



TO: P-12 Education Committee
FROM: Jhone M. Ebert 
SUBJECT: Charter Schools: Initial Applications Authorized by the Board of Regents

DATE: June 1, 2017

AUTHORIZATION(S): 
SUMMARY

Issue for Decision

The Commissioner and Department staff recommends that the Board of Regents consider, approve, and issue an initial charter and provisional charter for the following proposed charter schools:

- Emblaze Academy Charter School
- Key Collegiate Charter School
- The Renaissance Charter School 2

Reason(s) for Consideration

Required by New York State law.

Proposed Handling

This issue will be before the Board of Regents P-12 Education Committee and the full Board for action at the June 2017 Regents meeting.

Procedural History

Under the New York Charter Schools Act of 1998, the Board of Regents is authorized to approve applications for initial charters.

Background Information

Education law §2852(9) sets forth the number of charters issued. The numerical limit for charter schools is currently 460 charters in New York State. New charters may be issued on the recommendation of the State University of New York (SUNY) or the Board of Regents (BOR); however, no more than 50 charters can be issued in NYC on or after July 1, 2015. Based on the original 460 statewide cap, there are 156 charters remaining under the cap at this time.

A Charter School Fact Sheet outlining the number of charters issued and those currently remaining can be found at:

<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/psc/facts/nyscsfactsheet312017.pdf>.

A Summary of the 2010-2016 charter school application cycle is included below as **Attachment A**. The Charter School Application Summary, Findings, and Recommendation for the proposed new schools are included below as **Attachments B, C and D**.

2017 Request for Proposal (RFP) Timeline

The 2017 RFP timeline for applicants seeking to establish new charter schools authorized by the Board of Regents is as follows:

2017 Application Cycles			
Submission Rounds	Letter of Intent	Full Application	Regents Action
Round 1	February 15	March 17	June 12-13*
Round 2	July 7	August 18	November 13-14**

* The current items are being presented at the June 12-13, 2017 Regents meeting.

**This timeline is subject to change at the discretion of NYSED and/or the Board of Regents.

2017 Request for Proposals Submission Process

- **Phase I – Letter of Intent:**
Each applicant group must submit a letter of intent that provides a brief description of the school mission and design; the proposed student population (including plans to meet enrollment and retention targets); evidence of community outreach efforts and community support; a proposed school district and/or proposed facility; information about the founding group; and anticipated members of the initial board of trustees.
- **Phase II – Full Application:**
Each applicant group must submit a written application that provides the full design of the proposed school, including instructional model and approach; targeted student population; organizational structure; and financial plan. The Full Application is structured to objectively evaluate the proposed school's educational alignment and operational compliance to the requirements and the educational priorities of the Charter Schools Act. Each accepted application is rigorously

evaluated through a peer-review process by a three-member expert panel including national consultants, reviewers who are current educators in public schools or universities within New York State and across the nation, and experienced Department staff.

- Phase III – Capacity Interviews:
Each applicant group attends an interview to discuss the application and to demonstrate that they have the will, skill, knowledge, and capacity to successfully launch and operate the proposed school.
- Phase IV – Request for Modifications:
Each applicant group makes technical modifications to their applications, as necessary and as requested by the Department.

In addition to the above, throughout the chartering process, the Department reviews public comments provided through formal public hearings (required to be conducted by the school district of location for the proposed school) and through direct communication with the Department's Charter School Office. Recommendations to award new charters are made to the Board of Regents by the Commissioner. These recommendations are given to groups with a strong educational plan and a presentation that demonstrates their readiness to launch and operate a highly effective public school. Based on a synthesis of information gathered throughout all stages of the process, the Department presents its recommendations to the Board.

2017 New School Application Submissions at all Stages of the Process – Round 1

A summary of the Round 1 2017 application and review process is as follows:

- Seventeen applicant groups submitted Letters of Intent;
- Thirteen applicant groups were invited to submit full applications with four applicant groups withdrawing from the process;
- Three of nine applicant groups advanced to a Capacity Interview; and
- Three applicant groups are recommended for Board of Regents approval at the June 2017 meeting.

Related Regent's Items

Not applicable

Recommendation

VOTED: That the Regents find that: (1) the proposed charter schools meets the requirements set out in Article 56 of the Education Law, and all other applicable laws, rules and regulations; (2) the applicant can demonstrate the ability to operate the school in an educationally and fiscally sound manner; (3) granting the application is likely to

improve student learning and achievement and materially further the purposes set out in subdivision two of section twenty-eight hundred fifty of Article 56 of the Education Law; and (4) granting the application will have a significant educational benefit to the students expected to attend the charter school, and the Board of Regents therefore approves and issues an initial charter and provisional charter to the **Emblaze Academy Charter School** for a term of five years in accordance with §2851(2)(p) of the Education Law.

VOTED: That the Regents find that: (1) the proposed charter schools meets the requirements set out in Article 56 of the Education Law, and all other applicable laws, rules and regulations; (2) the applicant can demonstrate the ability to operate the school in an educationally and fiscally sound manner; (3) granting the application is likely to improve student learning and achievement and materially further the purposes set out in subdivision two of section twenty-eight hundred fifty of Article 56 of the Education Law; and (4) granting the application will have a significant educational benefit to the students expected to attend the charter school, and the Board of Regents therefore approves and issues an initial charter and provisional charter to the **Key Collegiate Charter School** for a term of five years in accordance with §2851(2)(p) of the Education Law.

VOTED: That the Regents find that: (1) the proposed charter schools meets the requirements set out in Article 56 of the Education Law, and all other applicable laws, rules and regulations; (2) the applicant can demonstrate the ability to operate the school in an educationally and fiscally sound manner; (3) granting the application is likely to improve student learning and achievement and materially further the purposes set out in subdivision two of section twenty-eight hundred fifty of Article 56 of the Education Law; and (4) granting the application will have a significant educational benefit to the students expected to attend the charter school, and the Board of Regents therefore approves and issues an initial charter and provisional charter to **The Renaissance Charter School 2** for a term of five years in accordance with §2851(2)(p) of the Education Law.

Timetable for Implementation

The Regents action is effective immediately.

Attachments

SUMMARY OF 2010-2016 CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION CYCLES

Regents RFP Cycle	Letters of Intent Submitted	Full Applications Submitted	Charters Issued By BOR (# in NYC) ¹
2010	39	35 prospectuses were submitted; 16 applicants were invited to submit full applications; 15 full applications were submitted	Regents: 7(5)
2011	100	80 prospectuses were submitted; 37 applicants were invited to submit full applications; 36 full applications were submitted	Regents: 9(7)
2012 Round 1	30	20 applicants were invited to submit full applications; 14 full applications were submitted	Regents: 3(3)
2012 Round 2	54	37 applicants were invited to submit full applications; 25 full applications were submitted	Regents: 10(8)
2012 Round 3	24	24 applicants were invited to submit full applications; 12 full applications were submitted	Regents: 0(0)
2013	99	60 applicants were invited to submit full applications; 55 full applications were submitted	Regents: 8(6)

¹ The 2015 legislative amendments to the Charter Schools Act takes the cap remaining under the 2007 and 2010 legislation (159) and provides for the reissuance of 22 charters, for a total of 181 charters to be used by either the Regents or SUNY. Chapter 20 of the Laws of 2015 imposed a limit of 50 new charters in New York City.

Regents RFP Cycle	Letters of Intent Submitted	Full Applications Submitted	Charters issued by BOR (# in NYC)
2014 Round 1	31	15 applicants were invited to submit full applications in either Round 1 or Round 2; 11 full applications were submitted for review	Regents: 2(1)
2014 Round 2	51	18 applicants were invited to submit full applications 15 full applications were submitted for review	Regents: 3(3)
2015 Round 1	38	15 applicants were invited to submit full applications 15 full applications were submitted for review	Regents: 0(0)
2015 Round 2	51	17 applicants were invited to submit full applications 11 full applications were submitted for review	Regents: 3(2)
2015 Round 3	N/A	Letters of Intent Waived 15 full applications were submitted for review	Regents: 1(1)
2016 Round 1 (June)	11	11 applicants were invited to submit full applications 11 full applications were submitted for review	Regents: 3(2)
2016 Round 2 (November)	25	15 applicants were invited to submit full applications 14 full applications were submitted for review	Regents: 3(2)
2016 Round 2 Continued (December)	25	15 applicants were invited to submit full applications 14 full applications were submitted for review	Regents: 1(0)
2017 Round 1 (June)	17	13 applicant were invited to submit full applications 9 full applications were submitted for review	Regents: 3 pending applications



New York State Education Department
Charter School Office

Charter School Application
Summary, Findings and Recommendation

Application in response to the
New York State Education Department 2017 Round 1 Request for Proposals to
Establish Charter Schools Authorized by the Board of Regents for:

Emblaze Academy Charter School

June 2017

Table 1: Summary of the Proposed School

Emblaze Academy Charter School

Name of Charter School	Emblaze Academy Charter School
Lead Applicant(s)	Kristen Shroff
District of Location	New York City CSD 9
Opening Date	September 2018
Projected Charter Term	July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2023
Management Company	None
Partners	Building Excellent Schools
Facility	Private Facility
Projected Enrollment and Grade Span during Charter Term	Year 1 (SY 2018-19): grade 5, 90 students Year 2 (SY 2019-20): grade 5-6, 180 students Year 3 (SY 2020-21): grades 5-7, 270 students Year 4 (SY 2021-22): grades 5-8, 360 students Year 5 (SY 2022-23): grades 5-8, 360 students
Planned Grade Span (beyond Initial Charter Term)	Not Applicable
Mission Statement	<i>The mission of Emblaze Academy Charter School is, through rigorous curriculum and high-quality instruction and within an invested and ambitious school community, to prepare students in grades five through eight to thrive in high school and graduate from the college of their choice.</i>

Emblaze Academy Charter School (EACS) seeks to prepare all students in grades five through eight to thrive in high school and graduate from a college of their choice. The founders plan to increase learning opportunities for all students, with special emphasis on a high-quality, college preparatory education. EACS believes in the power of high-academic expectations, in high-quality instruction as the primary driver of student achievement, and in a supportive culture that allows all students to reach their potential.

By implementing a four-year middle school model, EACS will be able to create a strong, differentiated student culture at both the lower school (5-6) and the upper school (7-8). To meet the needs of all students, several flexible structures will be put into place, including daily interventions, English as a Second Language staffing and support, and a robust special education program that includes support for at-risk students.

Key Design Elements

The key design elements include:

Rigorous Curriculum

- Rigor Equals Equity—To compete academically with students across the city and country for a seat at a competitive college, EACS will implement an inquiry-based instructional program to push students to think, analyze, and discover in history, writing, literature, science and math classes that will increase student achievement for all regardless of academic need. Students will receive approximately 200 minutes of literacy instruction daily and are expected to read at home for at least 30 minutes nightly. Students will be engaged in problem solving, experimentation and textual analysis across all subject areas. Students will write text-based academic essays in writing class, develop deep understanding of experimental design in science courses, analyze and dissect primary sources and write Document Based Questions (DBQ) in history courses and develop complex mathematical concepts in math classes.
- Challenge and support are at the core of instruction—Students will receive a combination of rigorous, above grade level work, targeted interventions and instructional supports. Daily small group courses will be designed to both challenge and support all learners.
- Start at the end—Each course will have a rigorous end of course assessment that will be backwards mapped and aligned with the New York State Next Generation Learning Standards.

High Quality Instruction

- High Impact Professional Development (PD)—EACS plans to strongly focus on developing and supporting its teaching staff. Emblaze teachers will have approximately 25 full days and 36 half-days of PD and a minimum of one hour of individualized one-on-one coaching each week.
- Results, not intentions—EACS will be data driven to ensure students receive needed targeted instruction. Data will be analyzed at the yearly, unit, weekly, and daily levels. There will be clear systems in place for responding to data. Instruction is structured in six-week cycles. Approximately every six weeks, students will take an Interim Assessment in each core course. After each six-week instructional cycle, teachers will meet for a Data Day to analyze results and inform groupings and instruction. Reading levels will be tested three times per year.
- Systems—Teachers will be trained to lead structured and joyful classrooms. Teachers will implement a consistent school-wide behavior system in which students can earn merits for demonstrating the school's core values of Respect, Initiative, Scholarship and Effort. Demerits will be earned for behaviors that distract from learning or demonstrate disengagement. Consistency from classroom to classroom will help to set students up for success and internalize the character and leadership skills that will support their success in high school and college.

Invested, Ambitious School Community

- RISE—EACS will implement an explicit character education program. The RISE values include Respect, Initiative, Scholarship, and Effort. Parents will have access to an on-line program that allows them to see the merits and demerits their child has earned. Teachers will also be able to use this portal as a communication tool with parents to share information, answer questions and to set goals that are transferrable between school and home.
- Celebrate academics—Students will have access to an online gradebook system to see their grades broken down by category (i.e. grades, GPA, assignments). Each Friday, families will receive a written report and when students are in Community Circle, they will be recognized for their efforts and growth.
- Families are partners—Prior to the beginning of the school year, school staff will meet with each family individually. All families will be invited to attend the Family Academy to learn about the school’s policies. EACS will distribute monthly school newsletter, and teachers will be required to communicate with at least three families on a weekly basis. There will be monthly parent events including Back to School Night, Curriculum Nights, Science Fairs, Report Card Conferences, and Project Presentations to help parents feel welcome at the school, have opportunities to speak with teachers and other members of the school community, and to celebrate student success.

Education Plan

Emblaze will operate for no fewer than 181 days of instruction on a trimester academic calendar, with fifteen Saturday Academy days for additional practice and small group instruction for subsets of students. Students will have an extended school day and year. On Fridays, the instructional day is shortened for professional development.

Coursework includes instruction in literature, mathematics, writing, history, science and physical education for 50 minutes each Monday through Thursday with a 45 minute elective. On Fridays, students are engaged in an abbreviated schedule with the addition of Community Circle and Family Meeting time. Additionally, all students participate in small group instruction in reading and math. This includes Guided Reading, Close Reading, Problem Solving, and Cumulative Review for 25 minutes daily based on demonstrated student need as evidenced by supporting data.

All curriculum materials will be strategically backwards mapped from the New York State Regents Exams or AP courses. New York State standards will drive instructional materials to ensure vertical and horizontal alignment. The school leader will work with teachers and the administrative team to build the school’s curriculum. Curricular materials will be evaluated at the daily, weekly, unit and yearly levels. Teachers will have opportunities to work together and analyze student data to make adjustments. Teachers are responsible for daily lesson planning using the approved, grade-level instructional materials, following the scope and sequence, and assessments.

Beyond core courses aligned with the Next Generation Learning Standards, students will participate in physical education class and elective/enrichment clubs. Enrichment clubs include

speech and debate, dance, foreign language, financial literacy, chorus, and art. Clubs will be taught by staff at the school. For students needing time to complete assignments or have shown that they are not putting their best effort into their work, they will receive additional support during Effort Academy instead of participating in an elective. Remediation and academic intervention classes are also scheduled to support student learning.

Teachers will have common planning time each day to collaborate with co-teachers or special education teachers, modify curriculum, analyze student data from formative and summative assessments, and make the necessary corrections and modifications to the curriculum. Each school year, 25 full days are set aside for professional development. Seventeen full days of training occur in the summer and focus on systems and structures, behavior system norming, curriculum development, lesson planning and best instructional practices all designed to lay the foundation for a strong school year. During the school year, teachers participate in half-day professional development on Friday afternoons. PD time will focus on student culture and investment, practice-based lesson execution, and instructional best practices. Additionally, full-day data training is planned for teachers after each unit assessment.

Assessment

EACS believes in data-driven instruction. Collected data will be tracked daily, weekly, by the unit of study and at the end of the year to fill any instructional gaps, remediate specific skills and to review and spiral skills and content.

Each day, teachers have approximately 50 minutes of time built into their schedule to grade daily student assessments, or exit tickets, identify trends, and plan an instructional response or support. Students receive feedback within 24 hours. Data from daily assessments is entered into an on-line gradebook and available to families each day.

Students take the nationally normed NWEA-MAP assessments in reading and mathematics and Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessments (F&P) to determine their reading level three times per year.

A school-wide dashboard will be created and updated weekly. It will report on key academic performance indicators such as GPAs, course grades, reading levels, weekly quiz results and Internal Assessment data. Data will be presented to the board's Academic Achievement Committee monthly using an academic dashboard. The Academic Team will also be responsible for teacher coaching, professional development, and creating action plans for struggling teachers and students.

School Culture

EACS plans to build a positive school culture by engaging all stakeholders. Respect, Initiative, Scholarship, and Effort (RISE) are the character values and traits that will be explicitly taught to prepare students for the rigors of competitive high schools and colleges. These core values are explicitly taught to students during Student Orientation and explicitly taught to families during Families Academy. Teachers use the values daily in their lessons and students receive frequent individual and whole class feedback on the values so they learn to internalize their meaning in real world context.

Each student will have an advisor, meeting monthly in a small group at Friday Family Meetings. Advisory periods will function as a critical component of the school's student support strategy, and an important mechanism toward building and sustaining school culture. Advisories also provide students with time to reflect and problem solve.

To support and track the evolving school culture, the director of operations will implement an ongoing process for monitoring school climate. A culture dashboard will be created, which will include key school performance indicators such as attendance, detention, Effort Academy, homework completion and suspensions. This information will be evaluated to determine the effectiveness of school wide expectations and programs. The Culture Committee will work with the dean of school culture to conduct walkthroughs to inform school wide culture decisions and help to provide additional support and coaching to new teachers.

Special Populations and Related Services

EACS has created a plan that includes scheduled intervention time, a robust staffing plan, systems and procedures for Response to Intervention (RTI), and a plan for collaborating with the Committee on Special Education to ensure student success academically and behaviorally.

EACS will collect academic and behavioral data, intervening early, and frequently monitoring data to determine the effectiveness of interventions that can support all learners; general education, students with disabilities, English language learners, and at-risk students. EACS defines "struggling" students as those students performing in the bottom 10% of their cohort academically or behaviorally. Six times per year, at the mid-point and end-point of each trimester, grade teams will meet with the special education coordinator and dean of student services to formally evaluate the effectiveness of the interventions each student has received. This information will inform next steps and services to be provided or referrals to be made.

It is anticipated that by mirroring the district of location, there will be at least 20% of their students requiring special education services and an additional 20% of their enrolled students will be English Language Learners. As such, the school has structured the staffing model and instructional program to ensure that all students have the supports they need to be successful.

The professional development plan includes staff training for working with students with disabilities, English Language Learners and gifted and talented students. Training will provide all staff with strategies to ensure that all students are provided full and meaningful access to participate and progress in the general education curriculum.

Recruitment and Retention

EACS is committed to meeting or exceeding enrollment and retention targets for ELLs, students with disabilities, and economically disadvantaged students. EACS will execute on a comprehensive student recruitment and retention plan during the pre-opening period and each year thereafter. EACS will: leverage relationships with the many nonprofits and CBOs that work with students and families in the South Bronx; attend community events; hold monthly information and enrollment sessions; target families with children who live in the target zip codes through a social media campaign; and distribute flyers at housing complexes, churches, and afterschool programs.

The school will work with organizations that serve “at-risk” students and families, including those with IEPs, ELLs, and students currently experiencing homelessness or living with foster parents.

EACS will maintain an open and family-like community inclusive of all students. To this end, EACS will develop a robust student retention plan which includes the following elements:

- Strong academic program with an additional middle school year
- Staffing plan to meet the needs of all students
- Academic and behavioral supports
- Helping parents to feel welcomed at school
- Family and community involvement
- Home school communication plan
- Parent events
- Robust professional development plan for staff to support student needs

Community Outreach

EACS has rigorously demonstrated that the proposed applicant group and proposed board has conducted sufficient public outreach in conformity with a thorough and meaningful public review process to solicit community input and address comments as described in the application.

EACS has held a series of public community meetings in New York City, including meetings with over seventy community-based organizations at various locations. Founders have presented information about the school to the community including the facility location, the target populations, the grades served and the school design and programs. To advertise the meetings, founders created flyers to deliver and post around the community and on-line.

Community feedback was solicited and has been used to inform the program design. A few examples include the creation of a daily advisory time, addition of the Family Meeting structure to the Friday schedule, and offering “challenge” in language arts and mathematics to the highest performing students are part of the school design.

School Governance and Leadership

The board will have no fewer than seven and no more than 15 members. EACS will begin with nine trustees who have been recruited and selected from the community. The board will create four committees and each member will serve on at least one committee. The board shall meet 12 times a year on a calendar schedule that the board determines at the beginning of each school year. The board may also call special meetings in accordance with by-laws. All meetings will comply with the New York State Open Meetings Law.

A School Trustee Background Information form, Statement of Assurance and resume or curriculum vitae was provided for each of the nine members who will comprise the initial board of trustees. As required, the applicant group has provided a set of draft By-Laws and a draft Code of Ethics.

The initial Board of Trustees includes the following individuals:

Proposed Board Member	Proposed Role on Board
Geraldo Vasquez	Trustee, Chair
Rosann Santos	Trustee, Vice Chair
Harini Mittal	Trustee, Treasurer
Tameka Beckford-Young	Trustee, Secretary
Daniela Cuevas	Trustee
Shelly Evans	Trustee
Marlin Jenkins	Trustee
Margaret Marrer	Trustee
Matthew Kirby-Smith	Trustee

School Staffing Plan

The board of trustees has the overall responsibility for setting policy for the school and for taking the steps to ensure that all laws are met. The board will hire a head of school who will be responsible for executing the mission of Emblaze and overseeing the day-to-day operations. The head of school will report directly to the board of trustees.

The head of school is responsible and accountable for academic performance, organizational health, fiscal integrity, student culture, and adult culture. The head of school will hire, coach, manage, and evaluate all deans and leadership team members. The proposed head of school is a fellow with Building Excellent Schools and has experience working as a special education teacher as well as an ESL teacher. She has a Master’s Degree in Special Education with a Bilingual extension.

Members of the leadership team during the initial five-year term include: director of operations, dean of curriculum and instruction, dean of school culture, dean of student services, English as a Second Language (ESL) coordinator and Special Education coordinator. EACS will open with 16 full-time employees in Year 1 growing to 50 full-time employees at full scale.

Facility

EACS has submitted a request to co-locate within a NYCDOE public-school facility in CSD 9. EACS hopes to identify a NYCDOE public space that is ADA compliant, meets the needs of its initial cohort of students, and allows for the financial and logistical flexibility needed to grow to full scale. If not available, EACS is actively pursuing several possibilities in the Bronx CSD 9 with an independent contractor who has successfully secured facilities for several charter schools.

Projected Fiscal and Programmatic Impact on District of Location

The applicant group provided an analysis of the fiscal and programmatic impact of the proposed school on public and non-public schools in CSD 9, indicating that the fiscal impact of the Emblaze

Academy Charter School on the NYC School District is expected to be nominal as presented below.

Table 1: Projected Fiscal Impact upon District of Location, 2018-19 to 2022-23

Year	Enrollment (Number of Students)	Estimated Budget	Total District General Fund Budget	Projected Impact (% of District's Total Budget)
2018-19	90	\$2,236,691	\$29,600,000,000	0.0076%
2019-20	180	\$3,782,904	\$29,600,000,000	0.0128%
2020-21	270	\$5,373,317	\$29,600,000,000	0.0182%
2021-22	360	\$7,163,732	\$29,600,000,000	0.0242%
2022-23	360	\$7,167,057	\$29,600,000,000	0.0242%

For forecasting purposes, the fiscal impact of this charter school on the district in which it will be located assumes that:

- There will be no fluctuation in the grade levels served by existing charter schools over the course of the charter term;
- The charter school will be able to meet its projected maximum enrollment;
- All students will come from the district of location; and
- All students will attend every day for a 1.0 FTE.

**Table 2: 2015-16 Demographic Detail for Proposed District of Location
New York City Geographic District #9**

	<u>Total District Enrollment</u>	<u>Percent of Enrollment</u>
All Students	34,697	
Economic Disadvantaged	31,280	90%
Limited English Proficient	8,183	24%
Students with Disability	8,065	23%

**Table 3: 2014-15 2015-16 High School Cohort Academic and Graduation Rates
Based on Grade Configuration for Proposed School**

Cohort Results	NYC CSD #9	NYS
ELA Cohort Proficiency (Gr3-6)	19%	36%
Math Cohort Proficiency (Gr3-6)	15%	36%
Cohort Graduation Rate	65%	80%

Public Hearing and Public Comment

As required by the Charter Schools Act, the NYC DOE conducted a public hearing on May 1, 2017 to solicit comments from the community concerning the proposed Emblaze Academy Charter School. Seven members of the community attended. Three individuals spoke in support the proposed application. No member of the community spoke in opposition to the proposed application.

Review and Findings

Review Panel Consultants	Section I: Mission, Key Design Elements, Enrollment & Community Outreach	Section II: Education Plan Rating	Section III: Organization & Fiscal Plan Rating	Overall Rating	Capacity Interview Rating: (Avg. of Interview Team Rating on 8 Criteria)
Reviewer 1	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets – Average rating of Board Representation at Interview, Will, Skill, Capacity, Knowledge, Governance, and Readiness to Launch
Reviewer 2	Approaches	Meets	Meets	Meets	
Reviewer 3	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets	

Based on the comprehensive review of the application and of the applicant, founding group, and proposed board of trustees, the Department makes the following findings:

1. The charter school described in the application meets the requirements of Article 56 of the Education Law (as amended) and other applicable laws, rules, and regulations.² This finding is based on the following, among other things:
 - i. The applicant has included in the application the information required by Education Law §2851(2).
 - ii. The proposed charter school would meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets, as prescribed by the NYS Board of Regents, of students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who are eligible applicants for the federal free and reduced price lunch program as required by Education Law §2852(9-a)(b)(i).
 - iii. The applicant has conducted public outreach to solicit community input regarding the proposed charter school and to address comments received from the impacted

² Education Law §2852(2)(a).

community concerning the educational and programmatic needs of students in conformity with Education Law §2852(9-a)(b)(ii).

2. The applicant has demonstrated the ability to operate the proposed charter school in an educationally and fiscally sound manner.³ This finding is based on the following, among other things:
 - The presentation in the application of a sound description of key features that are core to the school’s overall design, and which rigorously addresses the criteria outlined in the Department’s RFP in the areas of mission; key design elements; enrollment, recruitment and retention; and community to be served.
 - The presentation in the application of a sound educational plan, which rigorously addresses the criteria outlined in the Department’s RFP in the areas of achievement goals; school schedule and calendar; curriculum and instruction; assessment; school culture and climate; and special student populations and related services.
 - The presentation in the application of a sound organizational and fiscal plan, which rigorously addresses the criteria outlined in the Department’s RFP in the areas of founding group capacity; board of trustees and governance; management and staffing; evaluation; professional development; facilities; insurance; health, food and transportation services; family and community involvement; financial management; budget and cash flow; pre-opening plan; and dissolution plan.
 - An understanding of the New York State Charter Schools Act, and the skill, will and capacity to successfully launch and operate a high quality public charter school.
3. Granting the proposed charter is likely to improve student learning and achievement, will materially further the purposes of the Act⁴ and will have a significant educational benefit to the students expected to attend the charter school.⁵ This finding is based on the totality of the information presented in the application and during the application review process, as summarized in this document.

Recommendation

Based on the Department’s review and findings, the New York State Education Department recommends that the New York State Board of Regents approve the proposal to establish the Emblaze Academy Charter School to open in 2018 in the Bronx, CSD 9, in New York City.

³ Education Law §2852(2)(b).

⁴ Education Law §2852(2)(c).

⁵ As applicable pursuant to Education Law §2852(2)(d).



New York State Education Department
Charter School Office

Charter School Application
Summary, Findings and Recommendation

Application in response to the
New York State Education Department 2017 Round 1 Request for Proposals to
Establish Charter Schools Authorized by the Board of Regents for:

Key Collegiate Charter School
June 2017

Table 1: Summary of the Proposed School

Key Collegiate Charter School

Name of Charter School	Key Collegiate Charter School
Lead Applicant(s)	Romy Drucker
District of Location	New York City CSD 23
Opening Date	September, 2018
Projected Charter Term	July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2023
Management Company	None
Partners	Building Excellent Schools
Facility	Private Facility
Projected Enrollment and Grade Span during Charter Term	Year 1 (SY 2018-19): grade 4-5, 120 students Year 2 (SY 2019-20): grade 4-6, 180 students Year 3 (SY 2020-21): grades 4-7, 240 students Year 4 (SY 2021-22): grades 4-8, 300 students Year 5 (SY 2022-23): grades 4-8, 300 students
Planned Grade Span (beyond Initial Charter Term)	Not Applicable
Mission Statement	<i>With an unapologetic focus on student success, Key Collegiate ensures that all students have the academic skills, professional habits, and personal drive necessary to gain access to and excel within the high schools and colleges of their choice.</i>

Key Collegiate Charter School (Key Collegiate) seeks to improve learning and achievement for the students of CSD 23 in Brooklyn, specifically Brownsville and surrounding neighborhoods. The school will provide a literacy-intensive curriculum with blended-learning instruction, in an extended-day and extended-school-year model designed to prepare students for high school, college, and lifelong success.

Students will learn through varied instructional models that reinforce analytical thinking, problem solving, and conceptual understanding. Students will engage in inquiry-based learning cycles and blended-learning throughout the day. A daily coding class, part of the Problem-Solving block, will provide students with personalized learning opportunities to build critical skills and become self-directed learners. Students will develop executive and interpersonal skills through a habits-based

professional curriculum. The curriculum will be customized to the school, and seeks to prepare students to successfully navigate college and the professional world.

Key Collegiate will also create new professional opportunities for teachers, school administrators, and other school personnel both academically and culturally as an important feature of the school, particularly with regards to its focus on data analysis and professional development. All staff will receive extensive training during the approximately 27 days of professional development on specific strategies to best educate students with disabilities and ELLs.

Key Design Elements

The key features that are core to the school's overall design include the following:

A rigorous, engaging curriculum with differentiated supports that reaches all students. Key Collegiate will implement a rigorous curriculum to ensure students are on track to take New York State Regents and Advanced Placement (AP) classes in high school and to succeed in college and beyond. The school plans to implement an intensive intervention strategy that prepares students to be reading at or above grade level by 7th grade and to take Algebra and the accompanying Regents exam in 8th grade. The school will use inquiry-based learning and blended-learning techniques to engage and challenge all students, and serve the needs of all learners, including those with disabilities and English Language Learners (ELLs).

A literacy-intensive curriculum prepares students to become lifelong learners. The school will implement a literacy-heavy curriculum across all content subjects, with approximately 180 minutes dedicated daily to literacy. The goal is to support students to help them develop the phonics, fluency, and comprehension skills to read, comprehend, and analyze grade-level fiction and non-fiction texts and ensure they are prepared to access high-school level material upon matriculation.

Enhancing student learning with frequent data-driven assessment, analysis, and action. The school will have regular data-driven assessment and data analysis to assess where students are in their learning trajectories. Data-informed plans will allow the school to provide appropriate supports to help them reach grade-level proficiency.

A structured and joyful culture setting the foundation for student achievement. Key Collegiate will provide students with a safe, supportive, structured, learning environment. There will be clearly-defined expectations and achievement-based celebrations. The school's focus on creating a joyful culture is evident in the daily school schedule that dedicates time to physical activity during the performing arts elective and recess.

Partnerships with families and the community to create a united support system. Key Collegiate will engage students' families and will work with them to collectively help students to accomplish their academic goals.

A focus on professional habit development preparing students for college and career success. Key Collegiate will prepare students to access and excel in the high schools and colleges of their choice. The school will teach the skills and professional habits students need to function in a variety of environments. All students will partake in a developmentally and age-

appropriate Professional Habits curriculum to assist them in developing these skills during daily morning and afternoon PREP periods.

High-quality teaching producing strong academic gains and results. Teachers are the core drivers of academic excellence and the school will invest heavily in recruiting, hiring, developing, and retaining staff. Instruction will be outcomes-oriented and rooted in proven practices from the nation’s highest-achieving schools. Teacher development is operationalized through weekly observations, data analysis, and practice-based coaching.

Education Plan

Key Collegiate is a college-preparatory school and as such, will implement a rigorous curriculum that is aligned with the New York State Learning Standards (NYSL) and high school Advanced Placement (AP) courses to ensure that students are prepared to excel in high school and college. The school will implement a literacy-focused curriculum. It will build conceptual understanding through inquiry-based and blended-learning instruction across content to ensure the rigorous curriculum is engaging and accessible to all students. The school will use approaches shown to be effective with all learners, including Students with Disabilities (SWD) and English language learners (ELLs).

The educational plan for the school will adhere to:

Rigor: To access rigor, the school will implement inquiry-based learning, to push students to investigate a topic and engage in higher levels of thinking with the support of tools and teachers as references and coaches. To ensure that all students have the skills to access grade-level content, the school will implement blended-learning to support students in mastering skills at their level in addition to intervention supports throughout.

Engagement: The school’s founders believe the instructional model results in student engagement. The blended learning model gives students an opportunity to work on adaptive, gamified programs so they learn while they play. Inquiry-based learning drives engagement as well, as students have opportunities to collaborate and conduct investigations using manipulatives.

Curriculum

A Focus on Literacy. The school’s approach to literacy instruction will build upon research in *American’s Child Care Crisis: A Crime Prevention Tragedy*, that has found that “the most successful way to improve the reading achievement of low-income children is to increase their access to print.”⁶

Literacy-Focused Academics. The school will dedicate approximately 180 minutes per day to traditional literacy in their Humanities block and Book Club. Students will have time dedicated to independent reading as an element of blended-learning during Humanities as well as each day in the morning and afternoon. Literacy is a core component of their Problem-Solving block as well. Students engage in inquiry-based learning which challenges them with complex texts in both math and science. Key Collegiate will expect all students to learn and use grade-level, content-specific

⁶ Newman, Sanford, et al. “*American’s Child Care Crisis.*” *Fight Crime: Invest in Kids*, 2000. Accessed 10 Jan. 2017.

vocabulary to boost their literacy. To encourage students to develop a love of reading, they will invest in grade level libraries with books of varying reading levels and genres.

Literacy-Focused Culture. Key Collegiate will regularly celebrate students who have reached reading benchmarks during Community Meetings.

The academic programming at Key Collegiate is separated into two distinct blocks each day: Humanities and Problem Solving. This scheduling decision was made to allow for interdisciplinary work and lesson planning flexibility for teachers.

Humanities Curriculum. The ELA and History curriculum are interdisciplinary and taught in a single Humanities block. The block is dedicated to fiction and relevant non-fiction, allowing ELA and History content and skills to be addressed and developed, respectively, and aligned to NYSLs. For example, grade 4 students will read the novel *Eagle Song* by Joseph Bruchac and discuss standards-based literary components. In that same block, students will learn about American History and specifically Native Americans through relevant non-fiction assets and primary sources. The connection between the novel and the historical reference will create a deep understanding for students. The Humanities curriculum will be based on existing resources and curriculum from high-performing schools and will be customized to suit the individual needs of students, using components of EngageNY and learning modules from the Brooklyn Historical Society. The final component of the Humanities block is a daily 40-minute blended learning session dedicated to continued skill development in reading, comprehension, grammar, vocabulary building, independent reading, and small-group instruction. This time allows students to work at their pace and level, build their professional habits of independence, self-management, and problem-solving, and improve their technological fluency.

Problem Solving Curriculum. The Problem-Solving block includes math, science, and coding. These classes exist under a shared 150-minute block because, while not necessarily functioning as an interdisciplinary set, to allow for flexibility with lesson planning and teacher needs. Blended learning will take place for, on average, 90 minutes, and science and coding will each receive 30 minutes of instructional time.

The Math curriculum will be aligned to the NYSLs and is based on the outcomes from the National Research Council's 2001 math analysis, which called for a focus on the need for students to have "an understanding of math concepts" rather than on procedural knowledge and rote learning. To build this, instruction at the Lower Academy Key Collegiate (grades 4 and 5) will focus on a foundational skill-building and inquiry-based curriculum. The foundational side will be taught through direct-instruction and reinforced through blended-learning.

The inquiry-based component is dedicated to helping students develop an understanding of math concepts and contributes to literacy-based curriculum in non-traditional subjects. For students in the Upper Academy (grades 6-8), Connected Math Project (CMP) curriculum, developed by Michigan State University, which is "a problem-centered curriculum promoting an inquiry-based teaching-learning classroom environment" will be used. As noted in *Educational Studies in Mathematics*, students who learn math with CMP learn the computational skills necessary to navigate traditional middle school math curricula, "and score significantly higher on open-ended problems requiring modeling, mathematical reasoning, and/or articulating their thinking." Students will be prepared to take Algebra in grade 8 and the Regents exam.

For Science, the school will implement an inquiry-based curriculum by Activate Learning. Activate Learning is literacy-intensive, rigorous, and engaging. Lower Academy students' inquiry-based curriculum is called Active Science. Teachers will frame a lesson or more commonly, a series of lessons, with a central question, and students will then conduct investigations and develop the problem-solving skills to test their hypotheses and draw conclusions. Upper Academy students' inquiry-based curriculum is called Investigating and Questioning our World through Science and Technology (IQWST).

Coding at Key Collegiate will function under a 1:1 computer model, meaning that students will have their own designated Chromebook to use each day in school. The coding curriculum is intended to provide students with access to computer science, a rapidly growing field that the best, wealthiest schools and districts have adopted. The Coding curriculum is student-driven and enables students to master the fundamentals of coding and build up to develop the skills to create objects and designs. Lower Academy (grades 4 and 5) students will learn conditions, algorithms, binary code, and functions—creating site patterns, and characters, and games by the end of Lower Academy. Upper Academy students will engage in the Middle School components of code.org that build on the foundational skills developed in the four earlier courses in the Lower Academy. For the few students who join Key Collegiate in grade 5 and 6, an accelerated course will allow them to catch up with their peers in a short period of time.

All non-core academic classes will have clear end-of-year goals, a scope and sequence, and daily objectives to outline exactly what content and skills students will develop because of each class. Co-academic teachers will have significant autonomy over their curricula, with approval from the Head of School or an appointed academic designee.

Performing Arts: To successfully fulfill their mission of preparing students with the professional habits and personal drive necessary to be successful, the school has strategically selected performing arts as the daily elective course which will include reading music, singing, dancing (Tap, African, Ballroom, etc.), public speaking, and improvisation.

Professional Habits Curriculum: All students will engage in a Professional Habits curriculum.

Instruction

The curriculum is operationalized by implementing varied instructional techniques throughout the day to create lessons that are engaging so all students can access and master the rigorous curriculum, predominantly: direct instruction, inquiry-based, and blended-learning rotations. In addition to the three core instructional models, direct instruction, inquiry-based, and blended-learning, the school will also regularly implement other instructional practices such as Whole Class Read Aloud; Small Group Instruction; Independent Reading; Discussion; Debate & Socratic Seminar; Writing Workshops; Guided Reading; and Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) Instruction.

Assessment

Key Collegiate will measure progress towards its mission using rigorous academic performance assessments. The school will perform regular data collection using various assessment tools for multiple, real-time formative data points on growth and absolute performance throughout the year. The assessment system will comply with all requirements applicable to all public schools consistent with state law and relevant policies of the Board of Regents including the NYS Testing Program.

The school will compile daily student data through exit tickets, weekly quizzes in math and ELA, regular unit in-house unit exams, interim assessments scheduled at the end of each trimester, and state-mandated assessments. The school will also administer the F&P formative assessment four times during the school year to track student reading and literacy progress.

Internally created trimester exams will be directly based on NYSLs. All staff will receive a data dashboard with assessments results. Teachers will have a chance to review their own results as well as the results of their colleagues. Data from the state assessments in ELA and Math will also be used.

School Culture

Key Collegiate seeks to create an environment where teachers can effectively teach and students can effectively learn. The school believes in an organized, structured, safe, and positive learning environment and has developed a core value system that create such a structure. The school identifies five core values as the foundation of the school culture and discipline system, that they call the BIG 5: Determination, Respect, Kindness, Accountability and Professionalism. The school will also implement a restorative justice system: students will know that they can make mistakes and make positive changes and return to their community, prepared to be successful.

Key Collegiate will prepare students for success in college. Students will learn about college options and will be taught the academic requirements necessary to access and excel in college. Delivered within a supportive, achievement-oriented culture the school will celebrate student growth and success in their weekly Community Meetings and share academic achievements with students' families so they can support their student's success. Celebrating academic and developmental growth will be particularly important at Key Collegiate for students academically at risk. All growth is significant: students will be nurtured by acknowledging their progress, and encouraged by cultural rituals to succeed.

The school will communicate regularly with families about student behavior. This will start during Home Visits prior to the commencement of the academic year and will continue throughout the school year, with opportunities for reminders during Family Orientation and Family Welcome Night. Parents will have access to Class Dojo and will be able to track their child's academic performance regularly, in addition to weekly Progress Reports that will be sent home to be reviewed and signed by a parent which includes their weekly Dojo report as well as any school announcements.

Special Populations and Related Services

Key Collegiate will provide several tools to better serve special populations and students with special needs:

- Extended learning time to bring academically underperforming students closer to grade level. Language arts instruction for 180 minutes daily and a minimum of 90 minutes daily for mathematics.
- The school will schedule 18 days of Saturday School. Each weekend that Saturday School is offered, 10% of students will be selected to attend based on their academic performance on specific standard(s) that the teacher will address during the Saturday School session; this will provide additional learning time to academically at-risk students.
- Teachers certified in special education will co-teach in the Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) classroom.
- The school will provide students with disabilities access to the entire general education curriculum through an ICT classroom.
- Students remain in the same classroom for a significant portion of each day. This will benefit students with disabilities, as the school will make environmental accommodations and maintain consistency throughout the day.
- The school will implement trauma-informed practices, recognizing that many students have experienced trauma and may currently be amid this.
- The student support specialist will conduct weekly meetings with the Community Support Team (social workers and community outreach coordinator) to ensure that everything is done to support all students. The community outreach coordinator will support homeless students however possible with community organizations and support agencies available to students and families.
- The school will build relationships with the Brooklyn Students in Temporary Housing (STH) liaison from the Office of Safety and Youth Development
- Key Collegiate takes a structured immersion approach to support ELLs. ELLs will remain in the general education setting, but will receive intentional differentiation and scaffolding of content, systems, and processes.
- Blended-learning is an additional opportunity for “gifted” students to work at their own pace and on content that is potentially above grade level and more appropriate and responsive to their needs.

Recruitment

Key Collegiate is committed to meeting or exceeding enrollment and retention targets for ELLs, students with disabilities, and economically disadvantaged students. Key Collegiate will implement a plan to recruit and retain local students currently served by the lowest performing CSD in Brooklyn. Key elements of the plan are as follows:

To recruit SWDs, the school will ensure flyers list the supports offered to students with disabilities and the openness to serving and supporting all learners. The school will connect and share information with local elementary schools and non-profits that support students with disabilities for them to share with students. Key Collegiate will provide flyers to local medical centers such as Brownsville Multi-Service Health Center that serve our student population for them to share with patients.

To recruit ELLs, the school will print all flyers, information packets, and applications in English and Spanish. Additionally, information and recruitment sessions will be presented in both languages. The school website is in the process of being translated so that the site is accessible in both English and Spanish.

To recruit ED students and students in temporary housing, the school will distribute flyers, canvass, and hold information sessions at or around the NYCHA housing developments in Brownsville (Langston Hughes and Marcus Garvey), local shelters (WIN and CAMBA), and soup kitchens and food banks (St. Johns Bread and Life).

Retention

To retain students with disabilities, the school will develop relationships with their families early on to set the foundation for regular communication and to show the student we are united in service of their success.

To retain ELL students, the school will implement a structured immersion model, keeping ELLs in the general education class, while providing structured scaffolds and differentiation to support language acquisition including, but not limited to, graphics, sight word flash cards/word walls, and writing structure templates. The school will ensure the parents of all ELL students feel informed, and will send documents home in Spanish, have Spanish-speaking staff in the Main Office, and have translation services available at all parent events.

To retain ED students and students in temporary housing, the school will reduce the financial burden on families by providing most supplies—including the school uniform, extending the school day so parents/guardians can work later, offering field trips free of cost, and working with families to ensure students have what they need to be successful. Per the commitment to trauma-informed school practices, Key Collegiate will ensure students feel safe and have access to supports. There will be a community outreach coordinator on staff who will assist families by connecting them with services they need including, but not limited to, medical, child care, and counseling. The school will also have at least one social worker who will support students and serve as a family liaison as necessary.

Community Outreach

Key Collegiate intends to practice thoughtfulness and be attentive to all stakeholders and has taken a three-step approach to community outreach to design the best possible school for the community it intends to serve:

- Publicly informing the community about Key Collegiate: The founding group was deliberate and transparent with the community about Key Collegiate. Information was shared regularly and publicly in a variety of ways: attending community events; engaging families with school-aged children; and meeting with community-based organizations, Community Board meetings, and elected officials.
- Community member input: The school sought input from community members and families about what they want to see in a new school.
- Community feedback was incorporated into school design.

School Governance and Leadership

The proposed board of trustees is currently comprised of eight members. Each understands that they will be responsible for ensuring the school is meeting its legal, fiscal, and academic performance goals, and reporting this information as requested to the authorizer.

The proposed board will consist of at least seven trustees and no more than fifteen (15) trustees according to its by-laws and conduct its meetings in compliance with the Open Meetings Law.

A School Trustee Background Information form, Statement of Assurance and resume or curriculum vitae was provided for each of the eight members who will comprise the initial board of trustees. As required, the applicant group has provided a set of draft By-Laws and Code of Ethics.

The initial proposed board of trustees includes the following individuals:

Proposed Board Member	Proposed Role on Board
Romy Drucker	Trustee, Chair
Ron Russo	Trustee, Vice Chair
Nikki Carroll	Trustee, Treasurer
Gillian Francis	Trustee, Secretary
Jason Cali	Trustee
Lorna Hagen	Trustee
Athena Hernandez	Trustee
Michael McNally	Trustee

School Staffing Plan

The board has identified a head of school (HOS), who will be responsible for executing the mission of Key Collegiate and overseeing the day-to-day operations. The HOS will report directly to the board of trustees. The HOS will be the instructional leader and responsible for equipping all teachers with the necessary skills, knowledge, and tools to teach every student. The HOS may delegate to other members of the leadership team, but is responsible for all outcomes, all academic programming, curricular decisions, and operational responsibilities, including managing personnel and creating the budget. Several other staff will join the leadership team in Year 1 including:

- Operations manager (OM) to manage school operations and logistics including, but not limited to: vendor relationships, facility operations, student enrollment, and compliance.
- Student support specialist (SSS) to modify and adapt the curriculum for students who are coming in with special needs. The SSS will coach special education support teachers, provide staff trainings relative to SWD and ELLs, and oversee all legal mandates.
- Dean of culture to build and execute incentive systems to empower students towards academic success. The dean will coach teachers regularly in classroom management strategies.

The dean of curriculum and instruction (DCI) will join the instructional leadership team during Year 2 and work with the head of school to adjust existing grades 4 and 5 curricula and design grade 6 curricula. The DCI will work with teachers weekly to develop instructional skills to ensure all students are getting high-quality instruction through data analysis and action plans.

The school is committed to recruiting a team of teachers who are mission-aligned and committed to changing the status-quo that currently exists for most students in this community. The school will provide teachers with a complete curriculum including scope and sequence, interim assessments, and unit and daily lesson plans. During Summer PD, teachers will be trained to read, process, internalize, adapt, and execute the lessons.

Facility

Key Collegiate has submitted a request for co-location in CSD 23 to the NYC DOE, and is also exploring private space options in and around CSD 23.

Projected Fiscal and Programmatic Impact on District of Location

The applicant group provided an analysis of the fiscal and programmatic impact of the proposed school on public and non-public schools in NYC CSD 23, indicating that the fiscal impact of the Key Collegiate Charter School on the proposed district is expected to be nominal as presented below:

Table 2: Projected Fiscal Impact upon District of Location, 2018-19 to 2022-23⁷

Year	Number of Students Enrolled in Charter School Per Year	Total Charter School Basic Tuition (per Pupil Aid)	Other Funds*	Total District General Fund Budget ⁸	Percent of District Budget
2018-19	120	\$ 1,683,240	\$ 777,111	\$ 23,100,000,000	0.00729%
2019-20	180	\$ 2,524,860	\$ 883,032	\$ 23,100,000,000	0.01093%
2020-21	240	\$ 3,366,480	\$ 1,177,087	\$ 23,100,000,000	0.01457%
2021-22	300	\$ 4,208,100	\$ 1,471,142	\$ 23,100,000,000	0.01822%
2022-23	300	\$ 4,208,100	\$ 1,471,142	\$ 23,100,000,000	0.01822%

*Other funds include Per Pupil SPED, Facility Subsidy, NYSTL, NYSLIB, NYSSL, Title I, Title II, DYCD

For forecasting purposes, the fiscal impact of this charter school on the district in which it will be located assumes that:

- There will be no fluctuation in the grade levels served by existing charter schools over the course of the charter term;
- The charter school will be able to meet its projected maximum enrollment;
- All students will come from the district of location; and
- All students will attend every day for a 1.0 FTE.

⁷ Key Collegiate Charter School Application

Based on the analysis presented by the school, the programmatic impact of Key Collegiate Charter School will be a positive one, providing a high-quality college-preparatory option for students in CSD 23 where there is currently a limited number of high-performing schools.

**Table 3: 2015-15 Demographic Detail for Proposed District of Location:
New York City Geographic District # 23**

Total District Enrollment: NYC Geographic District #23

All Students	8,964	
Economically Disadvantaged	7,818	87%
English Language Learners	420	5%
Students with Disabilities	2,345	26%

Table 4: 2014-15 High School Cohort Academic and Graduation Rates Based on Grade Configurations for Proposed School

Cohort Results	NYC Geog. District #23	NYS
<i>ELA Cohort Proficiency</i>	19%	37%
<i>Math Cohort Proficiency</i>	14%	38%
<i>Cohort Graduation Rate</i>	40%	80%

Public Hearing and Public Comment

As required by the Charter Schools Act, the NYC DOE conducted a public hearing on April 26, 2017 to solicit comments from the community concerning the proposed Key Collegiate Charter School. Eleven community members attended the hearing. Six individuals expressed support for the proposed application based on community partnerships and the focus on high school and college readiness. No one spoke in opposition of the proposed application.

Findings

Review Panel Consultants	Section I: Mission, Key Design Elements, Enrollment & Community Outreach	Section II: Education Plan Rating	Section III: Organization & Fiscal Plan Rating	Overall Rating	Capacity Interview Rating: (Avg. of Interview Team Rating on 8 Criteria)
Reviewer 1	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets – Average rating of Board Representation at Interview, Will, Skill, Capacity, Knowledge, Governance, and Readiness to Launch
Reviewer 2	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets	
Reviewer 3	Meets	Approaches	Meets	Meets	

Based on the comprehensive review of the application and of the applicant, founding group, and proposed board of trustees, the Department makes the following findings:

1. The charter school described in the application meets the requirements of Article 56 of the Education Law (as amended) and other applicable laws, rules, and regulations.⁹ This finding is based on the following, among other things:
 - iv. The applicant has included in the application the information required by Education Law §2851(2).
 - v. The proposed charter school would meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets, as prescribed by the NYS Board of Regents, of students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who are eligible applicants for the federal free and reduced price lunch program as required by Education Law §2852(9-a)(b)(i).
 - vi. The applicant has conducted public outreach to solicit community input regarding the proposed charter school and to address comments received from the impacted community concerning the educational and programmatic needs of students in conformity with Education Law §2852(9-a)(b)(ii).
2. The applicant has demonstrated the ability to operate the proposed charter school in an educationally and fiscally sound manner.¹⁰ This finding is based on the following, among other things:
 - The presentation in the application of a sound description of key features that are core to the school’s overall design, and which rigorously addresses the criteria outlined in the Department’s RFP in the areas of mission; key design elements; enrollment, recruitment and retention; and community to be served.
 - The presentation in the application of a sound educational plan, which rigorously addresses the criteria outlined in the Department’s RFP in the areas of achievement goals; school schedule and calendar; curriculum and instruction; assessment; school culture and climate; and special student populations and related services.

⁹ Education Law §2852(2)(a).

¹⁰ Education Law §2852(2)(b).

- The presentation in the application of a sound organizational and fiscal plan, which rigorously addresses the criteria outlined in the Department’s RFP in the areas of founding group capacity; board of trustees and governance; management and staffing; evaluation; professional development; facilities; insurance; health, food and transportation services; family and community involvement; financial management; budget and cash flow; pre-opening plan; and dissolution plan.
 - An understanding of the New York State Charter Schools Act, and the skill, will and capacity to successfully launch and operate a high quality public charter school.
3. Granting the proposed charter is likely to improve student learning and achievement, will materially further the purposes of the Act¹¹ and will have a significant educational benefit to the students expected to attend the charter school.¹² This finding is based on the totality of the information presented in the application and during the application review process, as summarized in this document.

Recommendation

Based on the Department’s review and findings, the New York State Education Department recommends that the New York State Board of Regents approve the proposal to establish Key Collegiate Charter School to open in 2018 in Brooklyn, CSD 23, in New York City.

¹¹ Education Law §2852(2)(c).

¹² As applicable pursuant to Education Law §2852(2)(d).



New York State Education Department
Charter School Office

Charter School Application
Summary, Findings and Recommendation

Application in response to the
New York State Education Department 2017 Round 1 Request for Proposals to
Establish Charter Schools Authorized by the Board of Regents for:

The Renaissance Charter School 2

June 2017

Table 1: Summary of the Proposed School

The Renaissance Charter School 2 (TRCS 2)

Name of Charter School	The Renaissance Charter School 2 (TRCS 2)
Proposed Board Chair	Everett Boyd
Public Contact	Stacey Gauthier
District of Location	New York City CSD 30
Opening Date	September 2018
Projected Charter Term	July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2023
Partners	The Renaissance Charter School (TRCS)
Facility	Co-location or private
Projected Enrollment and Grade Span during Charter Term	Year 1 (SY 2018-19): grades K-2, 243 students Year 2 (SY 2019-20): grades K-3, 324 students Year 3 (SY 2020-21): grades K-4, 405 students Year 4 (SY 2021-22): grades K-5, 486 students Year 5 (SY 2022-23): grades K-6, 567 students
Planned Grade Span (beyond Initial Term)	Grades K-12 ¹³
Mission Statement	<i>The Renaissance Charter School 2 is based on the conviction that a change in the destiny of a single individual can lead to a change in the destiny of a community, nation, and ultimately humankind. Its mission as a K-12 school is to provide a comprehensive academic program aligned with the New York State learning standards that fosters educated, responsible, humanistic young leaders who will, through their own educational development and personal growth, spark a renaissance in New York City and beyond. Its graduates will be global citizens with an abiding respect for peace, human rights, the environment, and sustainable development.</i>

The Renaissance Charter School 2 (TRCS 2) is a replication of the Renaissance Charter School (TRCS) located in New York City (NYC), Community School District (CSD) 30, which was established as a conversion charter school in 2000. The current TRCS serves 575 students in grades K-12. TRCS also operates a pre-K program in collaboration with the NYC Department of Education (NYCDOE).

TRCS 2, plans to be fully aligned with the mission and key objectives of TRCS to provide a strong academic and humanistic educational program and will build upon the already developed

¹³ At renewal, the charter school will need to request an expansion to serve grade levels beyond those authorized in the initial charter term (K-6).

innovative NYS Learning Standards (NYSLs)-aligned educational program to help students achieve and exceed grade-level proficiency in all subjects and to build strong academic foundations for success in high school, college and career. Students will learn to work cooperatively, think creatively, and develop the skills and aptitudes necessary to become leaders and committed global citizens through the academic and enrichment programs described below.

Key Design Elements

The key design elements include:

A strong, comprehensive and proven NYSLs-aligned academic program. The TRCS instructional program has proven effective in helping students achieve academic growth and success. The TRCS 2 development team will adopt an enhanced TRCS curriculum and assessment program, which incorporates an integrated set of formal instructional programs with track records of success with at-risk student populations, “home-grown” teacher-developed curricula, and a wide range of assessments to assess growth in early literacy and attainment of NYSLs benchmarks.

A student-centered approach. TRCS 2 will “foster educated, responsible, humanistic young leaders who will be global citizens and leaders in the renaissance of NYC and beyond.” TRCS 2 will provide students with instruction and supports to address the academic needs, interests and learning styles of its students, especially English Language Learners (ELLs), Students with Disabilities (SWDs) and others with unique needs.¹⁴ To do so, TRCS 2 will establish a school-wide data culture to support teachers and administrators in using data to identify student needs and to provide targeted and differentiated instruction. TRCS 2 will train and support teachers to work within PLCs to analyze student data and differentiate instruction, using strategies and practices that have been effective in promoting student academic growth at TRCS (e.g., data-driven Advisory Program and The Learning Center). TRCS 2 will incorporate project-based, experiential learning experiences and non-traditional student-centered learning experiences.

A commitment to project-based and experiential learning. TRCS 2 will embed project-based and experiential learning throughout the curriculum, and multidisciplinary project-based learning will be emphasized at all grade levels. Experiential learning will be implemented through a variety of methods, including community service learning experiences and curriculum-embedded trips and special events such as: a) field trips to museums, theaters, art galleries and films; b) school organized college visits; c) art, music, dance and drama exhibitions; talent shows; and d) multicultural celebrations.

Extensive student academic and social-emotional development supports. TRCS 2 will support at-risk students through an extensive array of services and resources including The Learning Center (TLC) which will provide students with short-term and/or long-term academic assistance during and after the school day. Academic remediation and acceleration using a personalized, “managed care” approach will help students who require remedial help and those who wish to accelerate or enrich their studies. TRCS 2 will institute an Advisory Program which offers a “safe space” where advisors can: a) monitor each student’s progress towards achieving academic growth goals, help identify areas of need or challenge and support each

¹⁴ Research shows student-centered instruction to be effective in teaching ELLs, SWDs and other “underserved” demographic groups—<https://ed.stanford.edu/news/researchers-find-student-centered-learning-approaches-help-underserved-kids-achieve>

student's academic growth; b) support each student's social-emotional development; and c) promote community service and experiential learning through Advisory-developed projects. Additionally, TRCS 2 will have an Instructional Support Team that regularly monitors the progress of at-risk students and makes specific recommendations to address their needs and support their success.

A culture of collaboration. At TRCS 2, collaboration will be embedded in every aspect of the school program. Decision-making by the board will be strongly informed by a Collaborative School Governance Committee (CSGC) which is comprised of representatives of all school constituencies, including the Principal; the UFT Chapter Chair¹⁵; teachers and other instructional staff; parents and students. All stakeholder groups will collaborate in developing, evaluating and frequently updating the school's Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP). Additionally, academic and operational decisions will be made by a School Management Team comprised of the Principal and other school leaders. Teachers will work collaboratively in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs); and the CSGC will work collaboratively with a strong Parent Teacher Association and an active student government to ensure family engagement and input. Additionally, TRCS 2 also will collaborate with TRCS to support the replication of the TRCS model.

A commitment to college preparation and career readiness. To encourage students to make informed decisions to prepare for college and career, TRCS 2 will mandate student participation in a college-bound program in grades 5th and 6th grades.

Extensive teacher professional development. TRCS 2 will provide professional development to all teachers, ranging from a summer professional development institute and training provided by consultants to shadowing, mentoring and other embedded professional development. Professional development will occur within PLCs, where teachers engage in reflective protocol-driven dialogue about instruction, assessment and school improvement programs.

Partnerships. TRCS 2 will be a "community school" that welcomes, supports and partners with parents, families, individuals and community organizations. TRCS 2 will work with TRCS's director of development and partnerships to adapt the strategies that have helped TRCS identify, recruit and work with more than 50 partner organizations and agencies in the last charter term alone.

Academic Performance of The Renaissance Charter School

Because this is a proposed replication, the academic information from the operating charter school that is being replicated is included as reference.

¹⁵ TRCS 2 plans to negotiate a collective bargaining agreement with the UFT. TRCS is a fully unionized charter school.

Table 1: 2014-2016 Aggregate and Subgroup Grades 3-8 ELA and Mathematics Outcomes - The Renaissance Charter School

Subject	School Year	All Students	Students with Disabilities	English Language Learners	Economically Disadvantaged
ELA	2013-14	31%	0%	0%	22%
	2014-15	30%	2%	0%	20%
	2015-16	38%	7%	8%	26%
Mathematics	2013-14	40%	13%	13%	34%
	2014-15	48%	13%	18%	36%
	2015-16	52%	13%	8%	39%

Note: Data in table 1 represents tested students in respective subgroups who scored proficiently (level 3 or above) on each state assessment.

Table 2: 2014-2016 Aggregate Comparison Gr 3-8 ELA and Mathematics Outcomes -- The Renaissance Charter School and NYC CSD 30

Subject	School Year	TRCS	NYC CSD 30	Variance	NYS Average	Variance
ELA	2013-14	31%	32%	-1	31%	0
	2014-15	30%	34%	-4	31%	-1
	2015-16	38%	44%	-6	38%	0
Math	2013-14	40%	40%	0	36%	0
	2014-15	48%	42%	+6	38%	+10
	2015-16	52%	43%	+9	39%	+13

Note: Data in Table 2 represents tested students only in Grades 3-8 at TRCS, NYC CSD 30 (district of location), and NYS who scored proficiently (level 3 or above) on each state assessment. This table was created using grade level data to generate the comparative values, the percent difference between the school's performance and the district or state averages. All values were calculated to the nearest whole number; therefore, the percent differences may show a rounded value.

Education Plan

TRCS 2 is committed to promoting the academic success of all students. TRCS 2 students will begin the day with a healthy breakfast so they are ready to learn at the beginning of the school day. The school will address each student's academic needs, as identified through analysis of a variety of data, and respect each student's individual learning style. Teachers, working independently and in PLCs will analyze assessment data frequently and adjust lessons, learning experiences and academic interventions based on the data. TRCS 2 is also committed to supporting students in becoming competent, powerful thinkers, engaged citizens and life-long learners. Through project-based classroom activities and other learning experiences, students will be encouraged and

exposed to rigorous, progressive and humanistic instruction that develops student capacity for leadership, problem-solving, and critical thinking, as well as the ability to collaborate effectively and view events, circumstances and challenges from a lens of understanding, tolerance and empathy.

The specific elements of TRCS 2's NYSLS-aligned three-tiered curriculum are a strong standards-based curriculum including Core Studies, Project-based Learning and Experiential Learning, and Community Involvement. Each tier is valued as a significant pathway for student learning. In classroom activities, students will be encouraged and supported in assuming leadership roles and in working collaboratively with others.

English Language Arts

A core TRCS 2 belief is that literacy development—and especially reading comprehension and writing—occurs most effectively when students have broad content knowledge across multiple academic disciplines. TRCS 2 will infuse literacy and ELA elements into learning experiences in all core subjects, and each teacher, regardless of subject area, will be responsible for ensuring that students can read and write within each subject area while developing a strong content-knowledge base. TRCS 2's professional development initiatives will be designed to support all teachers in improving students' ELA skills within the context of specific content instruction, and teachers will work independently and in PLCs to incorporate literacy development into their lessons and learning experiences.

The school's whole language/writing process approach will begin in the early childhood grades with a balanced literacy program using the *Fountas & Pinnell Leveled Literacy system*. The school's balanced literacy approach is reflected through the *Guided Reading and Writing Workshop* instructional models. The *Writing Workshop* model views writing as an ongoing process. TRCS 2 will use Foundations in grades K-3. TRCS 2 will also use *Wilson Reading* across all grades.

To address the curricular shifts of the NYSLS, TRCS 2 will also focus largely on using Junior Great Books at K-6 and teachers across all grades will utilize the EngageNY Curriculum Modules to support their selection of texts and literature. TRCS 2 will have a commitment to literacy instruction that will support students in becoming proficient and analytical readers, a leading indicator in preparing students for success in all other academic disciplines. The ELA shift incorporates guided reading in every classroom. Guided reading sessions involve a teacher working with a small group of students several times per week on a set of specific learning objectives. This supports differentiated and targeted instruction that addresses the specific literacy learning needs of individual students. Guided reading is paired with Shared Inquiry which fosters whole group discussions and analysis of both fiction and nonfiction texts. TRCS 2's reading intervention programs will be implemented not only by classroom teachers and reading specialists, but also by special education teachers and the ELL teacher. Through these strategies and practices, TRCS 2 will meet the needs of all learners within a diverse student body representative of the CSD 30 community. TRCS 2 will explore joining TRCS in utilizing Teachers College Reading and Writing units of study in grades K-6.

TRCS 2 also recognizes the importance of developing strong cursive writing skills. TRCS 2 will adopt the "Handwriting Without Tears" program in grades K-3. Students will work from writing readiness to printing and cursive. Cursive instruction at TRCS 2 will emphasize the use of cursive writing in classroom note-taking and other skills that students will use throughout their lives. The

scope and sequence of lessons is based on research about how children learn best, i.e. research that found that children learn more effectively by actively doing and by using the different senses.

TRCS 2 will use the Orton Gillingham approach to support students who have difficulty with reading, spelling and writing. Orton Gillingham will be used when the Fountas and Pinnell (F&P) literacy interventions prove to be ineffective or when other diagnostic assessments indicate that an Orton Gillingham program might be more effective. It will be used in conjunction with balanced literacy instruction. All TRCS 2 teachers will receive some training in Orton Gillingham during the school's summer training institute, and at least one TRCS 2 teacher will receive advanced training in the Orton Gillingham approach and will serve as an in-house resource to other teachers.

Math

TRCS 2's approach to mathematics will emphasize connections between: (1) skills and mathematical applications in other academic disciplines; and (2) real world experiences. K-4 students will use *Singapore Math* and Grades 5-6 will use *Go Math* and *Math in Focus*. Teachers will also use the *EngageNY* and *Math in the City* (K-5) math modules as well as "home grown" instructional materials. TRCS 2 will use the TRCS Math curriculum which includes use of: Singapore Math and Math in the City Modules (grades K-4); Dreambox (grades 4-5); Go Math and Math in Focus (grades 5-6); Achievement Network Mathematical Resources (grades K-6); and Crosswalk Coach Plus in grades (grade 6).

Science

For grades K-6, TRCS 2 will use the *Full Option Science System* (FOSS) to engage students in study of units on the solar system, the living environment, weather, predators, life cycles, geography and the built environment. All students will participate in labs and complete lab journals. TRCS 2 will leverage the experience of TRCS as an Urban Advantage School that incorporates many innovative programs to provide its students with experiences and leadership opportunities that will fuel a passion for science. TRCS 2 will petition to become an Urban Advantage School during its first charter term. As an Urban Advantage School, TRCS 2 will have access to enhanced professional development for teachers and increased access to museums and other science-based organizations and institutions. TRCS and TRCS 2 will work together to ensure that the science curricula will meet the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS).

Social Studies

TRCS 2's mission is to develop leaders for the Renaissance of New York; and therefore, the study of New York will be a key part of the Social Studies curriculum. The foundation for this approach is established in the inter-disciplinary core of the K-3 curriculum. Students will study family, school and community through hands-on activities and neighborhood analyses. Grade K-5 teachers will use *Social Studies Alive!* Curriculum and grade 6 teachers will use the *History Alive!* Curriculum as they lead students through the New York sequence of social studies courses. *Social Studies Alive!* and *History Alive!* include interactive components that appeal to students whose strengths lie in varying multiple intelligences.

TRCS 2 will also integrate standards-aligned geography-infused learning experiences into Social Studies content instruction, working closely with TRCS which has integrated geography effectively into its Social Studies and other curricula for several years. TRCS's use of geography-infused learning experiences in Social Studies and other content areas has been supported by private and public grants (including a Charter Schools Dissemination grant from the New York

State Education Department) and has been identified as “best practices” by educational organizations and institutions.

Spanish

Spanish instruction will be provided to TRCS 2 students at every grade level. The TRCS 2 Spanish program will use the Calico Spanish Language Curriculum at grades K-2. Used effectively at TRCS, this curriculum uses stories and music to engage young learners as they acquire Spanish language skills. TRCS 2 will use Spanish is Fun at grades 3-5 and Asi se dice! at grade 6. TRCS 2 will utilize the expertise and cultural fluency of students from TRCS who are part of the school’s TRCS Spanish Honors society and have traveled to Spanish-speaking countries in their high school years. Like TRCS, TRCS 2 will celebrate the cultural heritage of the CSD 30 community through cultural events connected to Spanish-language academic units.

Arts

The Arts play a vital role in the culture of NYC. In developing leaders for the Renaissance of New York, TRCS 2 will place an important emphasis on arts education. K-4 students will have classes in Creative Movement, and TRCS 2 students will receive regular instruction in Instrumental Music, Fine Arts or Drama throughout the K-6 spectrum. In grades K-6, students will rotate between their studies of different art forms. TRCS 2 will integrate the arts into various aspects of study in other subjects. TRCS 2 will work with TRCS to leverage alliances with numerous arts organizations to provide TRCS students with a direct connection to the arts in New York City, and support the use of each artistic discipline as “a way of knowing” other academic subjects.

Project-based and Experiential Learning

TRCS 2 will embed project-based and experiential learning throughout the curriculum. Multidisciplinary project-based learning is emphasized at all grade levels. TRCS 2’s approach to project-based and experiential learning will be substantially the same as that of TRCS, which has made project-based and experiential learning anchors of its educational program. Many of the multi-disciplinary projects implemented at TRCS have used art to help students learn about important topics in Science, Social Studies and other subjects, such as the grade 1 Our Planet Art Project; the grade 3 grade project in which students made sculptures based on rain forest animals; and the grade 5 Women in History Art Project in which students made banners to illustrate great accomplishments and contributions made by women throughout American history. Teachers at all grade levels and subjects will work independently and in PLCs to develop interdisciplinary and multi-disciplinary project-based learning experiences and to align them with specific standards and learning objectives.

Assessment

At TRCS 2, accountability will be embedded in the school culture and all stakeholders — including each teacher, cluster, student and parent— will have personal responsibility for student success. It will be the responsibility of the principal and school management team which includes the director(s) of teaching and learning and the director of special student populations, in coordination with the Collaborative School Governance Committee, to establish and maintain a school-wide learning environment that fosters accountability, the use of data, and collaboration and teamwork among teachers to ensure that students are able to achieve at high levels, through differentiated learning and targeted academic interventions.

TRCS 2 will provide the support and resources to teachers necessary to facilitate high levels of student achievement such as ongoing professional development, structured and unstructured opportunities for cross-disciplinary and cross-grade level dialogue, peer support, cooperative development of learning experiences, and collaborative instructional decision-making to help teachers, and the entire school community, meet accountability goals.

Student achievement will be assessed through both standardized tests and course grades, and students will take all applicable NYS examinations. In all grades, students will be assessed through Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System and various screenings for speech, hearing, vision, and motor coordination. All students will participate in interim quarterly assessments from the Achievement Network, or a similar organization, in math and ELA. When additional information about literacy acquisition is required, TRCS 2 will administer other reliable assessments as necessary. An Annual School Report will be prepared in which school-wide progress towards charter accountability goals is analyzed and reviewed towards enacting ongoing school improvement.

Staff members across the school will have access to assessment data for the purposes of data analysis and the review of scope and sequence plans to identify needs and gaps, planning, and professional development. TRCS 2 will use a secure Student Information System (accessible by staff, students and parents for real-time information on student attendance and achievement) to store, manage and analyze assessment data. These tools and resources enhance the use of assessment data in instructional decision-making and facilitate the use of data in establishing individual student achievement, classroom achievement and school-wide achievement targets. TRCS 2 will integrate the use of these tools and resources to support and improve instruction, professional development, professional collaboration and academic interventions throughout the charter term.

School Culture

TRCS 2 will support student development of social emotional skills to help them learn to manage their emotions, react non-violently to conflict, and work and live cooperatively with peers and adults in the school community. The school will focus on supporting students in developing life-long social-emotional skills and competencies through its Elementary Grades' Morning Meeting with Move This World. An Advisory Program is designed to provide students with a "safe space" in which advisors can enhance student social-emotional development and work on team building. Activities and learning experiences within the developed TRCS Advisory curriculum, to be employed at TRCS 2, have included grade-level exploration of interpersonal relations, life skills, leadership and community building, team building and service learning.

In addition to infusing an understanding of diverse cultures into academic programming across a variety of subjects, TRCS 2 will support students in developing and/or participating in activities, organizations and clubs that provide opportunities for students to "be heard," to be represented, to create community among similarly circumstanced people and to learn from and about one another. All students will be encouraged to create curricular and extra-curricular learning experiences that reflect and enable them to explore their or other people's cultures and to select projects that speak to their cultures and interests.

TRCS 2's approach to student discipline will focus on helping students learn and grow, rather than on punishing undesirable behavior. TRCS 2's discipline policy will emphasize Positive Behavior

Intervention Supports (PBIS) and be compliant with the Dignity for All Students Act (DASA). TRCS 2 is committed to balancing student discipline with positive student behavior management within a collaborative school culture. Under the leadership of the director of school culture and the School Management Team, teachers, administrators and other school staff will work collaboratively in PLCs to explore ways to integrate principles and practices of Restorative Justice into the student discipline policies and culture.

Special Populations and Related Services

TRCS 2 is committed to providing high-quality student supports to enable all students to meet rigorous academic standards. TRCS 2 will be proactive in its approach to providing student support services by emphasizing early intervention. This strategy begins in the early childhood grades in which a variety of screenings will take place for speech, vision, development and hearing. The school will have a Student Support Team composed of representative staff from all clusters. The Student Support Team will have representatives on duty throughout each day to provide intervention and assist classroom teachers when necessary. In addition, TRCS 2 will have several initiatives designed to identify and provide strong student supports to students at-risk of academic failure, including the following:

- A high-quality Instructional Support program, headed by the director of special student populations, that includes a certified counselor and/or social worker, special education teachers, an ELL teacher and related service providers, and paraprofessionals. The Instructional Support program will provide case management and supplementary instruction for students with disabilities, ELLs, and economically disadvantaged students. TRCS 2 will also have Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) classrooms in which two teachers working together in the classroom to support all students.
- Data-informed decision-making will form the basis of instructional decisions at TRCS. The school's Student Information System will produce crucial information to help track the progress of individual students as well as to examine important trends. The School Management Team will meet regularly to review data trends and will also work closely with teachers and instructional staff to review data. This work will enable the school to find early warnings of students in crisis.
- A PLC professional development program that fine tunes instruction through reflective practice and ensures that it is aligned to assessments and standards.
- A Title One Reading Remediation Program for K-6 students who need additional academic support.
- An extended day program to provide students with additional support through afterschool tutoring in addition to extracurricular activities.
- The Learning Center, a program for learners who require long and short-term support through differentiated instruction and small group and individualized instruction.
- The Collaborative School Governance Committee, Instructional Support Committee, and the Student Support Team will meet regularly to conduct action research to identify ways

to improve the instructional program and quality of life at the school and to address the needs of all students, including at-risk students, ELLs and SWDs.

TRCS 2 will comply with all federal and state regulations and educate students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment with their non-disabled peers to the extent appropriate and allowed by each student's individualized education plan (IEP) prepared by the Committee on Special Education (CSE) of the students' school district of residence and all applicable federal laws, including the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA).

TRCS 2 has integrated proactive measures into its student recruitment initiatives to ensure that families of students with disabilities are made aware of the opportunities provided by the school and to facilitate the recruitment of a proportionate number of students with disabilities comparable to that of the district. These measures include outreach and networking with organizations that provide services to families and children with disabilities.

TRCS 2 will work with all students identified as ELLs to become proficient in the English language as quickly as possible while ensuring that the heritage and home language of the student are supported as an integral part of the TRCS 2 culture. Based on best-practice research, TRCS 2 will implement a structured English immersion and support program. ELLs will receive the same academic content as those students who are native English speakers. All instruction will be in English. However, the level of English used for instruction—both oral and written—will be modified appropriately for each ELL student.

TRCS 2 will hire bilingual teaching staff and will seek to recruit teachers and administrators who reflect the school community. All teachers will receive professional development on identifying and supporting ELLs. Through respecting the culture and resources of ELLs, TRCS 2 will help newcomers and their families feel at home and an integral part of the school community. This will, in turn, help them learn English more quickly with the goal of attaining full fluency as measured by the NYSESLAT or equivalent examination while ensuring that the school community incorporates and learns from the background and cultures of all students. The NYSESLAT or equivalent examination will be used, in part, to assess ELL student progress, make program modifications and determine individualized points of exit from ELL programming.

ELL students will have periods of supplementary English language instruction that through the use of data will be carefully geared to their individual age and ability level. Students will also participate in ELA classes with all students as part of their program, but with support if needed. To enhance the ELL program, TRCS 2 will: a) build sufficient time for teacher planning and collaboration time to allow teachers to intensively address individual needs; b) provide staff development in ELL instructional techniques, materials, and programs; c) incorporate technology into language instruction; d) provide sensitivity training about the needs of ELL students for the entire TRCS 2 community; e) train students to serve as peer tutors; and f) address the dominant language needs of families as appropriately as possible in school communications and meetings.

Student Recruitment and Retention

TRCS 2 will engage each year in a comprehensive and ongoing community outreach and student recruitment process that includes open house and similar events, coverage in city-wide and national media, local media and networking with potential “feeder” pre-schools and elementary schools in CSD 30. TRCS 2 will also build new partnerships with community and parent leaders, community-based and faith-based organizations and others to ensure that its recruitment efforts reach a diverse group of families from across the district. Recruitment materials and presentations will be translated into Spanish and other languages spoken in the district. Specific recruitment activities will include:

- A direct mail and/or e-mail campaign to families in CSD 30 included, but not limited to, families on TRCS’s extensive waitlist, as well as on families with children in potential “feeder” pre-schools in CSD 30.
- Open house events at TRCS 2 and shared open house events at TRCS;
- Targeted outreach to pre-schools that enroll significant numbers of SWDs and ELLs and to agencies and organizations that serve or advocate their behalf of children;
- Targeted outreach to communities in which large numbers of low-income/poverty-level families and non-English speaking families reside. TRCS 2 will also build alliances with community leaders including clergy, elected officials, nonprofit administrators and others who serve, work with and/or advocate on behalf of ELL and low-income families.

TRCS 2 fully expects to retain at least 95% of its students each year. This assumption is based in part on retention strategies developed at TRCS. Many of the factors contributed to TRCS’s high rates of retention, including a strong humanistic instructional program, a wide range of academic and social-emotional services and supports and engaging non-traditional learning. TRCS 2 also expects to meet or exceed its retention targets through high levels of parent and family involvement. Parents and families will be provided with numerous opportunities to become involved in the life of the school ranging from participation on the board of trustees or the Collaborative School Governance Committee to involvement in the Parent Teacher Association to service on volunteer committees.

Community Outreach

TRCS 2 has considerable evidence of family interest in and support for the proposed new school. TRCS 2 engaged has engaged in public outreach in cooperation with and independently of TRCS a year prior to submitting its Letter of Intent and during the months that followed. TRCS 2 has leveraged the contacts, experience and community goodwill of TRCS, as well as those of elected officials, community-based organizations and others that TRCS has worked with over the years. Outreach activities have included open house events, meetings and communication with parents, community leaders and elected officials, social media and an interactive webpage. TRCS 2 expanded its outreach to include additional e-mail communication to parents, open house events and presentations at public events such as the TRCS-sponsored “Meet Up for Democracy,” which drew more than 200 families and community members.

School Governance and Leadership

The proposed board of trustees of TRCS 2 is composed of six members. Each understands that the board is responsible for: a) determining whether the school is fulfilling the mandates of its charter; b) monitors the fiscal integrity of the school; and c) evaluating and overseeing the performance of the school’s principal. The board of trustees is responsible for oversight of all school activities, but may delegate management responsibilities to the principal and management team with the understanding that it will retain ultimate oversight responsibility. The principal will report directly to the board.

The board will have no fewer than five and no more than 20 members as per their by-laws. The board will meet 12 times a year and allow for special meetings. All meetings will comply with the New York State Open Meetings Law.

A School Trustee Background Information form, Statement of Assurance, and resume or curriculum vitae was provided for each member who is proposed to serve on the initial board of trustees. As required, the applicant group has provided a set of draft by-laws and a draft code of ethics.

The initial proposed board of trustees includes the following individuals:

Proposed Board Member	Proposed Role on Board
Everett Boyd	Trustee, Chair
Conor T. McCoy	Trustee
Rachel Mandel, MD	Trustee
Natalie Hardcastle	Trustee
Liz Perez	Trustee

School Staffing Plan

The board of trustees has oversight responsibility for the programs and activities of the school and delegates management of school programs, operations and other activities to the principal and/or the school management team facilitated by the principal and includes the director(s) of teaching and learning, the director of school culture and family engagement, and the director of special populations. (The TRCS principal, director of development and partnerships and others are expected to work closely with the TRCS 2 school management team and support the school throughout the replication of the TRCS model, but they will not be members of the team).

Day-to-day management and instructional leadership will be the responsibility of the principal, with oversight by the board. The principal will work closely with, and report directly to, the board and will be responsible for ensuring that the school adheres to its mission and that its academic goals and objectives are achieved. The principal will provide reports on the academic and operational progress of the school at each regular board meeting.

Specifically, the principal is responsible for managing the school’s daily internal affairs and will hire (with board consent and oversight), and manage all school staff and oversee all instructional programs. The principal will implement teacher evaluations and, with board oversight, determine teacher retention and promotion outcomes based on evaluation results. The school’s curriculum development, professional development and data-driven decision-making initiatives will be

designed and led by the principal, in coordination with the director(s) of teaching and learning and the director of special populations. The principal will serve as the central leadership figure within the school community. The principal will also oversee implementation of the school's student discipline policy in coordination with the director of school culture. Also, with consent of the board, the principal will communicate and interact on behalf of the school with the charter authorizer.

The following staff will be hired and will become members of the School Management Team:

A Director of Teaching and Learning will be hired in Year 1 and will have responsibility for curriculum and instruction, helping to design, deliver and oversee instructional professional development, supporting the teacher evaluation process and providing pedagogical support to teachers for grades K-6. An additional director of teaching and learning will be hired in Year 3 and another in Year 4 as the school expands.

A Director of Special Populations will be hired in Year 1 to oversee the teaching and learning and academic success of all SWD and ELLs enrolled at the school. He or she will also be responsible for the administrative and compliance requirements for working with all special populations.

A Director of School Culture and Family Engagement will be hired in Year 1 to manage and support positive student behavior and will monitor the overall school culture, including work with families to support ongoing and meaningful community engagement within the school community.

TRCS 2 school will hire teachers each year as the school grows to become a grade K-6 school. TRCS 2 intends to use a variety of methods to recruit teachers including: posting position openings on its website, social media, a web-based platform for teacher recruitment and the websites of other organizations that support charter staff recruitment; working with colleges and universities that have teacher training programs; leveraging relationships with professionals in the field; attending career fairs; accessing TRCS' resume list and working with a recruiter as needed.

The Collaborative School Governance Committee, composed of appointed and elected representatives of all school constituencies, will monitor the quality of life and sets academic priorities at the school, subject to approval of the board of trustees. One responsibility of this committee will be to develop and continuously monitor a Charter School Comprehensive Education Plan that identifies goals and strategies for school improvement based on analysis of data and feedback that each member receives from his or her school constituency.

Facility

TRCS 2 plans to request co-location in a NYCDOE public school in CSD 30. As a contingency, the TRCS 2 is actively exploring suitable private space in CSD 30. This includes identification of sites that could serve as incubation space for the first two or three years while working with a developer to construct a facility. The projected budget is based on the expenditures associated with housing the school in a private facility, offset by facilities funding from NYCDOE.

Projected Fiscal and Programmatic Impact on District of Location

The applicant group provided an analysis of the fiscal and programmatic impact of the proposed school on NYC public and non-public schools, indicating that the fiscal impact of the Renaissance Charter School on NYC public and non-public schools is expected to be nominal as presented below.

Table 2: Projected Fiscal Impact upon District of Location, 2017-18 to 2021-22¹⁶

Year	Number of Enrolled Students	Charter School Basic Per Pupil Tuition Rate	Total Charter School Per Pupil Cost to District	Estimated Additional Costs to District (e.g. SPED funds)	Total Projected Funding from District	Total District General Fund Budget	Projected Impact on District Budget
2018-19	243	\$14,030	\$3.409M	\$572,294	\$3.980M	\$26.824B	0.001
2019-20	324	\$14,030	\$4.546M	\$763,059	\$5.307M	\$30.897B	0.002
2020-21	405	\$14,030	\$5.682M	\$953,824	\$6.634M	\$29.012B	0.002
2021-22	486	\$14,030	\$6.818M	\$1,144,588	\$7.961M	\$30.173B	0.003
2022-23	567	\$14,030	\$7.955M	\$1,335,353	\$9.288M	\$31.380B	0.003

For forecasting purposes, the fiscal impact of this charter school on the district of location assumes that:

- There will be no fluctuation in the grade levels served by existing charter schools over the course of the charter term;
- The charter school will be able to meet its projected maximum enrollment;
- All students will come from the district of location; and
- All students will attend every day for a 1.0 FTE.

**Table 3: 2015-16 Demographic Detail for Proposed District of Location
New York City Geographic District #30**

¹⁶ The Renaissance Charter High School Application Technical Modification, June 2017

	<u>Total District Enrollment</u>	<u>Percent of Enrollment</u>
All Students	38,182	
Economic Disadvantaged	26,647	70%
Limited English Proficient	6,839	18%
Students with Disability	6,204	16%

**Table 4: 2014-15 2015-16 High School Cohort Academic and Graduation Rates
Based on Grade Configuration for Proposed School**

Cohort Results	NYC CSD #30	NYS
ELA Cohort Proficiency (Gr3-6)	43%	38%
Math Cohort Proficiency (Gr3-6)	45%	42%
Cohort Graduation Rate	73%	80%

Public Hearing and Public Comment

As required by the Charter Schools Act, the NYCDOE conducted a public hearing on Thursday, April 20, 2017 to solicit comments from the community concerning the proposed TRCS 2. Three (3) members of the community attended. No individuals from the community spoke in support of or in opposition to the proposed application.

Findings

Review Panel Consultants	Section I: Mission, Key Design Elements, Enrollment & Community Outreach	Section II: Education Plan Rating	Section III: Organization & Fiscal Plan Rating	Overall Rating	Capacity Interview Rating: (Avg. of Interview Team Rating on 8 Criteria)
Reviewer 1	Meets	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches	Meets – Average rating of Board Representation at Interview, Will, Skill, Capacity, Knowledge, Governance, and Readiness to Launch
Reviewer 2	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets	
Reviewer 3	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets	

Based on the comprehensive review of the application and of the applicant, founding group, and proposed board of trustees, the Department makes the following findings:

1. The charter school described in the application meets the requirements of Article 56 of the Education Law (as amended) and other applicable laws, rules, and regulations.¹⁷ This finding is based on the following, among other things:
 - vii. The applicant has included in the application the information required by Education Law §2851(2).
 - viii. The proposed charter school would meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets, as prescribed by the NYS Board of Regents, of students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who are eligible applicants for the federal free and reduced price lunch program as required by Education Law §2852(9-a)(b)(i).
 - ix. The applicant has conducted public outreach to solicit community input regarding the proposed charter school and to address comments received from the impacted community concerning the educational and programmatic needs of students in conformity with Education Law §2852(9-a)(b)(ii).

2. The applicant has demonstrated the ability to operate the proposed charter school in an educationally and fiscally sound manner.¹⁸ This finding is based on the following, among other things:
 - The presentation in the application of a sound description of key features that are core to the school’s overall design, and which rigorously addresses the criteria outlined in the Department’s RFP in the areas of mission; key design elements; enrollment, recruitment and retention; and community to be served.
 - The presentation in the application of a sound educational plan, which rigorously addresses the criteria outlined in the Department’s RFP in the areas of achievement goals; school schedule and calendar; curriculum and instruction; assessment; school culture and climate; and special student populations and related services.
 - The presentation in the application of a sound organizational and fiscal plan, which rigorously addresses the criteria outlined in the Department’s RFP in the areas of founding group capacity; board of trustees and governance; management and staffing; evaluation; professional development; facilities; insurance; health, food and transportation services; family and community involvement; financial management; budget and cash flow; pre-opening plan; and dissolution plan.
 - An understanding of the New York State Charter Schools Act, and the skill, will and capacity to successfully launch and operate a high quality public charter school.

3. Granting the proposed charter is likely to improve student learning and achievement, will materially further the purposes of the Act¹⁹ and will have a significant educational benefit to the students expected to attend the charter school.²⁰ This finding is based on the totality

¹⁷ Education Law §2852(2)(a).

¹⁸ Education Law §2852(2)(b).

¹⁹ Education Law §2852(2)(c).

²⁰ As applicable pursuant to Education Law §2852(2)(d).

of the information presented in the application and during the application review process, as summarized in this document.

Recommendation

Based on the Department's review and findings, the New York State Education Department recommends that the New York State Board of Regents approve the proposal to establish The Renaissance Charter School 2 to open in September 2018 in Queens, CSD 30, in New York City.