing) consistently performing among the best in the entire state.
- In 2014, SICS graduated its 1,000th student – the first charter school in the U.S.A. to reach that milestone by June 2014.
- In September 2014, SICS was recognized as a pioneer in implementing key RTTT initiatives by the Massachusetts Department of Education.
- In September 2014, SICS hosted its biggest college fair, to date, with representatives from 82 colleges and universities.
- SICS Class of 2015 was its 15th graduating class; 100% of all its graduates for the past 15 years have been admitted to college; the Class of 2015 was awarded an average scholarship of \$100,000 per student.

- SICS has been recognized among ‘America’s Best High Schools’ in *U.S. News & World Report* for six consecutive years and was the recipient of its Silver Medal for 2015.

History on Founder’s Development Efforts: After two attempts, the founding board’s efforts to open a Commonwealth charter school (Academy for the Whole Child Charter School) in the north central Massachusetts region were unsuccessful. Rather than giving up, the board decided to move forward with a new proposal. After many hours of “soul searching” and taking into consideration the strengths and weaknesses of our previous proposals, the board looked into the possibility of partnering with an education service provider (ESP). In late February 2015, SES contacted us to find out if we were intending on submitting a new proposal and if they would be seeking an ESP. They indicated their interest in working with us. So now it was up to us to try and learn as much as we could about their history and track record in Massachusetts, educational philosophy, data management, curriculum system, and reputation - including the positive and negative.

After extensive research of the SABIS® Educational System and other education management companies, the board started to warm up to the possibility of a partnership with SES. The area of most concern was the board’s strong views around small class sizes to support the emotional, developmental, and learning needs of the whole child which was in direct opposition of the SABIS® philosophy on class size. For some of the board members, this was a deal breaker. We had to see for ourselves by visiting SABIS® Network schools. After site visits to Holyoke Community Charter School and SABIS® International Charter School, even the toughest critics on the board were convinced that the multi system of supports and resources for classrooms, students, and staff can really work in larger class sizes. Their method creates a student-centered learning environment where children don’t fall through the cracks. We saw this firsthand during our visits. The board also met with many students and staff to talk about their experiences with SES. Their stories were authentic and heartfelt thus solidifying the board’s decision to partner with SES.

Another feature of the SABIS® Educational System is their highly developed and aligned curriculum to state standards and their performance monitoring system. These systems are highly effective and unique. The board recognizes that these were areas of weakness in our previous charter applications and now that we have partnered with SES, it will be a strength going forward. In other words, our partnership with SES gives the board the capacity it has needed to guarantee excellent student outcomes, effective management procedures, and financial sustainability.

In summary, the board is first and foremost committed to our community and the education of our children. Our passion for a charter school in the Fitchburg area has not waned. Student success is paramount. SES can make this happen through their proven, evidenced-based educational system. We are proud to present this application to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in partnership with SABIS® Educational Systems, INC.

PROPOSED LIBERTAS ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

A. MISSION

Through rigorous academics, character development, and strong supports for every learner, Libertas Academy Charter School prepares all sixth through twelfth grade students to succeed within the college of their choice and to be positive, engaged members of their communities.

B. KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS

VISION

We propose a high expectations, high achieving, and seamless 6-12 school that replicates the successful models of other high performing charter schools in Massachusetts and across the country.

Within an achievement-oriented culture in which expectations are clear and routines are consistent, and in which the joy of learning, the power of intellectual curiosity, and the development of life-building values are at the center of our 6-12 model currently unavailable to families residing within Springfield, all learners build the skills, knowledge, and character required for college and professional success and a life of positive community engagement.

To remediate academic gaps and accelerate learning for students currently achieving in the lowest decile of performance in The Commonwealth, and informed by the mandate of our mission, we focus intensively on literacy and mathematics and dedicate extended time to support students in meeting the cognitive and academic demands outlined within the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks (MCFs) and Common Core State Standards (CCSS). To ensure that students have the character traits that will allow them to succeed, no matter the challenge, we champion, teach, develop, and celebrate common values across the school, starting day one. To deliver success for every learner, we provide a robust set of supports within the classroom, provide additional services beyond the classroom, and prioritize our extended time model to reach the needs of all students. Every day, our staff, families, and students are driven by our mission and vision, which combined inform the core elements of our school design.

Rigorous Academics are present across the school - from morning Brain Breakfast Academics, to extended day rigorous, MCF- and CCSS-aligned classrooms, to afternoon Homework Support and Tutoring. Middle school students seamlessly matriculate into high school where they are personally known, academically challenged, and perform at levels competitive with students from across The Commonwealth. High school students graduate with the ability to think critically, communicate effectively, and apply their learning across multiple domains. All 6-12 students work with complex texts and build knowledge through content-rich nonfiction and fiction, demonstrate their understanding through text-based writing, and apply their conceptual thinking in mathematics and the sciences in multiple ways. All learners are prepared for the college of their choice and ready to build lives rich with opportunity for themselves and their

families.

Character Development is a priority, starting day one – with families during annual Home Visits, across the community via multiple Information Sessions, and during transformative Annual Orientations with students and families at the start of each year. Serving a large percentage of students who will be the first in their families to graduate from college, and, in many instances the first to earn a high school diploma, we will be a values-based school community that lives by our FIRST values of Focus, Integrity, Respect, Selfless Service, and Tenacity. We believe in the limitless potential of our students, and we will do whatever it takes to help students achieve their personal and professional goals and become positive, engaged members of the community.

Strong Supports for Every Learner are critical to the successful execution of our mission. Students with disabilities benefit from a full-inclusion model and are assured adequate time for small group and one-on-one interventions and other supports as indicated in their IEPs. English language learners (ELLs) benefit from our expanded learning time, particularly beneficial to them, as ELLs will be supported to develop cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP), and not simply the basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) of social language. As they accelerate in their learning, all students will be provided with enrichment opportunities within the extended school day.

COMMUNITIY(IES) TO BE SERVED

Springfield Public Schools (SPS) is the second largest in New England, with approximately 27,000 students, across nearly 60 schools. Massachusetts places schools and districts on a five-level scale, ranking the highest performing in Level 1 and lowest performing in Level 5. Level 4 schools are the state's most struggling schools based on an analysis of four-year trends in absolute achievement, student growth, and improvement trends as measured by student achievement results on state assessments. Springfield is rated as Level 4 overall; currently, 11 schools (3 elementary, 6 middle, 2 high) are designated as Level 4.¹ District proficiency rates in ELA are 41% and 33% in Math, compared to state proficiency rates in ELA of 69% and in Math of 60%.² The district graduation rate is 55%, compared to 85% for the state.³ Springfield's averaged combined SAT score is 1,149; the average combined SAT scores in Massachusetts is 1,526.⁴

To address this educational crisis, SPS, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and the Springfield Education Association have partnered to rapidly improve outcomes for a majority of Springfield's middle school students through creation of the Springfield Empowerment Zone. The partnership is targeting eight failing middle schools within the district: Chestnut South, Chestnut North, Chestnut Talented and Gifted, Kiley, Kennedy, Forest Park, Duggan, and Van Sickle. In addition, SPS has partnered with Teach For America

¹ <http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/sss/turnaround/level4/default.html>.

² <http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/reportcard/districtreportcardoverview.aspx?linkid=37&orgcode=02810000&fycode=2014&orgtypecode=5&>.

³ <http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/reportcard/districtreportcardoverview.aspx?linkid=37&orgcode=02810000&fycode=2014&orgtypecode=5&>.

⁴ <http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/reportcard/districtreportcardoverview.aspx?linkid=37&orgcode=02810000&fycode=2014&orgtypecode=5&>.
<https://secure-media.collegeboard.org/digitalServices/pdf/sat/sat-percentile-ranks-composite-crit-reading-math-writing-2014.pdf>.

for the first time so as to diversify its talent pipeline. This type of energy is exciting and may lead to improved results.

We agree with SPS Superintendent Warwick that “as a district, we’ve been diligent about improving middle school performance; including adding five new schools to create smaller learning communities; assigning leaders with track records of success; and implementing good, sound strategies that have had measurable outcomes. Still, we need more.”⁵ The Empowerment Zone provides principals with increased autonomy and support from an education consulting agency of their choice.⁶ While this provides an opportunity to implement some best practices associated with high-performing charter schools, principals do not have the full autonomies of a Commonwealth Charter. Further, the sole focus of the turnaround work is currently on the failing middle schools and ignores high schools in need of support. We believe that providing a unique and seamless 6-12 high-quality public school option to families is a key part of a powerful, comprehensive set of solutions - one that brings the full autonomies of a Commonwealth Charter informed by proven design elements, which themselves are based on good, sound strategies that have brought measurable outcomes for other high-risk communities. Our focus on supporting students’ transition from middle to high school and persistence within a high school college preparatory curriculum uniquely positions us to meaningfully contribute to the district’s efforts to turn around Springfield schools and bring quality choice to families and students at every grade level.

We propose a high expectations, high-achieving 6-12 charter school that replicates the successful models of other high performing charter schools in Massachusetts and across the country. As a Commonwealth Charter School, proposed in partnership with and bringing the training, support, and guidance of Proven Provider Building Excellent Schools, we will offer Springfield families a unique, seamless 6-12 college preparatory education uniquely designed to aggressively remediate academic gaps and accelerate student learning – all within a small, values-based 6-12 school community. Drawing on effective practices of top performing urban charter schools here in The Commonwealth and across the nation, and informed by the work of Harvard University’s Dr. Roland Fryer, we are prepared to found, govern, and lead a school whose unique design supports our ambitious mission and measurable goals. The fullest autonomies of a Commonwealth Charter, and specifically our ability to recruit, hire, train and retain staff aligned to and prepared to deliver on our mission, along with our ability to bring together those unique elements that will best serve our students and allow us to achieve our mission, and with the ability to control our finances in direct support of our mission, best allow us to be one of the strong answers to Springfield’s academic crisis, particularly within the middle and high school grades. Our small middle school size (270 students at capacity) offers families a meaningful alternative to the district middle school populations of 400 students or more, and small high school size (360 students at capacity) offers a strong alternative to high school populations of up to 1400 students. We will leverage our small school size to ensure that all students receive the individualized attention necessary to graduate on time and are able to matriculate and excel at the college of their choice. We look forward to collaborating with the wider educational initiatives within the city, and as a school based upon learning from others, we are committed to such partnership within the local district and charter community. Following a “seeing is believing”

⁵ <http://www.springfieldpublicschools.com/pages/sezp>.

⁶ Modesto Montero met with Matt Matera on 10/22/2105 to better understand the how the Empowerment Zone will function.

mindset, we will create a robust visitation program that allows educators to witness first-hand the Libertas Academy experience and build in structures for sharing of resources and documentation developed by our school.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT / RELATIONSHIPS

With over 4,200 families on waiting lists to one of the five charter schools in Springfield, we know that the demand is very high. Early assessment of parental demand for a school like Libertas Academy has been established through the experiences of founding Board members, who have continuing and close ties to the community, as well as through initial meetings with community stakeholders. Please see **Attachment M** [of the final application] for a list of stakeholder meetings. Each of these individuals continues to express the community's desire for a school such as Libertas Academy, designed and prepared to address the deep needs that exist at the middle and high school levels most particularly. In addition, we have collected letters of support from some of our strongest community supporters.⁷

STRATEGIES TO ASSESS DEMAND AND ESTABLISH SUPPORT

In order to successfully network with families, we held information sessions during the fall months and attended various community events. See **Attachment N** [of the final application] for a sample flyer for our information sessions. For those families who may be less aware of public school options, we conducted two door-to-door marketing campaigns, "Boots on the Ground," specifically within the North End neighborhood. The events took place on October 17th and October 31st. See **Attachment O** [of the final application] for an example of the petition we asked families to sign. We will continue to offer information sessions and hold "Boots on the Ground" events until we conduct our lottery in 2017 to ensure equitable access to our school. For more information about our recruitment strategies, please see **Attachment B** [of the final application].

PROPOSED SCHOOL GROWTH

Beginning in August 2017, Libertas Academy Charter School ("Libertas Academy") proposes to open our doors to 90 sixth grade students (three classes of 30 students each). Using a slow growth model, Libertas Academy will reach maximum capacity of 630 students, educating students in grades 6-12 in 2023-2024.

Grade	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
6		90	90	90	90	90	90	90
7			90	90	90	90	90	90
8				90	90	90	90	90
MS		90	180	270	270	270	270	270

⁷ See **Attachment K** [of the final application].

Grade	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
9					90	90	90	90
10						90	90	90
11							90	90
12								90
HS					90	180	270	360
TOTAL	90	180	270	360	450	540	630	

FOUNDING CAPACITY

Modesto Montero, Lead Founder and proposed Head of School, is a teacher, leader, and Building Excellent Schools Fellow, who brings to Libertas Academy a strong background in urban education, professional development design, ESL instruction, and adult coaching. Mr. Montero taught middle school ESL, was a Common Core Coach for the state of Tennessee, as well as a Professional Learning Community Leader-ESL and a Manager of Teacher Leadership Development with Teach For America. During his tenure as an educator in Memphis, Mr. Montero led his students to dramatic gains in reading. As a TFA staff member, Mr. Montero created the Vision of Excellence for ESL instruction for TFA-Memphis, which was based on sound research and best practices. As a TFA alum and having worked as a teacher coach, Mr. Montero brings an extensive network of educators from which to recruit and with whom to work as he oversees the program's implementation. Under his leadership, and with the support of a high capacity founding team drawn from Springfield's education, business, and community leadership, and with the support of Proven Provider Building Excellent Schools, we propose a seamless 6-12 college preparatory education uniquely designed to meet the needs of all learners and determined to be part of the larger solution to the chronic academic underachievement within the City of Springfield. The founding team brings: (a) the Lead Founder's professional and personal ties within the community and his national network of professional colleagues; (b) the support of the Davis Foundation, the largest local foundation that has been critical in the city's education reform efforts; (c) the Libertas Academy Board membership of the Davis Foundation's Executive Director Mary Walachy; the Board membership and extensive network of Dora Robinson, President and CEO of United Way of Pioneer Valley; the educational leadership and educational network of Kwame Webster, Managing Director of Teach For America in Western Massachusetts; the extensive community knowledge of Springfield/North End native and Executive Director of the Puerto Rican Cultural Center, David Silva; the Board membership of a parent of three graduates of Sabis International Charter School and Account Manager at Health New England, Inc., Rosemarie Marks-Paige; the 30+ years of legal expertise of William MacDonald, Manning Partner, Law Offices of William MacDonald; the wealth of knowledge of Anthony Surrette, a native of Springfield, who has over a decade of experience as an accountant at Corbin & Tapases, P.C; and the deep local commitment and Board membership of Program Officer, Women's Fund of Western Massachusetts, Ellen Moorhouse.

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, Fast Track Early College Design school generated to address the needs of the region of Brockton, Randolph, and Taunton. Partnering with EDWorks, a national leader in early college design, NHCS will be the first early college of its kind in Massachusetts. EDWorks describes their early college design as follows, “Fast Track early college high schools are changing what it means to be a college student. These schools support students least likely to attend college, simply because of their circumstances, and put them into an atmosphere with high levels of support and expectations. Fast Track may be the answer to inspiring students to challenge themselves and go to college better prepared to earn a degree. Through Fast Track, students will have a four-year academic roadmap that accelerates them through a rigorous high school course of study and up to 60 hours of college credit before graduation. Fast Track high schools offer personalized plans for each student, reaching underserved student populations including students from families without college experience, low-income, English language learners and students of color” (See more at: <http://edworkspartners.org/fast-track#sthash.1PEkSYca.dpuf>). In order to bring the vision of NHCS, to provide free college credit to students while still in high school, to fruition, the founding team has partnered with three key agencies: Massasoit Community College will provide our college courses, the YMCA will provide health-related programming and access to facilities, and EDWorks will provide the support of an experienced education service agency to our grass roots organization. NHCS will provide a public school option for 735 (at full enrollment) of our region’s students to minimize the achievement gap in educational attainment and college success. Our mission is to prepare our students for college. Period. How does NHCS intend to achieve this mission? We will use our three key design areas – our “We go to college” culture, our Fast Track Early College design, and our Professional and Community Development to create a strong foundation for our students and staff to reach our goals. Above all, each of us: staff, students, families alike, will focus on the idea that EVERY student will be prepared to attend college.

Program Description: In order to realize our mission, NHCS will enroll students in grades 6-12, for a total school enrollment of 735 students, 105 students per grade. We will fill vacated seats twice per year in grades 6-11 and we will recruit heavily in the poorest neighborhoods, ensuring that the most vulnerable students in Brockton, Taunton, and Randolph 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. Our students will enter NHCS in the 6th grade, spending their first three years in our “Lower School”, grades 6-8, with a primary focus on developing the academic skills necessary to get into and succeed in college. Upper School students, grades 9-12, may begin taking college courses in the 9th grade and continue earning college credit towards a Liberal Arts Associates’ Degree at MCC. A student’s instructional day at NHCS begins at 7:40 am, with breakfast in the classroom, and ends at 3:30 pm (extracurricular/enrichment activities will be held from 3:30-4:30pm). In addition, we will offer Summer Bridge programs to keep students academically on track and socially engaged in the learning experience.

Key Design Elements: Our primary goal is to meet our mission to prepare students in college by enrolling them early in college courses, providing the support services they need to succeed, and creating an environment that is both nurturing and encouraging. The founding team, in collaboration with EDWorks, identified three key design areas that create the foundation upon which NHCS is built. Design area one is our “We Go to College” culture. Design area two is the “Fast Track Early College Design”, a model designed by EDWorks. Design area three is “Professional and Community Development”. Each of these design elements weave through our lower school (grades 6-8) and our upper school (grades 9-12) daily routines including NHCS’ curriculum, instructional model, professional development, school culture, and allow us to reach our mission of preparing our students for college.

Student Lower School Day: Our instructional day will begin at 7:40am with advisory and breakfast in the classroom followed by seven, 57-minute periods (2 Math, 2 ELA, 1 History, 1 Science, and 1 elective period). Our instructional school day will conclude at 3:30 pm. Starting in Year 2, NHCS will offer after school extracurricular activities. On Fridays, students will leave campus at 1:38, taking one fewer ELA course and one fewer math course that day, to allow for all staff professional development. Our school year exceeds the state-mandated minimum of 180 days of instruction by 4 days for a total of 184 school days.

Student Upper School Day: During the summer before 9th grade, students will be divided into one of two pathways: College Prep or College Ready, based upon teacher recommendation (including behavior, maturity, and academic performance), MCAS results, and the college ACCUPLACER placement exam. All college classes will be cohort-based for NHCS students.

- *College Prep:* 9th grade students on the College Prep pathway will begin their day in morning advisory and breakfast at 7:40. They will enroll in seven periods (2 Math, 2 ELA, 1 History, 1 science, and 1 World Language). 10th grade students enroll in seven periods (2 Math, 2 ELA, 1 History, 1 science, and 1 World Language). During their second ELA course, they will complete Massasoit’s Developmental English sequence. During their second Math course, they will begin Massasoit’s Developmental Math sequence. 11th grade students will enroll in seven periods (2 Math, 2 ELA, 1 History, 1 science, and 1 elective period). During their second ELA course, they will complete Massasoit’s English 101/102. During their second Math, they will complete Massasoit’s Developmental Math sequence. 12th grade students will enroll in 8 college courses, 4 per semester: 2 semesters of US History; 2 semesters of college Math (Topics in Math and Statistics); 2 semesters of a World Language; 2 semesters of Social Science. Anticipating the needs of students who chose not to or cannot attend college courses, we offer a “third” pathway for students to stay behind at NHCS and complete a rigorous high school course sequence.
- *College Ready:* 9th grade students on the College Ready pathway will begin their day in morning advisory and breakfast at 7:40. The will enroll in seven periods (2 Math, 2 ELA, 1 History, 1 science, and 1 World Language). During their second ELA course, they will complete Massasoit’s Development English sequence. During their second Math course, they will begin Massasoit’s Developmental Math sequence. 10th grade students will enroll in seven periods (2 Math, 2 ELA, 1 History, 1 science, and World Language). During their second ELA course, they will complete Massasoit’s English 101/102.

During their second Math, they will complete Massasoit's Developmental Math sequence. In the 11th and 12th grade, College Ready students will attend college courses on the college campus three days per week and academic support workshops and technology workshops at NHCS two days per week. 11th grade students will enroll in 8 college courses, 4 per semester: 2 semesters of US History; 2 semesters of college Math (Topics in Math and Statistics); 2 semesters of a World Language; 2 semesters of Social Sciences. 12th grade students will enroll in 8 college courses, 4 per semester: 3 semesters of English; 2 semesters of social science; 2 semesters of a Biology with a lab; 1 semester of fine art.

Summer Bridge: The NHCS founding team understands the value of summer education opportunities, particularly for those students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds where summer learning loss is most prevalent. Our Summer Bridge program, located on the Massasoit Community College campus, is a 4-hour day divided into two parts: College Experience and Student Experience. The Summer Bridge will strengthen the community culture of our school and provide students an opportunity to learn new material in a fun, hands-on environment. The Summer Bridge schedule, which is currently being reviewed by the College Working Group, a team of Massasoit staff and NHCS founding members, is provided below for illustrative purposes. In addition to academic work, students will engage in culture-building activities with NHCS staff.

Summer Bridge Schedule

Summer before:	9 th	10 th	11 th	12 th
College Experience	College Experience, such as Theater	CTI 101* Microsoft Word	ART 107 (Drawing I)* College Portfolio	College Tour and College Portfolio Completion
Student Experience	Team Building and Academic Support	Team Building and Academic Support	Team Building and Academic Support	Team Building and Academic Support

*College Courses

Student Impact: NHCS will serve a student population that is predominantly economically disadvantaged and likely the student will be the first in his or her family to attend college. Our students will be prepared for the academic and social rigors of a college degree. Students who graduate from NHCS will have the opportunity to earn up to 60 college credits. Our students will have participated in multiple community building projects and college visits through our quarterly retreat system, they will have strong relationships with our staff developed through our school culture, and they will have a plan for life after graduation. The Individualized Learning Plan starts on the first few days they arrive at NHCS and culminates in our College Portfolio project.

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 economically disadvantaged, 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 middle and high school administration, middle and high school teaching, college access and success programming, curriculum design, community outreach, special education, legal affairs, education finance, English language instruction from district and charter schools. We are currently meeting with residents in our region, including faith and community-based groups, middle and high 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, Taunton, and Randolph are ideal communities for a new model of public education. Currently, Brockton, Taunton and Randolph not have any public school choice within the district. The demographics of these communities speak to our intention to serve predominantly economically disadvantaged and first-generation students to prepare for college. The commitment from all layers of social, cultural, educational, and political communities our region to improve the lives of students plays a large role in the founding group's interest in opening a new charter school in a community where there are no charter schools. Our school's commitment to urban students clearly addresses the youth population in these communities, many of who are economically disadvantaged or first generation college families.

Why we chose a regional charter school: It is the intention of the NHCS founding group to address the lack of school choice in the Taunton, Randolph, and Brockton communities, particularly for those students living in poverty. Through our outreach activities in Brockton, families from surrounding communities, including Randolph, identified the need for a high quality public school choice either by signing our petition or submitting an application to attend NHCS during the 2014-15 cycle.

Choice of a Commonwealth Charter: A Commonwealth charter will give NHCS the autonomy to reimagine the traditional school model to include college coursework, 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 the NHCS' founding group with the resources to address the educational achievement gaps in higher education enrollment and completion and continue to interrupt the pervasive cycle of poverty in urban cities.

Support for this model: In a recent report produced by the Rennie Center for Education Research and Policy, titled *Early College Designs: Achieving College-and Career-Readiness for All*, the authors argue that getting into college is not the arbitrator of success. In fact, too many students in the Commonwealth are leaving their high schools and testing into developmental education courses (an issue that leaves many dispirited or deep in debt before they even begin earning college credit). "Early college experiences can be especially valuable for students who do not think of themselves as college-bound. In a randomized study, minority and low-income early college students—who have been traditionally underrepresented in postsecondary education—had more successful postsecondary

outcomes as compared to peers who did not participate in early college programming. These findings, combined with national evidence on the efficacy of early college programming, suggest that this model may be especially effective for students who lack support from family and friends in setting college expectations. Ultimately, in addition to increasing college readiness and completion rates, early colleges have the potential to increase the size and diversity of the college-going population (see Rennie Center Report, pg. 1). And yet, despite national evidence that early college is “among the most effective strategies for promoting higher rates of postsecondary access, persistence, and completion” (see Rennie Center, pg. 2), our region does not currently have access to an early college high school. Massachusetts is home to a number of “early college programs” including dual enrollment, articulation agreements between districts and colleges, and Gateway to College. According to the Rennie Center report, however, “integrating early college experiences into traditional high schools and/or districts is just beginning to take hold as a viable strategy to promote college and career readiness” (Rennie Center, pg. 2). Unique to the NHCS design is our status as a standalone school, founded on research and best practice from national leaders, including our partner, EDWorks, as well as the research from Jobs for the Future, and the nearly 300 Early College High Schools in the country. NHCS can be an answer to move Massachusetts into a position to create new opportunities for learning, particularly for our most vulnerable students.

PROPOSED OLD STURBRIDGE ACADEMY CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This was prepared by the Old Sturbridge Academy Charter Public School applicant group.

The Old Sturbridge Academy Charter Public School (hereinafter “OSACPS”) is the result of an exciting partnership between Old Sturbridge Village (hereinafter “OSV”) and Expeditionary Learning (hereinafter “EL”) – two proven organizations with strong track records of success in educating hundreds of thousands of students.

On the cusp of celebrating its 70th anniversary, OSV provides educational experiences to over 60,000 schoolchildren each year. These experiences range in academic depth from self-guided school visits to hands-on classes and workshops to summer programs and internships. OSV educators have been developing programs tied to the Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for years. OSV has also served as a professional development resource for teachers from around the state, region, and nationally.

Early in his tenure as President and CEO of OSV, Jim Donahue began hearing from the community that there was a need for a high-quality alternative to the traditional public school – especially for at-risk students and for children who learn differently. Families who could afford to send their children to private day schools were doing so. As the founder and CEO of the Highlander Charter School in Providence, Rhode Island, Jim always believed that OSV would be the ideal setting for a school. As he discussed the idea with colleagues and members of the community-at-large, a vision emerged for a school that would provide children with rigorous learning experiences rooted in the context of the real world. It would be a school where children of differing learning styles and abilities could find academic success. It would be a school where teachers and students would model the values of OSV: authenticity, integrity, quality, compassion, and kindness. And, most importantly, it would be a school where children at-risk for learning due to poverty, language or learning differences would thrive.

While in Providence, Jim had the opportunity to visit Ron Berger’s classroom in Shutesbury, Massachusetts and talked with Ron about his work in helping schools to create a “culture of quality” in their classrooms and in the building. In fact, in their conversation, they talked about thinking about student work as if it were going to be displayed in a museum. With that in mind, it was no surprise that EL was recommended to the museum as a school-design partner. Our shared vision for rigorous teaching, authentic learning experiences, differentiated instruction, teacher efficacy and robust assessment practices would lead us to a ground-breaking partnership.

In identifying the communities to be served by the school, the founding group was first interested in serving students whose schools had been identified as underperforming by the state of Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. We then sought to include nearby and neighboring communities that served a significant population of low-income children – recognizing that the rural poor have not been the focus of charter school founders, who tend to open schools in more urban settings.

To these children and their families, Old Sturbridge Academy Charter Public School will offer a learning environment that is both unique because of its access to OSV and exciting because of the many ways that the museum will be able to support teaching and learning. We want children to rise every morning with the same sense of excitement, passion and wonder as they do on a day when they are preparing to go on a field trip – away from school. The work of Reach Advisors has shown the transformative power of early museum visits among children in their book *Life Stages of the Museum Visitor: Building Engagement Over a Lifetime* (Susie Wilkening and James Chung, American Alliance of Museums Press, May 15, 2009). People who visit museums self-identify as lifelong learners, and children who visit museums are more likely to be museum visitors in the future. *Our students* will actually grow up at a museum – developing essential habits of scholarship and good character. This will be especially true for students for whom the traditional classroom setting can present learning challenges. In addition, OSA would be the only school in the identified region that is using EL as a school-design model.

We will open with grades k-2. Each grade will include two classrooms, with an enrollment of no more than twenty students per room. Total enrollment in the first year will be 120. The school will accept an incoming class of kindergarten students each year until it reaches its full capacity of 360 students in grades k-8.

Our Principal will serve as the day-to-day instructional leader of the school, supported by Jim Donahue and a plethora of management resources from OSV that includes accounting, finance, human resources, food service, information technology, maintenance, and fund development. We will implement the core practices of EL as we establish the five key dimensions of life in the school: 1) curriculum; 2) instruction; 3) assessment; 4) culture; and 5) character and leadership. Consistent with the belief that a culture that supports positive behavior and helps students develop habits of goodness requires intentionality, we will also employ Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (hereinafter “PBIS”) – again, giving students, teachers and parents a common language and a clear framework. We will ensure that our Principal and teachers have support in integrating the tools provided through PBIS with EL’s framework for teaching and assessing positive behavior through Habits of Scholarship and relational character. The two must blend effectively.

Parents and caregivers will be an essential part of our school community. At the end of the summer, teachers will conduct home visits with each of their students to meet families in a setting that is most comfortable for them as they prepare for the first day of school. Full-school events for families - such as barbecues, potluck dinners, exhibition nights, student-led conferences and other celebrations, will happen at least quarterly. Parents will be welcomed as volunteers in classrooms and in the school. Each OSACPS family will receive a family membership to OSV *at no cost to them or to the school*, allowing them to visit the museum for free on weekends and during vacations. In the future, we will work to offer parents adult education opportunities and workforce development resources in partnership with OSV. OSV will be an extension of the classroom for teachers and students. With a campus of over 200 acres, the museum offers an idyllic setting with hundreds of resources to support learning. Not only will we bring our students into the museum, but we will bring the museum into our school. Resources include a robust Research Library, a greenhouse, a full working farm, a number of gardens, a 300-seat theater, a pottery shop and a kiln, a woodworking studio, and several hiking

trails – all situated along the Quinebaug River.

When students graduate from OSACPS, they will do so as excellent communicators, mathematicians, scientists and historians. They will have clear habits of both scholarship and relational character. They will have discovered other passions and talents as well – whether in woodworking or gardening, music or painting. They will have produced academic work that is “museum quality” and will have engaged in real-world learning at every grade level. They will be able to describe how *they* learn best and will be able to advocate for the tools they need when they are struggling.

OSV looks forward to OSACPS students returning to the museum after graduation as summer interns while they are in high school and college. After college, some will find their way back to Sturbridge to begin careers at the school or at the museum. Others will also enter careers that they love - fueled by a passion for quality and for lifelong learning. Our graduates will be capable and competent, caring and compassionate.